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HealthyView

Fall 2011

ahp ranked among nation's highest-rated health plans

tips to conquer cold season

lifesaving truths about hypertension

stress-fighting strategies



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conquer cold season: tips that are nothing to sneeze at

Another cold season is here, and if you're like most adults, you'll get one to three bugs this year. Once you catch a cold, take Grandma's advice: Slurp chicken soup to fight infection, and drink plenty of fluids—hot or cold—to loosen mucus and prevent dehydration.

But what about pills, potions, or practices to keep you healthy in the first place? Here's what the science says:

Zinc. This mighty mineral makes your cold shorter, finds a recent research review published in *The Cochrane Library*. For best results, suck on a zinc lozenge at the first sign of a sniffle. But beware: Zinc supplements can reduce the effectiveness of some antibiotics and arthritis medications. And doses of more than 40 milligrams per day for adults and 34 milligrams for teens may cause stomach troubles. Children have lower limits, so ask the pediatrician what's best for your child.

Vitamin C. Reach for an orange, not an apple, to keep the doctor away. Regularly getting about 1 gram of vitamin C daily can reduce your cold symptoms by a day or two. Real foods are the best sources. Choose citrus fruits, broccoli, potatoes, and tomatoes. Avoid supplements if you have kidney disease or are being treated for cancer. And keep your intake to 2,000 milligrams or less for adults and 1,800 milligrams for teens. Ask the pediatrician what amount is safe for younger kids.

Sleep. Talk about sick and tired. In one study, people who got less than seven hours of shut-eye were almost three times as likely to catch a cold as those who got eight hours or more. After you've gotten a cold, rest won't shorten it, but it may help you feel better.

Exercise. People who get moving on five or more days a week are about half as likely to catch colds. And when they do start sneezing, their illnesses are shorter and less severe. Researchers speculate that aerobic exercise boosts the

SIMPLE TIP:

One gram of vitamin C daily can reduce cold symptoms.

production of virus-targeting cells in the immune system. If you're already sick, postpone intense workouts until several days after your symptoms have gone away.

Despite its popularity, little evidence supports the herb Echinacea for preventing colds. So, back to Grandma's wisdom: The simplest, most effective way to ward off a cold is to wash your hands frequently with soap and water. Once you've caught a bug, sneeze or cough into your elbow or sleeve to prevent spreading germs. ☹



don't skip vaccinations!

It's important to get an annual flu vaccination. If you get sick with the flu, you are more likely to develop pneumonia. Pneumonia is a serious lung infection. It makes the heart and lungs work harder to move oxygen around the body. It could land you in the hospital.

To stay healthy, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommend these steps:

- Don't skip your flu shot this fall. The best time is September through early November, before flu season starts. But it still helps to get a shot even in December, January, or later.
- Ask your doctor if you need a pneumonia vaccination. You can get one at any time of the year. Most people need only one shot. Some people may need a booster shot after five years.

battle teen obesity with healthy family meals

The nation's teens face a weighty issue—almost one in five are obese. A new study in the *American Heart Journal* suggests that it's not genes, but unhealthy habits, that contribute most to adolescents' extra pounds.

Another new study—this one in *Health Education & Behavior*—offers an antidote. What happens at home has a strong influence on teens' health habits. Parents can make a difference in their child's health, one meal at a time.

Good-Food Basics

During the turbulent teen years, the family dinner table serves as a source of comfort and stability. And when healthy foods are on the menu, adolescents form positive habits that last the rest of their lives.

Aim to sit down together at least four nights per week. Make sure your meals include the basics for a healthy diet, such as:

- Lots of fruits and vegetables
- Whole grains instead of white or refined breads and pastas
- Fat-free or low-fat dairy products
- Lean meats, fish, beans, eggs, and nuts
- Limited saturated fats, trans fats, sodium, and sugar.

Putting it Together

So, how do you transform these ingredients into healthy, tasty meals for your whole clan? A little advance planning and some helping hands do the trick.

- One day each week, sit down and plan seven days of healthy breakfasts, lunches, and din-



ners. Make a shopping list based on your meal plan. Hit the store when it's less crowded and you're not tired or hungry; it'll be easier to buy only what you need.

- Make small changes to reduce fat and boost nutrients. For example, use part-skim instead of whole-milk mozzarella in your lasagna, or swap a chocolate cake for angel-food with strawberries.
- Get your children involved in meal preparation. This can help motivate them to try healthy new foods. Ask your teens to peel and slice veggies, flip pancakes, or form meatballs.
- Stock your pantry with healthy basics. Staples like brown rice, frozen vegetables, and canned beans form the foundation of healthy suppers.
- Need ideas? Find recipes and cooking tips from *Keep the Beat Recipes: Deliciously Healthy Family Meals*, a free cookbook from the National Institutes of Health, at www.kidseatright.org for more nutritious, delicious meal ideas.

