

GET WELL & Stay Well

A Publication of the UMMC Patient Resource Center Fall 2006

Welcome to Fall

Fall is here, and with it, come shorter days, cooler weather, and back-to-school activities. Fall is also host to a variety of important health topics, which we feature in this issue of GET WELL & Stay Well.

As the cooler weather moves in, so does the risk for colds, flu, and other infections. Read our article on hand hygiene and the benefits of the new waterless, alcohol-based products now available in the hospital and at home. Another related article explains the difference between the common cold and the flu. Helpful tips for preventing the spread of these annoying illnesses are also provided.

November 16 marks another celebration of the Great American Smokeout. On that day, smokers around the country will put out their cigarettes for the last time and take an important step to improving their health. Do you want to join them? Find out how in our feature article on **Kicking the Habit** for the Great American Smokeout.

This quarter, the Patient Resource Center is collaborating with Employee Health to host the third annual Wellness Fair for employees in November. This year's main themes include: maintaining a healthy weight, healthy heart care, smoking cessation, and diabetes prevention. All of these topics are important to every American as obesity is reaching epidemic proportions. Sixty percent of Americans are overweight, and obesity kills more people in this country than AIDS, breast, lung, and prostate cancers combined.

Healthy heart care and diabetes prevention and control are predominately controlled through a healthy diet, maintaining a healthy weight, and regular exercise or activity.

Please look at our course schedule and read our informative articles, and learn how to better care for yourself and others. Our vision is to help people—**GET WELL and Stay Well.**

Stay Healthy,

Anne D. Williams, RN, MS

Editor

Please direct editorial inquiries to: Anne D. Williams, RN, MS, at awilliams@umm.edu.

Kicking the Habit

Every year on the third Thursday of November, hundreds of Americans kick their habit of smoking for the last time. You can join them this year!

Almost four out of five smokers would like to quit. Are you one of them? Almost half of all adult smokers in the U.S. have already quit. It doesn't matter how old you are or how long you've smoked. Once you have quit, you've added healthy, full days to each year of your life. You will greatly lower your risk of death from lung cancer and other diseases like heart disease, stroke, chronic bronchitis, emphysema, and at least 13 other forms of cancer.

Now, it even makes more sense. The New York Times reported on August 29, 2006, that the level of nicotine found in U.S. cigarettes has risen about 10 percent in the past six years. This makes it harder to quit and easier to get hooked. In a study done by the Massachusetts Department of Health, the three most popular brands with young smokers, (Marlboro, Newport, and Camel) delivered significantly more nicotine than they did years ago. In fact, in KOOL cigarettes, a popular menthol brand, nicotine levels rose 20 percent. Smokers who choose "light" brands hoping to reduce their nicotine intake are also out of luck, as the study found that there was no significant difference in the amount of nicotine in brands tested in 1998 and 2004. Additionally, smokers who use "light" brands inhale deeper to get the same "hit" of nicotine, and thereby pull the dangerous toxins deeper into the lungs, increasing the risk of lung cancers.

So now that you're determined to quit...learn how you can kick the habit for life. The highest success rates for



quitting include combining a behavior modification program with nicotine replacement therapy. Consider joining a smoking cessation class like the ones offered at the UMMC Patient Resource Center. The main thing is to **START**.

S = **Set** a quit date.

T = **Tell** family, friends, and co-workers that you plan to quit and enlist their support.

A = **Anticipate** and plan for the challenges you'll face while quitting.

R = **Remove** cigarettes and other tobacco products from home, car and work.

T = **Talk** to your doctor about getting help to quit.

Stop by the UMMC Patient Resource Center on November 16 for free information, resources, and giveaways to help you kick the habit for life.

RESOURCES

UMMC KICK the Habit

www.umm.edu/kickthehabit

UMMC Patient Resource Center
410-328-WELL

U.S. Government Tobacco Cessation

www.smokefree.gov

American Lung Association

www.lungusa.org

American Cancer Society

www.cancer.org

Maryland Tobacco Quit Line

1-800-QUIT-NOW



Is it a Cold or is it the Flu?

