

SC-HCQU View

Facilitate-Educate-Communicate



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The Health Benefits of Pets

More than half of all U.S. households have a companion animal. Pets are more common in households with children, yet there are more pets than children in American households. There are more than 51 million dogs, 56 million cats, 45 million birds, 75 million small mammals and reptiles, and uncounted millions of aquarium fish.

Do these pets have any beneficial impact on our health?

Throughout history animals have played a significant role in human customs, legends, and religions. Primitive people found that human-animal relationships were important to their very survival. Today, pet ownership reflects a need for intimacy, nurturance, and contact with nature. Animals have been used to promote physical and psychological health for centuries, with the use of horseback riding for people with serious disabilities. In 1792, animals were incorporated into the treatment for mental patients at the York Retreat, England, in an attempt to reduce the use of harsh drugs and restraints. After WWII patients recovering from war experiences at the Army Air Corps Convalescent Hospital, New York, were encouraged to work at the hospital's farm with hogs, cattle, horses, and poultry.

Results from one study found that post-myocardial infarction (heart attack) survival rates were much higher among pet owners than among non-owners. It is conceivable that all patients who owned a pet were in relatively better health, as reflected by their ability to care for a household pet. But which came first, the health or the pet?

A growing amount of literature suggests the positive effects of the human-companion animal bond among children, special populations of chronically ill or disabled adults, and elders. The presence of animals in institutional settings is associated with the tendency of people to smile and talk more, reach out toward people and objects, exhibit more alertness and attention, and experience more symptoms of well-being and less depression.

Companion dogs provide people in wheelchairs with a source of social stimulation that increases the quantity and quality of attention directed toward them by both familiar individuals and strangers.

(Continued on page 2)



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The Health Benefits of Pets *(continued from page 1)*

The animal serves as a “magnet” which can be a significant benefit, as research has clearly demonstrated that individuals in wheelchairs tend to be avoided or ignored by ambulatory people. There are many promising areas of research related to potential health benefits of companion animals that would provide insight into the part that animals play in the health of humans. In the meantime, without sufficient research, pet owners can already attest to the health benefits, and would conclude pets are likely to be medically beneficial to everybody’s health.

Source: NIH Consensus Development Program/Health Benefits of Pets,
<http://consensus.nih.gov>



May

National Health Awareness Month



Mental Health Month
www.nmha.org

National Sight-Saving Month:
UV Awareness Month
info@preventblindness.org
www.preventblindness.org

National Osteoporosis Awareness & Prevention Month
communications@nof.org
www.nor.org

Asthma & Allergy Awareness Month
info@aafa.org
www.aafa.org

Better Sleep Month
bsc@sleepproducts.org
www.bettersleep.org

Melanoma/Skin Cancer Detection & Prevention Month
www.aad.org

Healthy Vision Month
hvm@nei.nih.gov
www.healthyvision2010.org/hvm/

Cornelia de Lange Syndrome (CdLS) Awareness Day (13)
awareness@cdlsusa.org
www.cdlsusa.org

Food Allergy Awareness Week (14-20)
faan@foodallergy.org
www.foodallergy.org

Schizophrenia Awareness Week (21-27)
harwin@NSFoundation.org
www.NSFoundation.org

Lyme Disease Awareness Month
lymefnd@aol.com
www.lyme.org

National Neurofibromatosis Month
ctf@ctf.org
www.ctf.org

National Trauma Awareness Month
info@amtrauma.org
www.amtrauma.org

Better Hearing & Speech Month
actioncenter@asha.org
www.asha.org

National High Blood Pressure Education Month
nhlbiinfo@nhlbi.nih.gov
hin.nhlbi.nih.gov/nhbpep_kit/

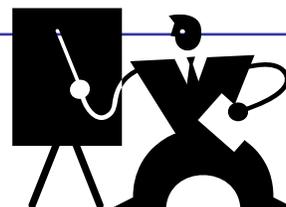
Tuberous Sclerosis Awareness Month
info@tsalliance.org
www.tsalliance.org

