

HealthConnection

GOOD NEIGHBOR PHARMACY

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THIS MONTH'S Featured Article

UNDERSTANDING DEPRESSION

PG. 3



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Senior Health Update How Does Loneliness Affect Your Health?

Loneliness and social isolation may represent a greater public-health hazard than obesity, and their impact is growing, according to research presented at the 125th Annual Convention of the American Psychological Association.

“Being connected to others socially is widely considered a fundamental human need — crucial to both well-being and survival,” says Julianne Holt-Lunstad, PhD, professor of psychology at Brigham Young University.

“Yet an increasing portion of the U.S. population now experiences isolation regularly.” Approximately 42.6 million adults over age 45 in the U.S. are estimated to be suffering from chronic loneliness, according to AARP’s Loneliness Study.

Holt-Lunstad recommends that doctors be encouraged to include questions on social connectedness in medical screening. Also, she notes, community planners should include shared social spaces that encourage gathering and interaction, such as recreation centers and community gardens. Additionally, people should prepare for retirement socially as well as financially, as many social ties are related to the workplace.

Source: American Psychological Association

Hot Topics

What Is Celiac Disease?

Celiac disease is an autoimmune digestive disorder that damages the small intestine. People with celiac disease can’t eat gluten, a protein found in wheat, barley and rye. The disease can cause long-term digestive problems and keep you from getting the important nutrients you need. This differs from gluten intolerance or gluten sensitivity, which causes gastrointestinal (GI) symptoms without the immune response typical of celiac disease. Wheat allergy is a temporary immune-response disorder in response to exposure that does not typically cause lasting harm to the body.

If you have celiac disease, you may have digestive problems or other symptoms. (Note: Some people with celiac disease have no symptoms.) Digestive symptoms are more common in children and can include:

- Bloating, or a feeling of fullness or swelling in the abdomen
- Chronic diarrhea
- Constipation
- Gas
- Nausea
- Pale, foul-smelling or fatty stools that float
- Stomach pain
- Vomiting

For children with celiac disease, being unable to absorb nutrients at a time when they are so important to normal growth and development can lead to:

- Damage to the enamel on the permanent teeth
- Delayed puberty
- Failure to thrive in infants
- Mood changes
- Slowed growth and short height
- Weight loss

Your doctor may diagnose celiac disease with a medical and family history, a physical exam, blood tests, an intestinal biopsy, a skin biopsy and genetic tests. Doctors in the U.S. do not routinely screen people for celiac disease.

Doctors treat the disease by prescribing a gluten-free diet. Symptoms significantly improve for most people with celiac disease who follow this diet. A registered dietitian can teach you how to avoid gluten while eating for good health. You can maintain a well-balanced diet with a variety of foods that do not include gluten.

Source: National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases





Your Doctor Can Help

Understanding Depression

Sadness is a normal reaction to difficult times in life and usually passes with a little time. But when a person has clinical depression, it interferes with daily life and normal functioning. It can cause pain for both the person with depression and for those who care about him or her. It is a real illness. It's not a sign of a person's weakness or a character flaw. You can't "snap out of" clinical depression. Most people who experience depression need treatment to get better.

Sadness is only a small part of depression. It has many other symptoms, including physical ones. If you have been experiencing any of the following signs and symptoms for at least two weeks, talk with your doctor:

- Persistent sad, anxious or "empty" mood
- Feelings of hopelessness, pessimism
- Feelings of guilt, worthlessness, helplessness
- Loss of interest or pleasure in hobbies and activities
- Decreased energy, fatigue, being "slowed down"
- Difficulty concentrating, remembering, making decisions
- Difficulty sleeping, early-morning awakening or oversleeping
- Appetite and/or weight changes
- Restlessness, irritability
- Persistent physical symptoms

If you have thoughts of death or suicide, seek immediate help.