Not only does family mealtime help your teens, it may have benefits for you. Adults with children who eat family meals tend to weigh less, a new study finds. ☺

autumn vegetable succotash



Preparation Time: 20 minutes
Number of Servings: 8
Cups of Fruits and Vegetables Per Person: 3

Ingredients

- ¼ C olive oil
- 1 C diced onion
- 2 cloves garlic, finely chopped
- 2 C diced red bell peppers
- 2 C diced zucchini
- 2 C diced yellow summer squash
- 3 C frozen lima beans
- 3 C fresh or frozen corn kernels
- 2 T coarsely chopped fresh sage

Directions

In a skillet over medium-high heat, add oil. Add onion; cook until translucent (two minutes). Add garlic, bell peppers, zucchini, squash, lima beans, and corn. Season as desired; cook, stirring, until vegetables are tender (10 minutes). Stir in sage, and serve.

Serving Size: ½ recipe

Each serving provides:
220 calories, 8 g total fat, 1 g saturated fat, 0 mg cholesterol, 40 mg sodium, 35 g total carbohydrate, 7 g dietary fiber, 6 g sugars

Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, "Fruits and Veggies: More Matters"

MyPlate Replaces MyPyramid

The U.S. Department of Agriculture, with help from first lady Michelle Obama, launched MyPlate earlier this year to help adults and children learn what a balanced diet looks like. Replacing the traditional food pyramid, Obama says 'MyPlate' should help Americans visualize what they need to eat better than the food pyramid did. The MyPlate diagram emphasizes the importance of fruits and vegetables as they recommend them taking up half of your plate when you eat a meal.

To learn more about MyPlate, visit www.choosemyplate.gov/.



Source: www.csmonitor.com/USA/2011/0602/Nutritional-coup-My-Plate-replaces-USA-food-pyramid

stress-fighting strategies for every stage of life

The latest findings on stress are in, and they paint a harried picture. According to the American Psychological Association's new Stress in America survey, the majority of us are moderately to seriously stressed. While we know it's unhealthy, we aren't sure how to escape.

The sources of strain change throughout life. But one thing doesn't: Its damaging effects on our health. If left unaddressed, chronic tension boosts the risk for heart disease, obesity, skin conditions, autoimmune diseases, and even suicide, among other ills. Here's a breakdown of what's bothering us or our loved ones at different life stages, and what we can do about it.

The Teen Years

Stressors: Adolescence is a turbulent time of changing bodies, peer pressure, and new responsibilities. In a recent survey, the stress levels of incoming college students were at an all-time high.

Solutions: Help your teens list their sources of tension. Strike out the ones they can't change, like a friend's behavior, and define ways to take charge of the others, such as cutting back on work hours. Urge teens to resist drugs and alcohol, which only add more problems.

If You're a Young Adult

Stressors: More than 75 percent of young adults said money and job security topped their list of worries. Workplace woes wear down those who are employed.

Solutions: Stop and take stock of where you are financially. Make a plan for solving your most pressing problems, like credit card debt. Ask for help from counseling services or financial planners.

To keep job strain from getting the best of you, develop a menu of emergency stress-busters. When you feel the pressure rising, count to 10 before you speak, take three to five deep breaths, or simply walk away.

For Couples and Parents

Stressors: The ongoing recession has left couples and families financially unstable. Strained relationships cause anxiety, and the challenges of balancing family and work create guilt and distress.

Solutions: Use tough times to come together. One survey found 29 percent of couples reported feeling closer during financial struggles. A tactic that helped: finding a religious home or other community.

To protect your work-life balance, set boundaries. For instance, turn off your Blackberry during and after dinner. Communicate your non-available hours clearly to coworkers.

Caregiving and Older Age

Stressors: Older adults are less stressed overall than younger generations. However, they're the most likely to cite health problems, either their own or a family member's, as pressure points.

Solutions: If you're caring for a sick loved one, create a support team. Make a list of who can help and how, along with contact information. Use it when you need a break.

The best caregivers also care for themselves. Make time each day for something that you enjoy, such as sewing or playing golf. ☺





**Our
Commitment
to Excellence**

AHP one of the nation's highest-rated health plans

Arise Health Plan (AHP) is dedicated to maintaining an active quality improvement program that includes both clinical and service quality initiatives. This dedication was recognized by the National Committee for Quality Assurance (NCQA), which ranked AHP 48th in the nation for HMO/POS commercial plans.

