

HealthConnection

GOOD NEIGHBOR PHARMACY

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THIS MONTH'S Featured Article

SUFFERING FROM ALLERGIES?

FIGHT BACK

PG. 3



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Senior Health Update

Antihistamines: What You Should Know

Antihistamines are typically separated into sedating and non-sedating forms, based on their central-nervous-system effects. Non-sedating antihistamines being less likely to cross the blood-brain barrier.

Antihistamines are some of the most commonly used drugs in medicine, and most are available in multiple forms, both by prescription and in over-the-counter products, alone or combined with other medications. Common uses include short-term treatment of symptoms of the common cold, hay fever, motion sickness, nausea, vertigo, cough, rash or hives, itching and anaphylaxis (an acute allergic reaction

to an antigen, such as a bee sting). Sedating antihistamines are sometimes also used as mild sleeping aids. Certain antihistamines, even over-the-counter ones, should not be used in the elderly. Check with your doctor or pharmacist before taking them.

Many antihistamines are also available in topical forms, as creams, nasal sprays and eye drops for local use in alleviating allergic symptoms. Non-sedating antihistamines are typically used in extended or long-term treatment of allergic disorders, including hay fever, sinusitis and chronic rash or hives.

Sources: U.S. National Library of Medicine

Healthy Eating Eat with the Seasons

Eating foods when nature produces them is what people the world over have done naturally through most of history, before mega-supermarkets dotted the landscape and processed foods became common.

Seasonal eating means two things: building meals around foods that have just been harvested at their peak and adjusting your diet to meet the particular health challenges of winter, spring, summer and fall. While it may seem like a luxury to have any food we want, anytime we want it, eating foods in season offers many benefits.

For starters, it connects us to the calendar and often to one another, reminding us of simple joys — apple picking on a clear autumn day or slicing a juicy red tomato in the heat of summer. Also, produce picked and eaten at its peak generally has more vitamins, minerals and antioxidants than foods harvested before they're ripe and then shipped long distances. Eating with the seasons is good for your taste buds and your health.

—Source: Cleveland Clinic





Suffering from Allergies This Spring? Fight Back

Allergies are the 6th leading cause of chronic illness in the U.S., with an annual cost in excess of \$18 billion. More than 50 million Americans suffer from allergies each year.

Allergies are an overreaction of the immune system to substances that generally do not affect other individuals. These substances, or allergens, can cause sneezing, coughing and itching. Allergic reactions range from merely bothersome to life-threatening. Some allergies are seasonal, such as hay fever. Allergies have also been associated with chronic conditions such as sinusitis and asthma.

Who's at Risk?

Anyone may have or may develop an allergy at any age — from a baby born with an allergy to cow's milk, to a child who gets poison ivy, to a senior citizen who develops hives after taking a new medication.

Can It Be Prevented?

Allergies can generally not be prevented, but allergic reactions can be. Once a person knows they are allergic to a certain substance, they can avoid contact with the allergen. Strategies for doing this include being in an air-conditioned environment during peak hay-fever season, avoiding certain foods and eliminating dust mites and animal dander from the home as much as possible. They can also control the allergy by reducing or eliminating the symptoms. Strategies include taking medication to counteract reactions or minimize symptoms and being immunized with allergy-injection therapy.

The Bottom Line

- The most common allergic diseases include: hay fever, asthma, conjunctivitis, hives, eczema, dermatitis and sinusitis.
- Food allergies are most prevalent in young children and are frequently outgrown.
- Latex allergies are a reaction to the proteins in latex rubber, a substance used in gloves, condoms and other products.
- Bees, hornets, wasps, yellow jackets and fire ants can cause insect-sting allergies.
- Allergies to drugs, such as penicillin, can affect any tissue or organ in the body.

Anaphylaxis is the most severe allergic reaction. Symptoms include flush; tingling of the palms of the hands, soles of the feet or lips; light-headedness; and chest-tightness. If not treated, these can progress into seizures, cardiac arrhythmia, shock and respiratory distress. Anaphylaxis can result in death. Food, latex, insect-sting and drug allergies can all result in anaphylaxis. If you have a known serious allergy, talk with your doctor about whether you should carry an epinephrine injection pen with you at all times. Seek immediate medical help if you experience any symptoms of anaphylaxis.

Sources: U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

To Do List

Handwashing: A Family Activity

For kids, washing hands can be a fun activity. It is simple enough for even very young children to understand. Handwashing gives children and adults a chance to take an active role in their own health. Once kids learn how to properly wash their hands, they can — and often do — show their siblings and encourage them to wash their hands, too. Parents can help keep the family healthy by:

- Teaching their kids good handwashing technique
- Reminding their kids to wash their hands
- Washing their own hands with their kids

Handwashing education:

- Reduces the number of people who get sick with diarrhea by 31 percent
- Reduces diarrheal illness in people with weakened immune systems by 58 percent
- Reduces respiratory illnesses, such as colds, in the general population by 21 percent

In short, handwashing is one of the best ways to avoid getting sick and spreading illness to others.