If you think you may have depression, start by making an appointment to see your doctor. This could be your primary doctor or a healthcare provider who specializes in diagnosing and treating mental-health conditions (a psychologist or psychiatrist). To prepare for your appointment, make a list that includes the following:

- Symptoms you've had, including those that may seem unrelated to the reason for your appointment
- When did your symptoms start?
- How severe are your symptoms?
- Have the symptoms occurred before?
- If the symptoms have occurred before, how were they treated?
- Key personal information, including any major stresses or recent life changes
- All medications, vitamins or other supplements that you're taking, including how much and how often
- A list of questions to ask your doctor

Depression is treated with medicines, talk therapy (where a person talks with a trained professional about his or her thoughts and feelings; sometimes called psychotherapy) or a combination of the two. Remember, there is no one-size-fits-all treatment. It may take some trial and error, with the help of your doctor, to find the treatment that works best for you.

Source: National Institute of Mental Health

To-Do List

Bust Those Dust Mites for Better Allergy Relief

Dust mites are a common trigger for many people's allergy and asthma symptoms. While they can be found throughout the house, these microscopic creatures thrive in warm, humid environments such as bedding, upholstered furniture and carpeting. Because so much time is spent in the bedroom, it is essential to reduce dust-mite levels there. What you can do:

- Encase mattresses, box springs and pillows in special allergen-proof fabric covers or airtight, zippered plastic covers.
- Wash bedding weekly in hot water (130° F) and dry it in a hot dryer.
- Purchase allergen-proof covers for comforters and pillows that can't be regularly washed.
- Keep humidity low by using a dehumidifier or air conditioning.
- Remove wall-to-wall carpeting wherever possible. Instead, throw rugs may be used if they are regularly washed or dry cleaned.

Source: American Academy of Allergy, Asthma and Immunology



Moms' Corner

Enjoy Delicious Produce and Save \$\$ by Shopping with the Season

It's possible to fit healthy vegetables and fruits into even a tight grocery budget. There are many low-cost ways to meet your produce needs. Try these tips.

- **Celebrate the season.** Buy produce in season. It's easy to get, more flavorful and usually less expensive. Your local farmers market is a great source.
- **Buy small amounts frequently.** Some fresh vegetables and fruits don't last long. Buy small amounts more often to ensure you can eat them without throwing any away.
- **Buy vegetables and fruits in their simplest form.** Precut, prewashed, ready-to-eat and processed fruits and veggies are convenient, but often cost much more than when purchased in their basic forms.
- **Grow your own.** Start a garden — in the yard or in a pot on the deck — for fresh, inexpensive, flavorful additions to meals. Herbs, cucumbers, peppers or tomatoes are good options for beginners. Browse through your local library or online for more information on starting a garden.

Source: ChooseMyPlate.gov



Kids' Health

Danger! Poison!

Young children are curious and fast. The best way to prevent poisoning at home is to think about it and take precautions before an emergency occurs. That includes talking with your family. These tips can help:

- Put the 24-hour Poison Help Line number, 800-222-1222, on or near every home phone and in your cell phone. This number immediately connects you to your local poison-control center.
- Store medicines and household products in a high cabinet.
- When taking vitamins or medicines, don't put your next dose on the table where children can reach it. Secure the child-safety cap every time you use a medicine or vitamin.
- Ask guests to store their medications where children can't find them. Children can easily get into pillboxes, purses, backpacks or coat pockets.
- Never call medicine "candy." This can be confusing to children.

- Remind family members that certain everyday items, such as household cleaning solutions, cosmetics, lawn-care products and plants, can be poisonous.
- Explain that some poisons, such as carbon monoxide, cannot be seen or smelled but that they are still dangerous. Install carbon-monoxide detectors in your home.
- Store chemicals and medications in their original containers. Original containers for these products contain information that may be needed in a poisoning. In addition, medicines and chemicals that have been transferred to an unlabeled container may be difficult to identify. Use of food containers (such as drinking glasses, cups or soda cans) to store pesticide solutions, cleaning compounds or solvents can result in an accidental poisoning.

Sources: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention; U.S. Health Resources and Services Administration; Children's Hospital of Wisconsin Poison Center

For additional articles on your child's health and safety, visit MyGNP.com.



Your Healthy Pet

Understanding Pet Medications

Your veterinarian is the best professional to assess your pet's medical needs and to answer any questions you have regarding medications. Here are a few questions you may want to ask your veterinarian when discussing animal medications:

- What is the name of the medication, and what is its purpose?
- How much medication should be given, and how often?
- How and where should the medication be stored?
- Should the medication be given with food, or before or after meals?
- What if I miss a dose?
- Should all the medication be given, even if my pet seems better?
- What side effects should I watch for?

