

HealthConnection

GOOD NEIGHBOR PHARMACY

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THIS MONTH'S
Featured Article

7 KEYS TO HEALTHY AGING

PG. 3



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Hot Topics

How You Can (and Can't) Catch the Flu

A person who has the flu can spread it to others up to about six feet away, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Most experts believe flu viruses are spread mainly by droplets made when people with flu cough, sneeze or talk. These droplets can land in the mouths or noses of people who are nearby or possibly can be inhaled into the lungs. Less often, a person might get flu by touching a surface or object that has flu virus on it and then touching her mouth or nose.

The CDC recommends avoiding sick people and staying home if you're sick. Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand rub. Linens, eating utensils, and dishes belonging to those who are sick should not be shared without washing thoroughly first. Frequently touched surfaces should be cleaned and disinfected at home, work and school.

The flu is contagious. Most healthy adults may be able to infect other people beginning one day before symptoms develop and up to five to seven days after becoming sick. Children may pass the virus for longer than seven days. Symptoms start one to four days after the virus enters the body. That means you may be able to pass on the flu to someone else before you know you are sick.

What's one way you can't catch the flu? From the flu vaccine, according to Harvard Medical School. The vaccine is made from an inactivated virus that can't transmit infection. People who get sick after receiving a flu vaccination were going to get sick anyway. It takes a week or two to get protection from the vaccine. But people often assume that because they got sick after getting the vaccine, the shot caused their illness.

Senior Health Update

Your Medication List: It Can Save Your Life

Keeping an up-to-date medication list, and sharing it with your pharmacist and doctors, is a great way to help safeguard your health, says the U.S. Food and Drug Administration. Be sure to include supplements and over-the-counter medications in addition to prescription meds.

Talk to your healthcare team about your medical conditions, health concerns and all your medications. The more they know, the more they can help—and the more you can decrease your chances of taking two or more medications or supplements that can be dangerous when taken together.

Your medication list should include the dosage, reason for taking the medication and the name of the doctor who prescribed it, in the case of a prescription medication.

Request a "medicine check-up" at least once a year. Go through your medicine cabinet to get rid of old or expired medicines and ask your doctor or pharmacist to go over all of the medicines you now take.





7 Keys to Healthy Aging Take Charge of Your Health in Your Senior Years

As we age, there are things we can do to help make our senior years as healthy and fulfilling as possible. These tips can help:

1. If you smoke, get help to stop.

According to researchers at the University of Pittsburgh, it's not too late. Even after 40 or 50 years of smoking, the body can still repair much of the damage. Studies show benefits to quitting at any age. And you don't have to wait years for benefits to begin. Many are noticed in the first year (or even the first month) after quitting.

2. Move more.

The heart and lungs naturally experience a reduction in efficiency and strength over time, especially if we are sedentary, says the American Council on Exercise. Regular exercise helps increase blood flow and oxygen supply. Becoming, and remaining, physically active and incorporating aerobic exercise (walking, aquatics, cycling, etc.) also can lower and control blood pressure, which reduces stress on the heart.

3. Drink plenty of liquids.

With age, you may lose some of your sense of thirst, according to the National Institute on Aging. Stay hydrated. Drink water regularly. Limit beverages that have lots of added sugars or salt.

4. Monitor your health.

Schedule an annual physical with your primary-care physician. The U.S. Department

of Health and Human Services advises asking your doctor for a schedule for important health screenings. Catching health problems early makes them easier to treat successfully.

5. Make eating a social event.

Meals are more enjoyable when you eat with others. Invite a friend to join you or take part in a potluck. A senior center or place of worship may offer meals that are shared with others. There are many ways to make mealtimes a social experience.

6. Increase your appetite with herbs and spices.

Eating a variety of healthful foods is especially important as we age. But foods may seem to lose their flavor as we get older. Maybe your sense of smell, sense of taste, or both have changed. Medicines may also change how foods taste. Herbs and spices can add to the enjoyment of your meals.

7. Add some "me time" to your day.

Carve out time just for you every day—even if it's only 30 minutes. Yoga, meditation, a walk with a friend, a crossword puzzle, listening to music... Do whatever feels good and helps you de-stress.

