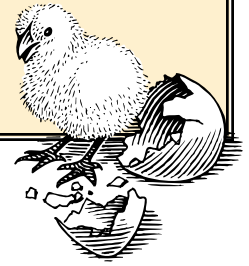


SC-HCQU View

Facilitate-Educate-Communicate



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“On Guard”

(Boosting Your Immune System)

Each of us is born with a natural defense force within our bodies to fight invaders. It is important to keep this force, called the immune system, well-equipped and strong. The most common invaders are viruses and bacteria.

By taking command of this protective army the body will operate a powerful defense. The immune system is very complex, comprised of different units, with specific functions, but all working together. Some of these units include your skin, mucous membranes, secretions, white blood cells, and the lymphatic system.

When your immune system is weakened you can experience a condition that is short-lived, such as the common cold, or more chronic, life-long conditions like Type I diabetes (insulin -dependent), rheumatoid arthritis, lupus, and Multiple sclerosis (MS). These chronic conditions are related to an immune system gone awry.

It is important to keep your immune system strong against the invaders of the body. The strength of our immune system is dependent upon many factors, the most basic being our heredity. The genes you inherit play a part in vitality and longevity, though much is known about risk factors and making practical changes in your lifestyle to offset any detrimental effects.

You can support your immune system, which was designed to perform quickly and efficiently, to eliminate threats upon itself:

~ Eat a diet full of color and variety – green broccoli, orange peaches, red apples, white fish, blueberries. By eating a variety you will boost your immune system and even lose or maintain your weight. Include all the food groups in your daily intake – dairy, meat, grain, fruits and vegetables.

~ Work out each day: Your body is designed for motion. In our sedentary, couch-potato society, there are only about 1 out of 5 Americans who exercise 5 times a week for 30 minutes. Get moving!

~ Get 8 hours of ZZZZZ's: When your sleep is sacrificed, so is your health. While you sleep your body is resting and refueling for the next day. To enhance a better night's rest, avoid caffeine and don't vigorously exercise in the evening. Establish routines, and enjoy relaxing activities prior to bedtime (warm bath, cup of warm milk or decaf herbal tea, reading).



On Guard – Boosting Your Immune System (*continued*)

~ Manage your stress; don't let stress manage you: Learn what works for you to adjust to life's demands, as stress can compromise your health. Music, journaling, spending time with friends and family, faith-based activities and relationships, and pets, are some ways to help you cope with the stresses that lower your immunity.

~ Develop a positive outlook on life: Is your cup half full or half empty? Studies prove that pessimists don't live as long as optimists. Turning your cup to half full results in less stress and better health. Spend time with folks who make you feel good. Think success – “will be” and “can do.” Practice random acts of kindness on yourself and to others – no special reason – just because!

Your immune system will continue to guard you 24/7, but its success is dependent upon whether or not you provide or withdraw support. Start today – Guard your defenses and support your body!

Egoscue, P. Pain Free, Bantam 1998

Mazo, E. The Immune Advantage, Rodale, 2002



April

National Health Awareness Month

Foot Health Awareness Month

jescherer@apma.org

www.apma.org

Counseling Awareness Month

jgaskins@counseling.org

www.counseling.org

National Autism Awareness Month

Kranta@autism-society.org

www.autism-society.org

Sexual Assault Awareness Month

resources@nsvrc.org

www.nsvrc.org

Sports Eye Safety Month

eyemd@aao.org

www.aao.org

Alcohol Awareness Month

www.mentalhealth.org/

National Infant Immunization Week (22-29)

nipinfo@cdc.gov

www.cdc.gov/nip/events/niiw/

World Voice Day (16)

voiceday@entnet.org

www.entnet.org/news/voiceday.cfm

National Volunteer Week (23-29)