—Source: U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention



What's Happening at the Pharmacy?

Understanding Asthma Medications

Asthma is a long-term disease that has no cure. The goal of asthma treatment is to control the disease. Good asthma control will:

- Prevent chronic and troublesome symptoms, such as coughing and shortness of breath
- Reduce your need for quick relief medicines
- Help you maintain good lung function
- Let you maintain your normal activity level and sleep through the night
- Prevent asthma attacks that could result in an emergency-room visit or hospital stay

Asthma is treated with two types of medicines: long-term control and quick-relief medicines. Long-term control medicines help reduce airway inflammation and prevent asthma symptoms. Quick-relief, or “rescue” medicines relieve asthma symptoms that may flare up.

Your initial treatment will depend on the severity of your asthma. Follow-up asthma treatment will depend on how well your asthma action plan is controlling your symptoms and preventing asthma attacks.

Talk with your doctor about the best medications for your asthma, and talk with your doctor or pharmacist about any questions you may have about your medications or how to take them.

—Source: National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute



Kids' Corner

Why Do We Sleep?

Sleep helps your body and brain develop and grow. Your brain needs sleep so you can:

- Remember what you learn
- Pay attention and concentrate
- Solve problems and think of new ideas

Your body needs sleep so your:

- Muscles, bones and skin can grow and fix injuries
- Body can stay healthy and fight sickness

You spend the day running on the playground, learning at school and eating meals — and at night your body and brain get to rest, right? Wrong! In fact, while you are off in dreamland, your body and brain are very busy getting ready for a new day. That is why it is so important to give yourself time to sleep.

Kids ages 5 to 12 need 10 to 11 hours of sleep each night. When you get enough sleep you can:

- Pay better attention in school
- Be creative and think of new ideas
- Be in a good mood
- Get along with friends and family
- Solve problems better

Without enough sleep you can:

- Forget what you learned
- Have trouble making good choices
- Be grumpy and in a bad mood
- Have trouble playing games and sports
- Be less patient with brothers, sisters and friends
- Have trouble listening to parents and teachers

To get better sleep, make sure your bedroom is cool, quiet and dark. Ask your parents to help with that. Try to go to bed at the same time every night. Your body gets used to a schedule and will be ready to sleep. Exercise during the day. And have a relaxing bedtime routine, such as a warm bath or shower, reading or listening to quiet music. Your body will know it's time to get ready to sleep.

—Source: National Sleep Foundation



Health Q&A

How Should I Treat an Ingrown Toenail?

Q: I have an ingrown toenail that has become quite painful. Can I treat it myself, or do I need to see a doctor?

A: You can treat most ingrown toenails at home. Here's how:

- Soak your feet in warm water. Do this for 15 to 20 minutes three to four times a day. Soaking reduces swelling and relieves tenderness.
- Place cotton or dental floss under your toenail. After each soaking, put fresh bits of cotton or waxed dental floss under the ingrown edge. This will help the nail grow above the skin edge.
- Apply antibiotic cream. Put antibiotic ointment on the tender area and bandage the toe.

- Choose sensible footwear. Consider wearing open-toed shoes or sandals until your toe feels better.
- Take pain relievers. Over-the-counter pain relievers such as acetaminophen (Tylenol, others), ibuprofen (Advil, Motrin IB, others) and naproxen sodium (Aleve) may help ease the toe pain.

If home remedies don't help, your doctor may recommend using topical or oral antibiotics, especially if the toe is infected or at risk of becoming infected. She may also perform a procedure in the office to either lift the nail away from the skin or to partially remove the nail.

—Source: Mayo Clinic



Did You Know?

Protect Your Knees While Gardening

Many gardening tasks require knee strength and stability, whether kneeling, sitting, standing or walking. The best way to protect knees from the stress and strain is to condition them with strengthening exercises and stretching.

The muscles that protect the knees are the quadriceps (front of the thighs) and the hamstrings (back of the thighs). To ease strain on the knees, practice strengthening exercises regularly and stretch before starting gardening activities. Your doctor should recommend specific exercises and stretches that are appropriate for you.

Squatting can put unnecessary strain on the knees if done incorrectly or for long periods of time. When squatting, keep feet flat with weight evenly distributed. Squatting with heels off the ground can potentially damage knee ligaments. Preferred work positions would be having one knee on the ground, working on hands and knees using a kneeling pad or sitting on a chair or stool. If you use a chair or stool, place it close to the area where you are working and use long-handled tools to avoid straining the upper body. If a kneeling pad is inconvenient to carry, try using strap-on knee pads.