BLANCHE BROWN, RN, CRNP, UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND GRADUATE STUDENT

It's that time of year again, as we approach the winter months that the coughs, the sneezes, the sniffles, and the sore throats begin to appear from nowhere. Many of us have already started to experience our first seasonal common cold. Colds, or upper respiratory tract infections, are the most common cause of illness in children and adults. Most colds are caused by viruses, and there are over 200 types of viruses that can cause the common cold. A cold may last for about seven to ten days, but some colds last longer especially in children, elderly people, and those in poor health. Adults can suffer from an average of two to four colds per year, and children suffer from an average of six to eight colds per year. Colds are very contagious and are spread through droplets from a sneeze, cough or hand contact.

The flu (also called influenza) and the common cold are alike in many ways. Both are respiratory illnesses but are caused by different types of viruses which can have similar symptoms, but the flu can sometimes lead to more serious problems, such as pneumonia or bacterial infections. As with colds, rates of infection are highest among persons 65 and older, children less than two years, and persons of any age with medical conditions that place them at risk for complications from influenza.

BE AWARE OF THE COMMON SYMPTOMS

With the flu, symptoms come on suddenly and are more severe. Younger children tend to have higher temperatures than adults, ranging from 103°–105°F. Children rather than adults may vomit and have diarrhea.

COLD SYMPTOMS

runny/stuffy nose
congestion
sneezing
cough
scratchy/sore throat

FLU SYMPTOMS

fever
sore throat
cough
headache
aches & pains
feeling lousy all over
overly tired
chills

There is no cure but symptoms can be relieved by drinking plenty of fluids, getting plenty of rest, using a humidifier, decongestant or an antihistamine, and a pain reliever such as Tylenol® or MOTRIN®. Note that over-the-counter medications can minimize discomfort associated with flu symptoms, but these medications do not treat the virus infection. Check with your doctor before using these cold remedies especially if you have high blood pressure or thyroid disease. Also, note that children under 18 years old should avoid aspirin or other salicylates. Antibiotics won't work against cold and flu germs.

PREVENTION IS KEY

These steps may help prevent or reduce the spread of respiratory illnesses:

- Wash your hands often with soap and water, especially after you cough or sneeze.
- Use a waterless, hand sanitizer to clean your hands between contact with others.
- Avoid close contact with people who have colds.
- Stay home from work, school, daycare, and errands when you are sick.
- Sneeze or cough into a tissue and throw the tissue away.
- Clean surfaces you touch with a germ-killing disinfectant.

TRY TO AVOID GETTING THE FLU

No vaccine is 100 percent protective, but the flu shot can greatly lower your chance of getting the flu. The best time to get the shot is from the middle of October to the middle of November, because most people get the flu in the winter. The shot can't cause the flu, but you may feel sore or weak or even feverish for a few days. There are currently two vaccine options, the flu shot and the nasal spray vaccine (also called FluMist®). The shot gives more reliable protection, and the spray is recommended only for non-high risk groups. You need a flu vaccine every year because the virus is constantly changing and new vaccines are developed annually to protect against new strains.

WHO SHOULD GET A FLU SHOT?

- Adults 50 years or older.
- All children ages six to 23 months.
- Adults and children ages two to 64 years with chronic medical conditions, especially asthma, other lung diseases, and heart disease.
- All women who will be pregnant during the influenza season.
- Residents of nursing homes and other chronic care facilities.
- Persons who live with or care for persons at high risk.
- Health care workers.
- Any person wishing to avoid the flu.

PEOPLE WHO SHOULD NOT RECEIVE THE FLU SHOT:

- You are allergic to eggs or any component of the vaccine.
- You have a history of Guillain-Barre Syndrome.
- You have an acute illness and a fever. You should not get it until you are feeling better.

THE NASAL-SPRAY FLU VACCINE-FLUMIST HAS BEEN APPROVED FOR:

- Healthy persons aged five to 49 years.
- Children five to eight years need two doses at least six weeks apart in their first year of vaccination with FluMist.
- Individuals nine to 49 years only need one dose.

PEOPLE WHO SHOULD NOT RECEIVE FLUMIST:

- Adults 50 years of age or older, or children younger than five years.
- People with immune suppression which includes: HIV, cancer and people who are being treated with drugs that cause immunosuppression.
- People with egg allergies.
- People with chronic health problems such as: heart disease, kidney disease, lung disease, asthma, diabetes, anemia and other blood disorders.
- Pregnant women.
- Anyone with a history of Guillain-Barre Syndrome.
- Children 5-17 years receiving aspirin or aspirin-containing therapy.