volunteerweek@pointsoflight.org

www.pointsoflight.org/programs/seasons/nvw

National Child Abuse Prevention Month

nccanch@caliber.com

www.nccanch.acf.hhs.gov/topics/prevention/index.cfm

IBS (Irritable Bowel Syndrome) Awareness

iffgd@iffgd.org

www.aboutibs.org

National Occupational Therapy Month

cmetzler@aota.org

www.aota.org

Women's Eye Health and Safety Month

info@preventblindness.org

www.preventblindness.org

Cesarean Awareness Month

info@ican-online.org

www.ican-online.org

National Public Health Week (3-9)

nphw@apha.org

www.apha.org/nphw

World Health Day (7)

www.who.int/world-health-day/

2006 Walk America (29-30)

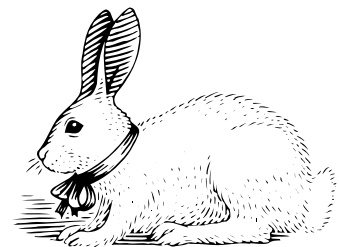
walkamerica@modimes.org

www.walkamerica.org

North American Occupational Safety & Health Week (30-May 6)

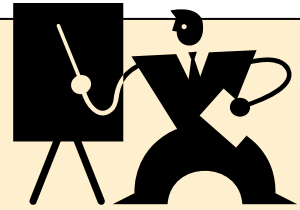
dhurns@asse.org

www.asse.org/naosh



South Central HCQU Regional Trainings

Trainings are free, but registration is required.



- **Slips, Trips and Falls** – May 9 from 10:00 am - 12:00 noon @ Lancaster County Public Safety Training Center, 101 Champ Blvd., Manheim – **Registration Deadline: April 25 before 4:00 pm**
- **Genetics of Mental Retardation** – May 11 from 1:00 pm – 3:30 pm @ Franklin County Human Services Building, 425 Franklin Farm Lane, Chambersburg – **Registration Deadline: April 27 before 4:00 pm**
- **Consumer Health Fair** – May 19 @ Chambersburg Recreation Department, 235 South 3rd Street, Chambersburg – **Registration Deadline – April 28 before 4:00 pm**
- **Anatomy & Physiology** – May 25 from 10:00 am – 12:30 pm @ Silver Springs Presbyterian Church, 444 Silver Springs Road, Mechanicsburg – **Registration Deadline: May 11 before 4:00 pm**

The following trainings are co-sponsored by the
York/Adams Training Network

- **Communicating with Non-Speaking Individuals** – April 18 from 1:00 pm – 3:00 pm @ Bell Socialization Services, 160 South George Street, York – **Registration Deadline: April 11 before 4:00 pm**
- **Anatomy and Physiology** – April 27 from 10:00 am – 12:30 pm @ Bell Socialization Services, 160 South George Street, York – **Registration Deadline: April 20 before 4:00 pm**
- **EPS & Medication Side Effects** – May 11 from 10:00 am -12:00 noon @ Typical Life Corp, North East Plaza, North George Street, Manchester – **Registration Deadline: May 4 before 4:00 pm**
- **Hepatitis & AIDS** – May 23 from 1:00 pm – 3:00 pm @ Bell Socialization Services, 160 South George Street, York – **Registration Deadline: May 16 before 4:00 pm**

Unfortunately, we are unable to accommodate registrations after the deadline.

*For more information call Cherie Adkins at 717-909-3858 and
leave a message re: registration, questions, etc.*

*Listen to prompts on this phone line regarding trainings that are full,
as well as cancellations due to weather.*

Don't Miss It!

Consumer Health Fair

"Healthy Outlooks: Ways to Wellness"

Friday, May 19, 2006

9:30 am – 2:00 pm

Chambersburg Recreation Center

235 South 3rd Street
Chambersburg, PA

Register Now!

Registration Deadline: April 28, 2006



HOW HEALTHY ARE YOUR FEET ???