Other helpful tips:

- Keep the medication in the original labeled containers to ensure you are giving the proper dose at the correct intervals.
- Do not give human medications to your pets unless directed by your veterinarian.
- Keep a list of all medications your animal is taking (including over-the-counter products, supplements and prescription drugs) and share it with your veterinarian at each visit.
- A pharmacist is legally required to obtain permission from your veterinarian before modifying a prescription in any way. This includes changing a medication from a brand name to a generic product or adjusting the dosage.

Source: Ohio Veterinary Medical Association



Health Q&A

How Can I Stay Active with Osteoarthritis?

Q: I've had osteoarthritis for years, and I know I should be more active. How can I exercise safely?

Research shows that people can and should exercise when they have osteoarthritis. In fact, exercise is considered the most effective nondrug treatment for reducing pain and improving movement in osteoarthritis, according to the Arthritis Foundation.

Three kinds of exercise are important for people with osteoarthritis: exercises involving range of motion, aerobic exercises and strengthening exercises. Each plays a role in maintaining and improving your ability to move and function. Speak with your doctor or physical therapist about the exercises that are best for you.

Injuries from routine falls or severe bangs and bumps during athletic activities can cause cartilage tears or can permanently alter the way your joints move so that they wear down cartilage more than usual. You can help avoid injuries that may lead to osteoarthritis by taking care of your body. Warming up and stretching before exercise can help prevent serious injury. If you do injure yourself, see your doctor to receive proper treatment. Injuries left untreated may heal improperly, which could lead to further damage later on.

Source: The Arthritis Foundation

Do you have more questions?
Our website has the answers.

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for more information.



Eat Smart

It's Picnic Time!

Now that warm weather is here to stay for the season, it's time to think about a family picnic. Following safety tips for handling your picnic foods is the way to keep the fun rolling — and keep food poisoning out of the picture.

- **Plan ahead.** Pack a food thermometer, a cooler with ice or freezer gel packs, plenty of clean utensils, storage containers for leftovers, paper towels and trash bags. Find out ahead of time if you'll have running water, grills, picnic tables and trash receptacles at the site.
- **Thaw meat properly.** Don't thaw it on the counter overnight. Thaw food in the refrigerator or cook it from a frozen state.
- **Wash your hands before preparing food.** If running water is not available, use disposable hand wipes.

- **Cook meat and poultry to a safe temperature as measured with a food thermometer.** Just because a hamburger looks done on the outside doesn't mean it is done on the inside.
- **Serve food items from the grill on a clean platter.** Don't use the same plate and utensils for cooked food that were used for the raw food.
- **Be smart with leftovers.** Unpack that cooler as soon as you return home. Refrigerate leftover meats and salads that have stayed cold. Discard them if they have become warm.

Source: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services





Living with Diabetes

Where Do You Carry Extra Weight? It Matters, Doctors Say

Visceral fat — fat stored deep in the belly — is the most harmful kind, experts say. Years ago, we didn't know that where we carry extra weight matters. Now we know it does. Researchers say a large waist size makes you more likely to develop heart disease. Fat around the belly makes you more likely to have a heart attack or a stroke. These are the leading causes of death in diabetics. This type of fat makes it hard for your body to use its own insulin.

Our bodies normally have a certain amount of fat just under the skin. Visceral fat is another layer of fat that is deep within a cavity in the belly. It surrounds the stomach, the liver and the intestines. In fact, this fat is very close to the liver. It is so close that the liver can turn it into cholesterol. From there, this fat goes through the bloodstream.

It may collect along the walls of the arteries. This leads the arteries to get hard and narrow (called "atherosclerosis").

It is not just people with diabetes who are at risk. Deep belly fat is a problem in otherwise healthy adults. It makes it harder for the body to use insulin well, which can lead to insulin resistance. This often results in type 2 diabetes.

The American Diabetes Association suggests you keep total fat to 20 to 30 percent of your total calories, keep saturated fat to less than 7 percent and limit harmful trans fats. Read nutrition labels. Eat more fresh fruits and vegetables, fish or vegetable proteins, and whole grains.

Source: Johns Hopkins University

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