

Depression 101

Vagal Nerve Stimulator

Naps, They really are good for... Zzzzz ...

The Ugly Truth About Your Toothbrush

...and much much more!



"We find innovative ways for people with disabilities to achieve their dreams."

A health newsletter from Medical Services

med services



August is... National Immunization Awareness Month

We all need immunizations (also called vaccines or shots) to help protect us from serious diseases.

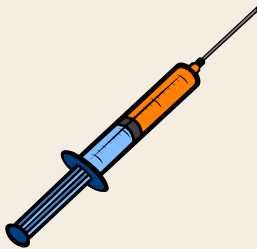
Shots can prevent infectious diseases like measles, diphtheria, and rubella. But people in the U.S. still die from these and other vaccine-preventable diseases.

It's important to know which shots you need and when to get them.

Everyone over age 6 months needs a seasonal flu shot every year. Other shots work best when they are given at certain ages. Here are some general guidelines:

- Children need a series of shots from birth to age 6.
- Pre-teens need recommended shots at age 11 or 12.
- All adults need a tetanus booster shot every 10 years.

Talk to your doctor or nurse to find out which immunizations you need.



Depression 101

It's more than feeling "blue"...

"Depression will be the second largest killer after heart disease by 2020—and studies show depression is a contributory factor to fatal coronary disease."

- World Health Organization

What Is Depression?

Everyone occasionally feels blue or sad. But these feelings are usually short-lived and pass within a couple of days. When you have depression, it interferes with daily life and causes pain for both you and those who care about you. Depression is a common but serious illness.

Many people with a depressive illness never seek treatment. But the majority, even those with the most severe depression, can get better with treatment. Medications, psychotherapies, and other methods can effectively treat people with depression.



What are the signs & symptoms of depression?

People with depressive illnesses do not all experience the same symptoms. The severity, frequency, & duration of symptoms vary depending on the individual and his or her particular illness.

Signs & symptoms include:

- Persistent sad, anxious, or "empty" feelings
- Feelings of hopelessness or pessimism
- Feelings of guilt, worthlessness, or hopelessness
- Loss of interest in activities or hobbies once pleasurable
- Fatigue or decreased energy
- Insomnia, early-morning wakefulness, or excessive sleeping

(Continued on page 2)

*All information on depression in this newsletter is from the National Institute of Mental Health.
www.nimh.nih.gov*

Depression 101 (Continued)

How can I help a loved one who is depressed?

If you know someone who is depressed, it affects you too. The most important thing you can do is help your friend or relative get a diagnosis and treatment. You may need to make an appointment and go with him or her to see the doctor. Encourage your loved one to stay in treatment, or to seek different treatment if no improvement occurs after 6 to 8 weeks.

To help your friend or relative:

- Offer emotional support, understanding, patience, & encouragement.
- Talk to him or her, and listen carefully.
- Never dismiss feelings, but point out realities & offer hope.
- Never ignore comments about suicide, & report them to your loved one's therapist or doctor.
- Invite your loved one out for walks, outings, & other activities. Keep trying if he or she declines, but don't push them to take on too much too soon.
- Provide assistance in getting to the doctor's appointments.
- Remind your loved one that with time and treatment, the depression will lift.

How can I help myself if I am depressed?

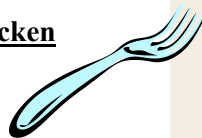
If you have depression, you may feel exhausted, helpless, and hopeless. It may be extremely difficult to take any action to help yourself. But as you begin to recognize your depression and begin treatment, you will start to feel better.

To help yourself:

- Do not wait too long to get evaluated or treated. There is research showing the longer one waits, the greater the impairment can be down the road. Try to see a professional as soon as possible.
- Try to be active & exercise. Do activities you once enjoyed.
- Set realistic goals for yourself.
- Break up large tasks into small ones, set some priorities and do what you can as you can.
- Try to spend time with other people and confide in a trusted friend or relative. Try not to isolate yourself, and let others help you.
- Expect your mood to improve gradually, not immediately. Do not expect to suddenly "snap out of" your depression.
- Postpone important decisions, such as getting married or divorced, or changing jobs, until you feel better.