~ Wanda Nikolaus, RN



April is healthy feet month. You probably don't think about your feet a whole lot, unless they hurt. How many things can go wrong with your feet? Quite a few!

If you are caring for individuals who have diabetes you are already checking their feet on a daily basis to insure that there are no reddened areas that could lead to skin breakdown or ulcerations. People who have high blood sugar have a more difficult time with wound healing so it is very important to have daily observation of their feet. This means checking the entire foot - bottom, top, sides and between the toes. Individuals who are diabetic should always have nails trimmed by a podiatrist as it is extremely important to avoid nicking the skin.

What could cause problems for the rest of us? For starters, how about bunions, a callous, warts, ingrown toenails, nail fungus and more? Let's take a look at these:

A bunion (medical term – hallux valgus deformity) is an enlargement or deformity at the base of the big toe. It can be swollen and painful. Consult a podiatrist for proper treatment.

A callous is a superficial area that occurs at a site of repeated trauma, such as from ill-fitting shoes. A corn can appear over toe joints or between the toes. These are caused by pressure or friction and may require professional treatment.

Plantar warts generally occur on the bottom of the foot. Warts are caused by a virus and may be painful. They may disappear spontaneously but if not, the PCP may remove them with topical applications, freezing or burning.

Ingrown toenails are very common and are frequently due to improper nail trimming. They may also be due to shoes or stockings that don't fit properly. The toe will frequently become infected which will be indicated by pain, swelling or redness near the nail. You may need a podiatrist to remove a portion of the nail to help it grow out properly. Sometimes the physician will recommend soaking the toe in Epsom salts and warm water to help draw out the infection. Be sure to avoid hot water bottles or heating pads!

Many individuals are plagued by nail fungus, which results in unsightly and discolored nails. Oral medication may be prescribed but this treatment is expensive, has side effects and is not always effective. An application of Vicks vapor rub twice a day has been shown to be effective but this is a treatment that requires patience and adherence to the regime.

Athlete's Foot is a fungus that is easily spread in community showers and pools. The skin can be dry or cracked and may be itchy. Be sure to keep the feet dry (especially between the toes) and avoid going barefoot in public areas. Treatment is usually an over-the-counter topical anti-fungal.

Blisters (a fluid-filled lesion) can occur due to improperly fitted shoes or socks that bunch up. Repeated agitation, such as walking under these conditions, can cause a blister to develop. Consult the PCP for proper treatment. Don't "pop" the blister!

Arthritis can be very painful and make walking difficult at times. Our individuals frequently don't, or are unable, to report pain, but as people age it's important to remember that arthritis can be present and may go undiagnosed. Older individuals especially may have this condition, which affects a variety of joints.

Plantar fasciitis is pain in the bottom of the heel or arch. This condition may have many causes, such as weight gain, trauma, muscle imbalance and a high or low arch. The PCP should be consulted to determine necessary treatment. This may include orthotics, physical therapy or cortisone injections.

HOW HEALTHY ARE YOUR FEET ???

(continued)

What about smelly feet? This is known as bromhidrosis (foot odor) and can be problematic for some people. The cause may be increased perspiration (there are 250,000 sweat glands in the foot!) or may be due to bacteria that thrive in a warm environment. Medicated foot powders may help and be sure to keep feet clean and dry. Change shoes and socks frequently.

Don't forget ill-fitting shoes! Many of our consumers are unable to purchase expensive shoes and it's difficult to find a lot of personal assistance in shoe departments these days. It's good to purchase shoes later in the afternoon, as feet tend to be more swollen at that time. When you are assisting an individual make sure their toes don't rub and that the shoes are as wide or narrow as needed for proper fit. Be certain the shoes are broken in before being worn for long periods of time! To maintain good circulation, be sure that socks aren't too tight and discourage people from crossing their legs.

Summer's coming and it may be tempting to go barefoot. This is not a good idea as it presents a risk of injury. And don't forget the sunscreen when swimming or sunbathing – your feet haven't seen the light of day all winter!