The Quality Improvement Program includes all aspects of services provided by health plan staff, practitioners and providers. Arise Health Plan arranges for the provision of comprehensive health care delivery through a network of primary care and specialty practitioners, behavioral health practitioners and clinicians, ancillary care providers, hospitals, and other health care facilities.

All Arise Health Plan departments participate in the Quality Improvement Program. The scope of the Quality Improvement Program incorporates regulatory and pro-

fessional compliance, credentialing and recertification, medical management, behavioral health care, disease management, pharmacy management, quality of care and service, member diversity and patient safety. Review and evaluation of these components are directed by the Quality Improvement Committee and is initiated at the end of each calendar year. In addition, a yearly Quality Improvement Plan is developed to monitor performance and identify areas in which we can improve care and services to our members.

To evaluate program effectiveness, AHP uses Healthcare Effectiveness Data & Information Set (HEDIS®)¹ and Consumer Assessment of Healthcare Providers & Systems (CAHPS®)². HEDIS® is developed and maintained by NCQA, a non-profit health care qual-

ity organization. Our goal is to exceed the 90th percentile nationally based on Quality Compass®³ statistics in each of the measures. Quality Compass is NCQA's comprehensive national database of health plans' HEDIS and CAHPS results. Eighty-four percent of 56 HEDIS® measures exceeded the national average based on 2010 national benchmark data. More than half of those over the national average met or exceeded the 2010 90th percentile. ☺

see our results for yourself!

We are proud of our progress and strive for continuous improvement. Detailed results can be viewed at www.wecareforwisconsin.com/quality. A printed copy of this information is available upon request.

¹ HEDIS® is a registered trademark of the National Committee for Quality Assurance (NCQA).

² CAHPS® is a registered trademark of the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ).

³ The source for data contacted in this publication is Quality Compass®2010 and is used with the permission of the National Committee for Quality Assurance (NCQA). Any analysis, interpretation, or conclusion based on these data is solely that of the authors, and NCQA specifically disclaims responsibility for any such analysis, interpretation, or conclusion. Quality Compass is a registered trademark of NCQA.

pressure points: lifesaving truths about hypertension



blood pressure: what's your number?

Blood pressure monitoring should begin at age 18. At the minimum, if your blood pressure is normal, you should have it checked every couple of years. Depending on your family and medical history, your doctor may advise more frequent testing.

Your blood pressure is lower than 120/80.

Congratulations—this is a healthy measurement. Blood pressure can change through the years, so keep getting yours checked.

Your blood pressure is between 120/80 and 139/89.

This is considered prehypertensive. Without making changes to reduce blood pressure, you will develop hypertension.

Your blood pressure is 140/90 or higher. You have high blood pressure—even if just one of your numbers is in this range. Your doctor will prescribe healthy lifestyle changes and, if your blood pressure remains high, medication. To maintain a healthy blood pressure, you'll also need to quit smoking; follow a nutritious, low-sodium diet; cut back on alcohol; exercise more; and maintain a healthy weight.

If you have high blood pressure, you may think it's the result of stress or the normal aging process. The truth is, no one really knows what causes hypertension, yet many myths such as these continue to circulate about the disease.

Part of the confusion stems from the fact that high blood pressure—or hypertension—is unlike many short-term illnesses. For example, it has no signs or symptoms, yet it leads to death and disability. It is also treatable and sometimes preventable—but it cannot be cured.

Take action when diagnosed

Because hypertension does not make you feel sick, “accepting that you have it—and following through with proper treatment—requires a great deal of trust and cooperation between you and your doctor,” says Patrice Desvigne-Nickens, M.D., medical officer with the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute. You may be shocked to learn that you have it. Nevertheless, it's important to take action right away.

Get the facts

Over time, high blood pressure causes serious damage to vital organs inside the body—all without telltale signs. “It prematurely ages arteries, which causes problems with the heart, brain, kidneys, eyes, and limbs—all leading to heart attack, stroke, kidney failure, and blindness,” says Desvigne-Nickens.

Knowledge is the key to conquering hypertension. Here are the truths behind these widely believed myths about this disease.

- Stress and an aggressive personality do not cause high blood pressure. Despite the name hypertension, there is no link between the disease and anxiety or personality. If you cope with daily stress by smoking, drinking alcohol, or eating junk food, however, you will increase your risk of developing the disorder.

- High blood pressure is not a normal part of aging. The likelihood of developing high blood pressure does increase with age. But high blood pressure is not something older adults must accept or live with. No matter your age, it can be controlled.