Healthy Recipe Corner

Low-fat Sesame Chicken



- 1/4 cup all-purpose flour
 - 1/4 tsp salt
 - 1/8 tsp ground black pepper
 - 4 boneless skinless chicken breasts, cut into chunks
 - 1/4 cup reduced sodium soy sauce
 - 1/4 cup sugar
 - 1/2 tsp dark sesame oil
 - 2 tbsp sesame seeds, toasted
 - 1/4 c chopped fresh chives (optional)
1. In a gallon-size plastic bag, combine flour, salt & pepper.
 2. Add chicken, seal bag, & shake well to coat.
 3. Coat a large nonstick skillet with nonstick spray and warm over medium-high heat.
 4. Add chicken to skillet & cook until no longer pink in center. Transfer chicken to plate.
 5. Reduce skillet to medium heat & combine soy sauce & sugar in the skillet.
 6. Cook until sugar dissolves, stir occasionally.
 7. Add oil & sesame seeds. Add chicken & chives. Toss & serve immediately.

medi-aide rewind >>>

Has it been a while since you've been in medi-aide? You're not alone! Read this section to brush up on the skills & review the information you learned in medi-aide class.

Vagal Nerve Stimulator (VNS)

A vagal nerve stimulator, or VNS, is a small device implanted under the skin near the collarbone in a person who has uncontrolled seizures. Wires under the skin run from the device & wrap around the vagus nerve in the neck. The doctor programs the device to emit weak electrical currents which are sent to your brain. These electrical signals help prevent the abnormal electrical "bursts" in the brain which cause seizures.

The device is constantly sending out weak electrical currents throughout the day at regular intervals to help prevent seizures. If someone with a VNS has a seizure, a magnet can be used to swipe the device. This will shorten, stop, or lessen the severity of the seizure. The magnet should be swiped over the device at the first sign of a seizure. Staff can assist with this if the person is unable.

To use the magnet:

Slowly swipe the magnet over the device (left-side of chest near collarbone) for 3 seconds. After 60 seconds, if the seizure has not stopped, swipe the magnet again.

Remember: 911 should be called for a seizure lasting longer than 5 minutes unless supports state otherwise.



Naps

They Really Are Good for...ZZZ...

Most people enjoy the occasional nap, however is this afternoon pastime harmful or helpful?

Information Courtesy of The National Sleep Foundation—www.sleepfoundation.org

More than 85% of mammalian species are polyphasic sleepers, meaning that they sleep for short periods throughout the day. Humans are part of the minority of monophasic sleepers, meaning that our days are divided into two distinct periods, one for sleep and one for wakefulness. It is not clear that this is the natural sleep pattern of humans. Young children and elderly persons nap, for example, and napping is a very important aspect of many cultures.



As a nation, the United States appears to be becoming more and more sleep deprived. And it may be our busy lifestyle that keeps us from napping. While naps do not necessarily make up for inadequate or poor quality nighttime sleep, a short nap of 20-30 minutes can help to improve mood, alertness and performance. Nappers are in good company: Winston Churchill, John F. Kennedy, Ronald Reagan, Napoleon, Albert Einstein, Thomas Edison and George W. Bush are known to have valued an afternoon nap.

Benefits

- Naps can restore alertness, enhance performance, and reduce mistakes and accidents. A study at NASA on sleepy military pilots and astronauts found that a 40-minute nap improved performance by 34% and alertness 100%.
- Naps can increase alertness in the period directly following the nap and may extend alertness a few hours later in the day.
- Napping has psychological benefits. A nap can be a pleasant luxury, a mini-vacation. It can provide an easy way to get some relaxation and rejuvenation.

Most people are aware that driving while sleepy is extremely dangerous. Still, many drivers press on when they feel drowsy in spite of the risks, putting themselves and others in harm's way. While getting a full night's sleep before driving is the ideal, taking a short nap before driving can reduce a person's risk of having a drowsy driving crash. Sleep experts also recommend that if you feel drowsy when driving, you should immediately pull over to a rest stop & drink a caffeinated beverage and take a 20-minute nap.

Depression— Where can I go for help?

If you are unsure where to go for help, ask your family doctor. Others who can help are listed below.