To-do List

It's Time for Back-to-School Eye Exams

Start early to make sure your child has healthy eyes for a lifetime, advises the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). The CDC recommends that your child be checked for vision problems by an ophthalmologist, optometrist, pediatrician or other trained specialist at:

- Newborn to 3 months
- 6 months to 1 year
- About 3 years (preschool)
- About 5 years (kindergarten)

According to the CDC, less than 15 percent of U.S. preschool children receive an eye exam and less than 22 percent receive vision screening. Vision screening can reveal a possible vision problem, but can't diagnose it. A comprehensive dilated eye exam is needed to diagnose eye diseases.

Amblyopia (reduced vision because the eye and brain aren't working together properly) is the most common cause of vision loss in children, affecting 2 to 3 out of 100 children. Amblyopia needs to be treated promptly to help avoid vision loss. Now's the time to schedule that back-to-school eye exam!



Moms' Corner

Preventing Childhood Obesity

Childhood obesity has immediate and long-term effects on physical, social and emotional health, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Children with obesity are at higher risk for other chronic health conditions, including asthma, sleep apnea, joint problems, type 2 diabetes and risk factors for heart disease. In addition, children with obesity are bullied more than their normal-weight peers and are more likely to suffer from social isolation, depression and lower self-esteem.

In the U.S., the percentage of children and teens affected by obesity has more than tripled since the 1970s. Today, nearly one in five can be considered obese.

Body mass index (BMI) is a widely used tool for measuring obesity. The CDC recommends that health professionals use BMI percentile when measuring the bodies of children and young people ages 2 to 20. BMI takes into account that young people are still growing and are growing at different rates depending on their age and sex. If you have concerns about your child's BMI, talk with your doctor.



Kids' Health

Supplemental Fluoride for Children

Parents often ask their child's dentist about the safety and effectiveness of using supplemental fluoride to help prevent tooth decay. The American Dental Association (ADA) recognizes the use of fluoride and community-water fluoridation as safe and effective in preventing tooth decay for both children and adults.

Fluoride is a mineral found in all natural water sources. When used as directed or within the context of community-water-fluoridation programs, fluoride is a safe and effective agent that can be used to prevent and control dental caries.

Community-water fluoridation is the process of adjusting the fluoride content of fluoride-deficient water to the recommended level for optimal dental health, which is currently recommended at 0.7 parts fluoride per million parts water.

Many bottled waters do not contain optimal levels of fluoride. In addition, some types of home-water-treatment systems (e.g., reverse-osmosis and distillation systems) can reduce the fluoride levels in water supplies, potentially decreasing the decay-preventive effects of optimally fluoridated water. However, carbon/

charcoal filtration systems don't remove fluoride.

Fluoride can be delivered topically and systemically, too. Topical fluorides strengthen teeth already present in the mouth, making them more decay-resistant, while systemic fluorides are ingested and become incorporated into forming tooth structures. Systemic fluorides also provide topical protection because fluoride is present in saliva, which continually bathes the teeth.

Self-applied topical fluorides include toothpastes, mouth rinses and gels. Professionally applied topical fluorides include higher-strength rinses, gels, and foams; fluoride varnishes; and silver-diamine fluoride.

Fluoride supplements can be prescribed for children ages 6 months to 16 years who are at high risk for tooth decay and whose primary drinking water has a low fluoride concentration.

Ask your child's dentist about how to avoid one potential risk of fluoride supplementation: the development of fluorosis, which may occur when excess levels of fluoride are ingested during tooth development. Fluorosis varies in appearance from white striations on the teeth to stained pitting of enamel.



Your Healthy Pet

Adopting a Rescue Puppy? Schedule a Health Check-Up

Congratulations! You've adopted a new puppy from a shelter or rescue organization and you have a new friend for life. You'll want to help your puppy have the healthiest possible start in life.

According to the Humane Society of the United States, shelters take in animals with widely varying backgrounds, some of whom have not been previously vaccinated. Inevitably, despite the best efforts of shelter workers, viruses can be spread and may occasionally go home with adopted animals. If you already have dogs or cats at home, make sure they are up-to-date on their shots and in good general health before introducing your new puppy to your household.