—Source: Virginia State University

Do you have more questions?

Our website has the answers.

Visit www.MyGNP.com

for more information.





Diabetes and Women Living with Diabetes During Menopause

Menopause can make it more difficult to keep your diabetes under control. But there are things you can do to help.

- **Make healthy lifestyle choices.**

Eating healthy foods and exercising regularly are the basics of your diabetes treatment plan. Focusing on these two things can help you feel your best after menopause, too.

- **Measure your blood sugar frequently.**

You may need to check your blood-sugar level more often than usual during the day, and occasionally during the night. Keep a log of your blood-sugar readings and symptoms. Your doctor may use the details to adjust your diabetes treatment plan as needed.

- **Ask your doctor about adjusting your diabetes medications.** During the menopause transition, your blood-sugar levels may increase or decrease and your doctor may want to change your dosage or your medication.

Diabetes and menopause are a twin challenge. Working closely with your doctor, you can make this transition easier while keeping your diabetes in check.

—Source: Mayo Clinic

Get Fit

Use a Pedometer for Fitness Motivation

Walking is a great way to help you lose weight, keep it off and improve your health. You can use a pedometer to measure how many steps you take; get feedback about your activity level; and plan, track and reach your physical goals.

How to wear your pedometer:

- Clip it to your clothing or place it in a pocket or a bag that you carry or wear.
- Use the leash and clip to keep from dropping or losing your pedometer.
- Keep the pedometer dry.

Pedometers do not measure:

- Walking for less than 10 steps or 10 seconds at a time.
- Cycling, swimming, some dancing, basketball and tennis.

Getting started:

- Wear your pedometer every day for 1 week.
- An electronic pedometer will count your steps in a 24-hour period beginning and ending at midnight.

- Record your steps on a daily food and physical activity diary.
- At the end of one week, add up your daily steps. Determine your daily average by dividing the total steps by the number of days.

Ways to add walking to your lifestyle:

- Take a 10-minute walk whenever you can.
- Take the stairs (up or down) instead of the elevator.
- Take 10-minute walks during lunch and breaks at work.
- Park farther away and walk.
- Get off the bus one stop early and walk the rest of the way.
- Step in place while watching television.
- Walk your dog (or borrow a friend's dog).
- Mow your lawn with a push mower or do other yard work.
- For short distances, walk instead of driving your car.

—Source: U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs' "Move!" Program



Diabetes in the News

Do You Know Your Diabetes Facts?

If you have recently been diagnosed with diabetes, know that you are definitely not alone.

- Approximately 29.1 million people, or 9.3 percent of the U.S. population, have diabetes, including 8.1 million people who have diabetes but have not yet been diagnosed.
- Diabetes impacts people in all social, economic and ethnic backgrounds.
- Type 1 diabetes accounts for about 5 percent of all diagnosed cases of diabetes, and currently affects approximately 1.5 million people in the U.S.

- Among people 20 years or older, 1.7 million are newly diagnosed with diabetes annually. Approximately 4,657 new cases of diabetes are diagnosed each day.

Stay informed when it comes to your health. Talk with your doctor about being tested for diabetes at your next physical.

—Source: Diabetes Research Institute Foundation

Living with Diabetes How Can Diabetes Hurt My Feet?

High blood glucose from diabetes causes two problems that can hurt your feet:

- **Nerve damage.** With damaged nerves, you might not feel pain, heat or cold in your legs and feet. A sore or cut on your foot may get worse because you do not know it is there. This lack of feeling is caused by nerve damage, also called diabetic neuropathy. Nerve damage can lead to a sore or an infection.
- **Poor blood flow.** The second problem happens when not enough blood flows to your legs and feet. Poor blood flow makes it hard for a sore or infection to heal. This problem is called peripheral vascular disease. Smoking when you have diabetes makes blood-flow problems worse.

If you have diabetes, be sure to talk with your healthcare team about how to avoid these issues or how to treat them if you are noticing symptoms.

—Source: National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases



Your Diet

Be a Sugar Sleuth

You can use the Nutrition Facts label on foods to guide you in looking for sugars and carbohydrates, both of which are important to consider in meal planning if you have diabetes.

Note that foods labeled as sugar-free, no sugar added, reduced sugar and dietetic may still contain carbohydrate. Sugar is only one type of carbohydrate

that affects blood-glucose levels. To get the complete amount of carbohydrate, look at the Nutrition Facts panel.

Sugar is listed under the Total Carbohydrate on the Nutrition Facts panel. Keep in mind that it includes both added sugars and naturally occurring sugars, such as the natural sugar in raisins.

—Source: American Diabetes Association



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Fight Back Against Seasonal Allergies

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