Fibromyalgia Awareness Day (12)
nfa@fmaware.org
fmaware.org/may12.htm

National Women’s Health Week (14-20)
4woman@ps.net
www.womenshealth.gov

Tinnitus Awareness Week (15-21)
tinnitus@ata.org
www.ata.org

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: May 2 before 4:00 pm**
- **Anatomy & Physiology** – May 25 from 10:00 am – 12:30 pm @ Silver Spring Presbyterian Church, 444 Silver Springs Rd., Mechanicsburg – **Registration Deadline: May 18 before 4:00 pm**
- **Genetics of Mental Retardation** – June 1 from 10:00 am – 12:30 pm @ St. Joseph's Catholic Church, 410 E. Simpson St., Mechanicsburg – **Registration Deadline: May 18 before 4:00 pm**
- **Grief & Coping With Death and Dying** – June 5 from 9:30 am – 12:30 pm @ Hershey Public Library, 701 Cocoa Ave., Hershey – **Registration Deadline: May 24 before 4:00 pm**
- **Medication Errors** – June 6 from 10:00 am – 12:00 noon @ Lancaster County Public Safety Training Center, 101 Champ Blvd., Manheim – **Registration Deadline: May 30 before 4:00 pm**
- **Cancers of the Reproductive System** – June 8 from 10:00 am – 12:00 noon @ Lancaster County Public Safety Training Center, 101 Champ Blvd., Manheim – **Registration Deadline: June 1 before 4:00 pm**
- **Substitute Health Care Decision Making** with Linda and Bob Derr – June 12 from 9:00 am – 3:30 pm @ Hospice of the Good Shepherd, 2700 Luther Dr., Chambersburg – **Registration Deadline: May 30 before 4:00 pm**
- **Dysfunctional Behaviors and Aggression Across the Lifespan** with Jim Siberski – June 22 from 9:00 am – 3:30 pm @ Hershey Church of the Nazarene, 986 E. Governor Rd., Hershey – **Registration Deadline: June 8 before 4:00 pm**

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

- **Extra-Pyramidal Symptoms (EPS) & Medication Side Effects** – May 11 from 10:00 am – 12:00 noon @ Typical Life Corp., North East Plaza, North George St., Manchester – **Registration Deadline: May 4 before 4:00 pm**
- **Hepatitis & AIDS** – May 23 from 1:00 pm – 3:00 pm @ Bell Socialization Services, 160 S. George St., York – **Registration Deadline: May 16 before 4:00 pm**
- **Autism & Cerebral Palsy** – June 8 from 10:00 am – 12:00 noon @ Typical Life Corp., North East Plaza, North George St., Manchester – **Registration Deadline: June 1 before 4:00 pm**
- **Personality Disorder & Organic Brain Syndrome** – June 27 from 1:00 pm – 3:00 pm @ Bell Socialization Services, 160 S. George St., York – **Registration Deadline: June 20 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.*



**There are also training opportunities through
Riverside Professional Development**

3525 North 6th Street ~ Harrisburg, PA 17110 ~ Phone (717)-238-3660 ~ Fax (717)-238-5886

Lancaster County MH/MR

provides staff training opportunities covering a variety of topics including those addressing Self-Determination, Community Support Program, and Grammar/Writing. Many (but not all) of these training are free.

For more information, please contact Sandi Hampton at hamptons@co.lancaster.pa.us or 717-299-8038.

Managing Osteoarthritis



Osteoarthritis (OA) is a chronic joint disorder characterized by degeneration of joint cartilage and adjacent bone that can cause joint pain and stiffness. By age 40, many people have some evidence of osteoarthritis on x-ray. Usually symptoms develop gradually and affect only one or a few joints at first. Joints of the fingers, neck, lower back, toes, hips, and knees are commonly affected.

The Arthritis Foundation reports that research in 2005 demonstrated that lack of regular vigorous physical activity nearly doubled the risk for functional decline and eventual disability in basic daily tasks essential to maintaining independence such as preparing meals, dressing and bathing in individuals suffering from arthritis. A separate study showed that obese persons losing as little as 15 pounds was associated with nearly 50 percent improvement in knee OA symptoms.

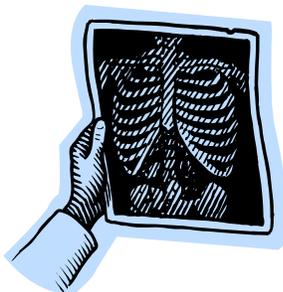
Overall treatment involves understanding the condition, rehabilitation, activities of daily living, and medications, and is very unique for each person. It is important that a plan be discussed and developed with the guidance of the individual's health practitioner, promoting their control and independence in all areas of life.

Pain is the most significant symptom that causes an individual to seek help. In treating OA, pain is a valuable indicator of the effectiveness of the treatment.

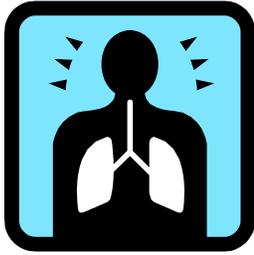
- Being physically active and incorporating an appropriate exercise program is important. A regular exercise program should include postural stretching and strengthening exercises to help maintain healthy cartilage, increase a joint's range of motion, and strengthen surrounding muscles to absorb shock better. Exercise must be balanced with rest of painful joints, but generally not immobilization. The Arthritis Foundation promotes an exercise program entitled "PACE"—(People with Arthritis Can Exercise).
- Physical therapy and massage therapy may be beneficial. Applying heat to painful and stiff joints several times a day for 20 minutes, swimming in a heated pool or moving around in a whirlpool spa can reduce pain and improve function of the affected joint(s). Massaging the muscles around the painful joints may relieve pain. Avoid chilling and outdoor activity in cold weather.
- Some people find relief with natural supplements (i.e. glucosamine, chondroitin, SAM-e), herbal and homeopathic remedies (i.e. teas, tinctures, plasters)
- Eating a well-balanced diet will help achieve and/or maintain a healthy weight, and provide nutrients necessary in preventing other health conditions that may impact on general well-being.
- Medication is the least important aspect of a total treatment program. An analgesic such as Tylenol may be all that is needed, or other medications such as anti-inflammatories, muscle relaxants may be indicated.
- When all other treatments have failed to bring relief surgery may help. Joints most commonly replaced are hip and knee. When function becomes limited replacement should be considered.