- Women get high blood pressure as often as men. Of the approximately 73 million adults who have high blood pressure, nearly half are women. After menopause, a woman's risk of developing hypertension is actually higher than for a man her age. In some women, pregnancy or taking birth control pills can make blood pressure rise.

- Even a healthy lifestyle can't always prevent high blood pressure. Adopting a healthy lifestyle is always a good idea—but high blood pressure can strike anyone, at any age.

- Still, making healthy choices every day—such as exercising daily, eating a balanced diet, managing stress, and avoiding alcohol and tobacco—is a winning strategy. Doing so reduces your risk of developing hypertension and lowers your chance of developing many other serious diseases. ☺

we want to hear from you!

We value your feedback and suggestions. How can we improve Arise Health Plan's services, the *Healthy View* newsletter, or our website? If you have questions, comments, or suggestions, please e-mail Jeanne Wittig, Director of Marketing, at jeanne.wittig@arisehealthplan.com.

Visit the Arise Health Plan website today!



ditch depression to become healthier

You know that diseases like arthritis and diabetes can have a negative impact on health. Yet you may not realize that another disease—depression—is just as serious.

But a new report in *The Lancet* journal suggests that depression may hurt health more than angina, arthritis, asthma, or diabetes. Researchers found that people with depression had the lowest health scores based on factors like pain, sleep, energy, and mood. More than 245,000 people from 60 countries participated in the study.

The good news is that depression is highly treatable. Recognizing depression and seeking treatment will improve your mental and physical health.

Are you depressed?

Knowing the signs of depression can help you identify it early on so it doesn't become worse. Symptoms include:

- Loss of interest in activities
- A significant weight loss or weight gain, such as a change of more than 5 percent in a month
- A change in sleep habits
- Loss of energy

- Feeling sad, worthless, or guilty
- Difficulty concentrating

Risk factors

As many as 1 in 10 older adults has depression. Women are especially at risk. So are those who:

- Have a chronic disease, such as arthritis or diabetes
- Have experienced a stressful life event, such as the death of a loved one
- Spend a lot of time alone
- Had depression earlier in life

There is no single cause of depression. Some medicines can trigger side effects that can contribute to depression.

Where to find help

If you have several symptoms for more than two weeks, talk with your doctor. Counseling and antidepressant medicines are two treatment options. Exercise has also been shown to ease depression.

Many older people with depression—especially men—don't get treated. But depression shouldn't be ignored. With treatment, depression symptoms can diminish, leading to an improved quality of life. ☺

have a hearing or speech impairment?

Arise Health Plan strives to be easily accessible to all of our members. TTY/TDD users may contact Arise Health Plan at **920-347-9390** (local) or **1-888-332-0144** (toll free).

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is poor balance bringing you down?

Stepping On is a falls prevention program for people ages 60 and up who have fallen or have a fear of falling. It offers:

- Mutual support
- Information about the many aspects of falls prevention
- An introduction to simple exercises designed to improve your balance
- Strategies you need to prevent falls

This program is the work of Dr. Lindy Clemson of Sydney, Australia, whose research has found that participants in this falls prevention program have a 31 percent reduced rate of falls.

Local leaders along with medical experts will offer the workshop. Classes meet 2 hours per week for 7 weeks.

Location: Aging & Disability Resource Center of Brown County, 300 South Adams Street, Green Bay

Dates: Wednesdays, January 18 to February 29, 2012

Time: 9 to 11 a.m.

Enrollment is limited to Brown County residents and pre-registration is required. A \$10 fee includes all learning materials. To register, call **920-448-4314** during the hours of 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday. Let them know when you call if you need any special accommodations for disabilities.



workshop: living well with chronic conditions

Are you an adult with an ongoing health condition? At a Living Well with Chronic Conditions Workshop, you'll get the support you need to:

- Find practical ways to deal with pain and fatigue
- Learn and practice techniques to break the symptom cycle
- Have better nutrition and exercise choices
- Understand how to evaluate new treatment choices
- Learn better ways to talk with your doctor and family about your health

Call the Aging & Disability Resource Center of Brown County at **920-448-4300** to learn more or register for a workshop. Enrollment is limited to Brown County residents. Cost is \$20 and includes the book "Living Healthy Life with Chronic Conditions."

Upcoming Living Well 6-Week Workshop

Place: Bellevue Retirement Community, 1660 Hoffman Rd., Green Bay

Dates: Tuesdays, January 17 to February 21, 2012

Time: 10:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. (free lunch provided courtesy of Bellevue Retirement Community)

Put life back in your life! Register today for this Living Well with Chronic Conditions Workshop by calling **920-448-4300**.