The flu can impact your daily life by leading to school absenteeism, days off from work, complications, such as pneumonia or other infections and other aspects of normal daily activity. So, take precautions such as good hand washing, staying home when sick, plenty of fluids and rest, and get vaccinated against the flu. Consult your doctor first for any questions related to flu symptoms and vaccine information. For more information, you can call your local health department; call the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention 1-800-232-2522 (English), 1-800-232-0233 (Español); log onto www.cdc.gov/nip/; or the American Lung Association www.lungusa.org.

E. coli and Spinach: What You Should Know

ADAPTED FROM AN ARTICLE BY MICHELLE MURRAY, UMMC WEB SITE

WRITER FROM AN INTERVIEW WITH DR. MICHAEL S. DONNENBERG

As of September 26, 183 people from 26 states, including Maryland, have been infected with an outbreak of E. coli O157:H7 from fresh spinach grown in California. Typically, this type of outbreak is usually associated from eating undercooked, contaminated ground beef. What should you know to protect yourself and your family? An infectious disease expert, Michael S. Donnenberg, MD, from the University of Maryland School of Medicine offers the following advice about this outbreak.

WHAT IS E. COLI?

E. coli is a type of bacteria commonly found in the large intestine of man and other warm-blooded animals. Most strains are harmless, however, some strains contain extra genes that provide them with the ability to cause disease.

WHAT ARE THE SYMPTOMS OF INFECTION WITH THIS TYPE OF E. COLI?

The symptoms often begin with abdominal pain and cramps, which may be severe. Watery diarrhea then follows, and in some cases followed by bloody diarrhea.

IS IT SAFE TO EAT FROZEN OR CANNED SPINACH?

Yes.

WILL COOKING RAW SPINACH KILL E. COLI?

It will, but there is danger in handling the raw spinach prior to cooking. The bacteria can get on your hands, your utensils, your cutting knives, and subsequently be ingested.

WHAT OTHER PRECAUTIONS SHOULD PEOPLE TAKE WHEN PREPARING THEIR FOOD?

Produce should always be washed before consumption, and care should be taken not to use the same utensils in preparing uncooked foods that have been used with uncooked meat. However, sometimes the contamination is within the plant, not just on the surface, so washing may not be enough. If you have one of the brands of raw spinach that was identified, discard the product immediately. Additionally, to avoid the usual ground beef contamination, remember that all ground beef should be cooked until the middle reaches a temperature of 160 degree Fahrenheit (well done or until the juices run clear). Wash your hands after handling raw meat. Never drink unpasteurized milk or juice. Children with diarrhea should not be permitted to bathe in public places. It is also important to wash your hands immediately after visiting petting zoos.

WHO IS AT MORE RISK AND WHO SHOULD TAKE SPECIAL PRECAUTIONS WHEN EATING FRESH PRODUCE?

We should all follow the same precautions, However, the risk of serious complications is higher in the very young and elderly.

For more information: log onto www.cdc.gov, or call 1-800-CDC-INFO.

Everyone Plays a Role In Hand Hygiene

ELIZABETH P. FUSS, RN, MS, CIC



Infectious disease specialists and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) have reported for many years that hand hygiene is the best way to prevent infections in our homes and hospitals.

With the development of waterless, alcohol-based hand cleaners, a new dimension has been added to traditional hand-washing with soap and water. For the most part, the waterless products have been shown to be the best method for hand hygiene in healthcare settings. Alcohol-based hand rubs require less time, are more effective than soap against most organisms, are more accessible than sinks, reduce bacterial counts on hands, and are actually less damaging to the skin. Healthcare workers have reported that their hands feel less dry with these products, and measurements of water content on hands show healthier skin as well.

Patients are also being encouraged to speak up for themselves and ask a health care provider "Did you wash your hands?" Many patients don't yet feel comfortable asking their healthcare provider, so healthcare workers are also being encouraged to show or tell patients that they've washed their hands.

At University of Maryland Medical Center, signs and educational materials have developed to show our commitment to hand hygiene. Look for the bright blue and yellow "Did U Wash?" signs, and don't forget – It's OK to ask!