To promote healthy feet for your individuals include a foot exam on a routine basis. This can be done when assisting with dressing or after showering. There once was an individual who was reporting foot pain. When the house supervisor investigated she discovered a stuffed mouse in his shoe! (A true story). Expect the unexpected – lots of things can cause foot discomfort! Remember, as with most conditions, prevention is the key!



<http://www.apma.org>



South Central PA
Health Care Quality Unit

Presents

On-Line Training



Visit our web site and check out the SC-HCQU trainings now available on-line!



- ◆ Take a course at your convenience!
- ◆ Topics include:
 1. *Depression*
 2. *Simplifying Seizures*
 3. *De-Stress the Discharge*
- ◆ Look for a new training topic every month
- ◆ Log on at www.geisinger.org/schcqu and click on "On-Line Training"

Great opportunity for staff on night shift
or staff with limited time to attend trainings.

Bulletin Board

Take note!

To receive our newsletters just send your e-mail address to mmerdman@geisinger.edu

You will be placed on our e-mail list and automatically receive *The HCQU View* each month.

Don't Forget

South Central HCQU continues to collect used cell phones. These phones will be recycled or resold and a portion of the proceeds will benefit the *National Organization On Disability (NOD)*. Just drop off old/unwanted cell phones at the HCQU office or hand them to your regional nurse.

Remember –

If you can't feed a hundred people, then feed just one.
~ Mother Teresa



MEDICATION ALERT !!

All drugs containing **PHENYLPROPANOLAMINE** are being recalled. You may want to try calling the 800 number listed on most drug boxes and inquire about a REFUND. Please read this CAREFULLY.

STOP TAKING anything containing this ingredient. It has been linked to increased hemorrhagic stroke (bleeding in brain) among women ages 18-49 in the three days after starting use of medication. Problems were not found in men, but the FDA recommended that everyone (even children) seek alternative medicine.

The following medications contain Phenylpropanolamine:

Acutrim Diet Gum Appetite Suppressant
Acutrim Maximum Strength Appetite Control
Alka-Seltzer Plus Cold medicine (cherry or orange)
Alka-Seltzer Plus Cold Medicine Original
Alka-Seltzer Plus Cold & Flu Medicine
Alka-Seltzer Plus Cold & Sinus Effervescent
BC Allergy Sinus Cold Powder
Comtrex Flu Therapy & Fever Relief
 Contac 12 Hour Caplets
Dexatrim Caffeine Free
Dexatrim Gelcaps
Dimetapp Cold & Allergy Chewable Tablets
Dimetapp DM Cold & Cough Elixir
Dimetapp 4 Hour Liquid Gels
Dimetapp 12 Hour Extentabs Tablets
Permathene Mega-16
Tavist-D 12 Hour Relief of Sinus & Nasal Congestion
Triaminic Expectorant Chest & Head
Triaminic Triaminicol Cold & Cough
3D Cold & Cough Berry

Acutrim Plus Dietary Supplements
Alka-Seltzer Plus Children's Cold Medicine Effervescent
Alka-Seltzer Plus Cold & Cough Medicine Effervescent
Alka Seltzer Plus Night-Time Cold Medicine
BC Sinus Cold Powder
Day & Night Contac 12-Hour Cold Capsules
Coricidin D Cold, Flu & Sinus
Dexatrim Extended Duration
Dexatrim Vitamin C/Caffeine Free
Dimetapp Cold & Cough Liqui-Gels
Dimetapp Elixir
Dimetapp 4 Hour Tablets
Naldecon DX Pediatric Drops
Robitussin CF
Triaminic DM Cough Relief
Triaminic Syrup Cold & Allergy
Orange 3D Cold & Allergy Cherry (Pink)
3D Cough Relief Yellow 3D Expectorant

<http://www.fda.gov/cder/drug/infopage/ppa/>