- Mental health specialists (psychiatrists, psychologists, social workers, counselors)
- Community mental health centers
- Hospital psychiatry departments & outpatient clinics
- Family services or social agencies
- Clergy
- Peer support groups
- Employee Assistance Program
- Private clinic & facilities
- Check the phone book under "mental health," "health," "social services," "hotline," or "physicians," for phone numbers & addresses.

Depression— What if I or some- one I know is in crisis?

If you are thinking of harming yourself, or know someone who is, tell someone who can help immediately.

- Do not leave your friend or relative alone, & do not isolate yourself.
- Call your doctor.
- Call 911 or go to a hospital emergency room to get help.
- Call the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 1-800-273-TALK

question & answer >>>

Q: *Why don't you send out blister packs & med sheets sooner so houses have more time to check them in?*

A: As you can imagine, a lot of orders are processed through Medical Services! Due to the high volume of orders & medication changes, Omnicare waits to begin to fill blister packs & print med sheets until approximately one week before we need them. This allows for things to be as accurate as possible when they are delivered to us.

Since our agency is so large, it does take quite a while for them to complete the process of printing the med sheets & filling the blister packs. Medical Services makes all attempts to get you the med sheets & blister packs as soon as possible and always sends them out within one business day of receiving them from Omnicare.



pop quiz...

How much did you learn? Test your knowledge!

1. August is National _____ Awareness Month.
2. T or F: Depression always causes people to sleep too much.
3. VNS stands for _____ Nerve Stimulator.
4. T or F: ALL medications can be returned to Omnicare for credit.
5. September is _____ Awareness Month.

(1) Immunization (2) False (3) Vagal (4) False (5) Prostate

September is...

Prostate Cancer Awareness Month

Prostate Cancer is the most common cancer in men. It is second only to lung cancer in number of cancer deaths per year.

What are the symptoms?

- Difficulty urinating
- Frequent urination
- Pain while urinating
- Blood in urine or semen



All men over the age of 50 should be tested annually.

For more information go to: zerocancer.org

Did you know?

Not all medications that are returned to Medical Services can be sent to the pharmacy for credit. Some medications need to be destroyed by the nurse. Please be mindful of this & notify parents so everyone can work to be more financially responsible. Here are some examples of medications that cannot be returned to Omnicare for credit:

- Used topicals, creams, drops, etc.
- Half tabs
- Medications that did not come from Omnicare
- Controlled medications
- Refrigerated medications
- Medications that were filled more than 30 days ago



Brain Games

Puzzles are a fun way to "exercise" your brain. Give your brain a workout & see if you can solve the puzzles below!

TEMPERATURE	PAR 2	CHANCE
HEART	COLLAR HOT	THE HEAD SAND

Answers:

Falling Temperature	Two Under Par	

GOOD LAST GOOD LAST	PAT HIT	BARS BARS BARS BARS BARS BARS BARS BARS BARS
A MOMENT	LOOK ULEAP	YYY MEN

Answers:

The Ugly Truth About Your Toothbrush

Your toothbrush is loaded with germs, say researchers at England's University of Manchester. They've found that one uncovered toothbrush can harbor more than 100 million bacteria, including *E. coli* bacteria, which can cause diarrhea, and staphylococci ("Staph") bacteria that cause skin infections. But don't panic. Your mouth wasn't exactly sterile to begin with. Follow these helpful tips on how to store your toothbrush to keep it as clean as possible.

Most bathrooms are small. And in many homes, the toilet is pretty close to the bathroom sink where you keep your toothbrush.

Every toilet flush sends a spray of bacteria into the air. And you don't want the toilet spray anywhere near your open toothbrush.

"You don't store your plates and glasses by the toilet, so why would you want to place your toothbrush there?" McCombs says. "It's just common sense to store your toothbrush as far away from the toilet as possible."

Toothbrush holders, often due to their close proximity to toilets, pick up bacteria that swirl through the air after the toilet is flushed. They are frequently overlooked when cleaning the bathroom & are actually ranked as the third dirtiest item in the house.



Once you've moved your toothbrush away from the toilet, here are some other tips to keep it clean.

- Keep it rinsed.
- Keep it dry.
- Keep it upright
- Keep it to yourself.

Article courtesy of webmd.com