Take your pup to the veterinarian within a week after adoption. There, he will receive a health check and any needed vaccinations. The exam will likely include taking your puppy's temperature, checking the health of his skin and coat, inquiring about his diet, checking eyes and ears, listening to heart and lungs, evaluating the health of his abdomen, checking paws and toenails, and looking in his mouth to assess oral health.

If your puppy has not been spayed or neutered, make that appointment. There are already far too many homeless puppies and dogs. Don't let your new pet add to the problem. Most likely, the shelter will require that you have your pet spayed or neutered.

*Health Q&A*

Why Should I Get All My Prescriptions Filled at the Same Pharmacy?

Q: My family has been using different pharmacies depending on proximity to home or work. I've been hearing that we should use just one. Why?

A: There are many things you can do to help protect your family from potentially dangerous medication errors. Having all prescriptions filled at the same pharmacy (or by the same pharmacy chain, where your medication record is available to pharmacists at each branch pharmacy) is an important step. This allows the pharmacist to check for possible drug interactions between a new prescription and something you're already taking.

These additional tips, from the medical journal U.S. Pharmacist, can help keep your family safe, as well:

Check the label when you get a prescription to verify that you're receiving the proper medication.

Keep medications in their original containers when possible.

Know what to do if you miss a dose. Contact your doctor or pharmacist if you have questions.

Read the patient-information sheet that accompanies the medication.

Remind your doctor and pharmacist if you have any medication or food allergies or if you have a condition that could affect the use of any medication. Also mention if you are taking any dietary supplements or over-the-counter medications.

Do you have more questions?
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for more information.



Eat Smart

Portion Control: Why It Matters

To maintain a healthy weight, how much you eat matters as much as what you eat, according to the National Institutes of Health (NIH). Do you know the difference between a portion and a serving? A portion is how much food you choose to eat at one time. A serving is the amount of food listed on a product's Nutrition Facts label. Your chosen portion size may or may not match the serving size.

How many calories you need each day to lose weight or maintain your weight depends on your age, weight, metabolism, whether you are male or female, how active you are and other factors. For example, a 150-pound woman who burns a lot of calories through intense

physical activity, such as fast running, several times a week will need more calories than a woman about the same size who only goes for a short walk once a week.

In addition to checking food labels for calories per serving, keeping track of what you eat (as well as when, where, why and how much you eat) may help you manage your food portions, says the NIH. Create a food tracker on your phone, calendar or computer to record the information. You also can use mobile apps to help you track how much you eat—and how much physical activity you get—each day.





Living with Diabetes

Diabetes and Your Gums

Recent research shows that there is an increased prevalence of gum disease in people with diabetes, adding serious gum disease to the list of other complications associated with diabetes, such as heart disease, stroke and kidney disease, according to the American Diabetes Association (ADA).

Gum disease can become a serious health problem. The more severe form of gum disease is called periodontitis. When you reach this stage, your gums begin to pull away from your teeth. Pockets form between your teeth and gums. These fill with germs and pus—and they deepen. When this happens, you may need gum surgery to save your teeth. If nothing is done, the infection goes on to

destroy the bone around your teeth. The teeth may start to move or get loose. Your teeth may fall out or need to be pulled.

According to the ADA, not only are people with diabetes more susceptible to serious gum disease, but gum disease may have the potential to affect blood-glucose control and may contribute to the progression of diabetes. People with diabetes are at an increased risk for serious gum disease because they are generally more susceptible to bacterial infection and have a decreased ability to fight bacteria that invade the gums.

If your blood-glucose levels are poorly controlled, you are more likely to develop

serious gum disease and lose more teeth. Like all infections, gum disease may be a factor in causing blood sugar to rise and may make diabetes harder to control.

Other oral problems associated with diabetes include thrush, an infection caused by fungus that grows in the mouth; and dry mouth, which can cause soreness, ulcers, infections and cavities.

Talk with your dentist about your diabetes and about any oral-health concerns you have. Brush and floss properly and see your dentist for regular checkups.



Is Your Family Prepared for Cold and Flu Season?

Get your medicine cabinet ready for what the season may have in store. Visit your local *Good Neighbor Pharmacy* to stock up on cold-fighting essentials. Talk to your pharmacist about what products are the right fit for your family's needs, or visit MyGNP.com.



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