Advances in this challenging life-changing disease are being made with the potential to bring about significant improvement in the lives of people with arthritis. Sixty-six million Americans, both children and adults, suffer from various forms of arthritis. It can rob individuals of a productive life, but with perseverance and a proper treatment plan, individuals can regain control and manage this condition to lead healthy, functional lives.

For more information about the PACE exercise program and support available for those living with arthritis, visit www.arthritis.org



Resource: www.cdc.gov/arthritis



Gaining Control Over Asthma

Asthma is a chronic respiratory disease affecting over 20 million Americans and becoming more serious, requiring more people to be hospitalized. It is often linked to allergies, heredity, and environment. It affects all ages but 50% of the cases are children under age 10 (boys with asthma outnumber girls). In adult-onset asthma, women are more often affected than men.

Airway inflammation causes spasm of the air passages followed by swelling and thickening of lung secretions. This decreases or closes off air to the lungs with wheezing, coughing, chest tightening and labored breathing. It is known that these asthma attacks are caused by certain triggers.

Some common asthma triggers include dust, pollen, animal dander, breathing cold air, cigarette smoke, certain chemicals, perfume, medications, infection and even exercise. These triggers vary from person to person, and the length and severity of the attack vary with each episode.

Signs of a medical emergency which may require emergency or urgent care may include:

- Difference in breathing—faster, slower, more shallow
- Cough or wheeze that will not stop
- Bluish fingernails or lips

An asthma attack should be treated as quickly as possible to open the airway. Sit upright during attack and follow the plan prescribed by your physician. Don't wait to get emergency help if symptoms are not responding to your rescue treatment.

Asthma attacks may be prevented if the factors that trigger them are identified and avoided. This is sometimes difficult to determine.

- Avoid known allergens and air pollutants. Watch for the Air Quality Index (AQI) during your local weather report. It offers you information every day on whether air quality in your area could be a health worry.
- Take prescribed medications regularly; don't omit them when you feel well. Most treatment plans include daily and emergency (rescue) medications.
- Avoid aspirin.
- Investigate and avoid triggering factors.
- Do relaxation and airway clearing exercises (health practitioner can assist with these).
- Stay active, but avoid sudden bursts of exercise. If an attack follows exercise, sit and rest; sip warm water. Use bronchodilator for exercise-induced asthma.
- Swimming is excellent exercise for people with asthma.
- Drink plenty of fluids to keep secretions loose.

Hopefully, these practical tips will help you understand and better plan how to manage your asthma. With an individualized action plan in place you should be sick less, breathe easier and enjoy life more.

Resource: <http://health.nih.gov>

Do What You Can For Those You Can

A Zen monk was seen by his disciple by the sea, where the tide had washed ashore hundreds of starfish. It was clear that they would soon die from exposure. The monk was tossing the starfish, one at a time, back into the sea, in a slow and meditative manner.

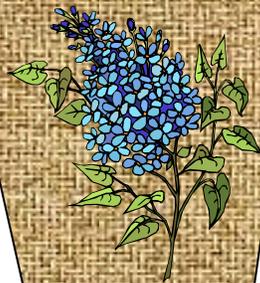
"Why are you bothering?" the disciple asked the monk. The young disciple looked at the large number of starfish that were succumbing. "It won't make any difference."

The monk stopped for a moment, and looked down at the starfish in his hand. "It will to this one," he replied."

I am only one, but I am one.
I cannot do everything, but I can do something.
And I will not let what I cannot do interfere with what I can do.
~ Edward Everett Hale



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 –

*Once you choose hope,
anything's possible.*

~ Christopher Reeve



Attention Providers!

Med Task Force

Medication errors remain the Central Region's highest primary category of incident. The Central Region's Office of Mental Retardation will be providing data around the issue of medication errors specific to your provider agency through Med Task Force meetings scheduled in your respective counties. The HCQU will also be providing technical and data assistance in order to help your agency study its own medication errors. Your agency's goal will be to understand the process of medication administration in your own agency and identify your own areas of improvement. **It is our hope that you will send two representatives from your agency to learn more about this project.** The Medication Task Force has the potential of helping Providers demonstrate one of the criteria that the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid is expecting Providers do; a process of quality improvement around an issue important to consumers' health and safety.

For meeting dates and times call Leanna Gingrich, HCQU Data Analyst at 717-909-3853.



HCQU Training On-Line

has a new arrival!

"Body Basics"

This on-line training is an overview of the major body systems. How much do you really know about the human body?

Check it out at www.geisinger.org/schcqu.