October/November/December 2006 Calendar

To register for classes (except for Stork's Nest, Childbirth and Infant Care), please contact the Patient Resource Center at 410-328-WELL (9355). All sessions are free unless noted.

Classes

Stork's Nest - Prenatal Education

October 6, 13, 20, 27

November 3, 10, 17, 24

December 1, 8, 15, 22, 29

All classes run from 10:30 am -12:30 pm every Friday.

Please contact Stork's Nest at 410-328-2944 for information and registration.

Childbirth Education, Infant CPR, and Infant Care

Please contact the Childbirth Education office at 410-328-2944 for class information and registration for Infant Care, Breastfeeding and Infant CPR.

Yoga (Prana)

Thursdays, 6 – 7:00 pm

Weekly—ongoing

Cost: \$10 for employees weekly or \$100 for 10 weeks

\$12 for public weekly or

\$120 for 10 weeks

\$15 for walk-ins (walk-ins are welcome)

\$25 reimbursement for benefit-eligible employees.

The Solution® Method Training

Tuesdays, 6 – 8:00 pm

Cost: \$399. \$25 reimbursement for benefit-eligible employees.

12 week group—ongoing. Provides support and training in the skills of self-nurturing and effective limits, which turn off the drive to go to excess with food, working, spending, etc.

Smoking Cessation – American Lung Association's Freedom from Smoking®

8 weeks, Tuesdays, 12 noon – 1 pm beginning soon

Cost: Free (includes ALA educational packet).

Call 410-328-9355 for registration and information. You don't have to quit the first day!

Food Safety...It's in Your Hands

Mondays, 10 am

9 Gudelsky Conference Room near the BMT unit entrance. For any Cancer Center patients, families, or caregivers. Contact Hadass at 410-328-5462 to register.

Support Groups

Transplant Support Group—Education Series

3rd Tuesday each month at 5 – 6:30 pm

October 17 – Staying Connected: Before, During, and After your Transplant
November 21 – Thank Goodness for Caregivers

December 19 – Holiday Gathering
UMMC Patient Resource Center and Learning Centers

Leukemia and Lymphoma Support Group

4th Tuesday each month at 3:30 pm

Free to all adults/families with Leukemia, Hodgkins or non-Hodgkins Lymphoma, or Myeloma. Call Tracy Orwig at 410-825-2500 or Beth Wintermute at 410-328-3595 to register or for more information. UMMC Patient Resource Center

Bariatric Support Group

2nd Wednesday each month at 6 – 8 pm

Free to adults in the Bariatric bypass surgery program. Call Nadja Muchow at 410-328-8936 for more information.

Breast Cancer Support Group

4th Thursday each month at 12 noon

Free to all women with breast cancer. Call Stacey Stephens at 410-328-4673 for more information.

Events

Hearing Screenings

Every Friday in October from 1 – 3 pm (Oct 6, 13, 20, 27)

UMMC Patient Resource Center

Denim Day

Friday, October 6

Donations will be accepted on October 2–October 4 from 11 am – 1 pm at the Patient Resource Center.

Your \$5 donation will help to raise funds for breast cancer research and give you opportunity to wear denim and pink on Denim Day Friday, October 6th. For more info, call Mariellen Synan 410-328-8402.

Lexington Market's 23rd Annual Chocolate Festival—Calling All Sweet Tooths!

October 5th–October 7th, 11 am-5 pm

Stop by and try some of Baltimore's yummiest and most delectable chocolate—inspired sweets, and enjoy the free entertainment. For more information of this tasty event, call 410-685-6169.

Lexington Market's Annual Health and Nutrition Day

October 11, 10 am – 2 pm

Center Court

UMMC and MD General sponsor this event filled with free health screening, health information, fun food and nutrition facts, and much more! For more information, call Mariellen Synan 410-328-8402.

Great American Smokeout

November 16 – Kick the Habit for life! 11 am – 1 pm

Find out how you can kick the habit. UMMC Patient Resource Center

Free Mammograms and Pap Tests

To women over 40 years living in Baltimore City. Offered by the Baltimore City Cancer Program at UMMC Cancer Center. Call 410-328-HOPE (4673).