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Medical and Health Directory

August 2017
Finding the best solution for you

Years ago the emergency room was your only option when you needed immediate care, but today’s health care market is home to a number of flourishing alternative options. To find the right solution for your situation, consider the three C’s: care, convenience and cost.

• Care: Evaluate the severity of your symptoms and identify what services you need. An emergency issue should always be treated at the ER, but if the problem is not life- or limb-threatening, it can be treated somewhere else.

• Convenience: It’s a good idea to know what health care facilities are near you, as well as their hours of operation.

• Cost: Not every service will be covered by your insurance, so it’s important to understand your coverage area as well as your pre-authorization requirements.

Finding the best health care option for you

If you face a serious health issue, you should head to the emergency room immediately. However, if the issue merits immediate care but is not life- or limb-threatening, the Urgent Care Association of America offers this quick guide to your on-demand health care options.

Urgent care centers

Urgent care centers are equipped to handle illnesses and injuries that require X-rays, intravenous fluids and/or on-site lab tests. With an emphasis on convenience, urgent care offers short wait times – often 30 minutes or less compared to four hours in the emergency room – and affordable care, made even more so because it is covered by most insurance providers.

Retail clinics

Otherwise known as walk-in clinics, retail clinics are commonly found in supermarkets or pharmacies and specialize in treating less serious conditions than urgent care centers or emergency rooms. If you have a minor illness or you need preventative care, like a vaccination, then a retail clinic is a logical stop for you.

Telemedicine

A product of the digital age, telemedicine connects patients with providers via virtual visits, resulting in lower costs and decreased travel time. Telemedicine services are an attractive option if you live in a rural community or for times when the treatment you require does not extend beyond a consultation. They are also a handy tool for follow-up appointments that do not require an in-person visit.

On-site clinics

Finally, you may consider an on-site clinic. This option is now offered by many employers as a way of providing increased health care access to their employees. Similar to retail clinics, an on-site clinic specializes in offering wellness and preventative services – though the specific services offered by each clinic may vary.

You’ve read all the care options above and you have a pretty good idea of the best solution for any care need. Match that need with the right treatment option above and you’ll receive the same quality care without the long wait and hefty bill of that emergency room visit.

To find an urgent care center near you, visit www.whereisurgentcare.com.
Cataract surgery has an emotional benefit

(BPT) – You may know that cataracts can interfere with your ability to see clearly, but might be unaware of their impact on your emotions. Alcon, the global leader in eye care, conducted a survey of about 1,300 people age 60 and older who have undergone cataract surgery and found that almost 60 percent of respondents said cataracts made them feel annoyed, frustrated or old. Also, many respondents said that the condition makes some daily activities harder.

If cataracts are impacting your ability to perform your usual day-to-day activities, and clouding the richness and detail of life, there’s good news. Cataract surgery is common, effective and not only can improve your vision, but many patients report emotional benefits and some positive impact on their lifestyles. What’s more, 93 percent of those surveyed say they would recommend cataract surgery to someone considering the procedure.

“Cataracts impair more than just vision, they can interfere with a patient’s lifestyle and emotions,” says Dr. Lawrence Woodard, ophthalmologist and medical director of Omni Eye Services of Atlanta, Georgia. “Surgery can make a significant difference, allowing people to see more clearly and get back to doing the things they love. Many of my post-surgery patients report how happy they are to get back to their life.”

Cataract Facts

Cataracts, or clouding that occurs in the eye’s naturally clear lens, are one of the most common types of eye conditions associated with aging and one of the leading causes of age-related vision impairment in the U.S., according to the National Eye Institute (NEI). They can’t be prevented and occur naturally over time, causing the clear lens in your eye to become cloudy from the buildup of proteins. As the lens becomes cloudier, less light can pass through it into your eye and your vision becomes blurred. People with cataracts may also have trouble seeing at night, or experience sensitivity to light and glare. They may see “halos” around lights, have double vision, or feel that colors look faded.

Cataracts affect more than 24.4 million Americans age 40 and older, according to Prevent Blindness America. By 2050, that number will more than double to about 50 million, the NEI projects. While nearly everyone who lives long enough will eventually develop cataracts to some extent, certain groups are at greater risk. In fact, according to a study by the NEI, African Americans are twice as likely to develop early onset cataracts due to certain medical conditions, such as diabetes. Additionally, cataracts are the leading cause of visual impairment among Hispanics, according to a study by University of Arizona researchers.

Cataracts and Lifestyle

Beyond the common symptoms of cataracts, many people affected also have difficulty with some day-to-day activities. Nearly two-in-three respondents (64 percent) report that cataracts impacted their lives before surgery, such as making it difficult to work, see colors, drive and watch TV and movies. For many, undergoing surgery brought into focus the true impact cataracts had on their lives. Nearly 40 percent of respondents say they didn’t realize just how much they were missing, or didn’t truly realize the emotional impacts of cataracts until after they had surgery. For example, more than 65 percent of people surveyed reported being surprised by the brightness and vividness of colors following surgery.

“I can see things that I couldn’t see before,” says John Brown (name changed to protect patient privacy), who underwent cataract surgery. “I can appreciate things I couldn’t see before,” says Woodard. “By treating both conditions, they could potentially find themselves free of the glasses for distance they’ve worn their whole lives. If you’re considering cataract surgery, it’s important to talk to your eye doctor to decide what treatment option is best for you.”

Visit MyCataracts.com or call 1-844-MYCATARACT (1-844-692-2827) to learn more about cataracts and treatment options.

Dr. Woodard is a paid consultant for Alcon.

Patient “John Brown” received modest compensation from Alcon for talking about his actual experience.
Alzheimer’s disease is one of the most prevalent types of dementia in the world, affecting an estimated 35.6 million people all over the globe, and that number is expected to double in 20 years. The Alzheimer’s Foundation of America estimates that as many as 5.1 million Americans may be living with Alzheimer’s disease. Australian company Actinogen Medical says Alzheimer’s is Australia’s second biggest killer. According to a 2012 study commissioned by the Alzheimer’s Society of Canada, 747,000 Canadians were living with cognitive impairment, which included, but was not limited to, dementia.

People with Alzheimer’s disease and other types of dementia may experience a decline in mental abilities severe enough to reduce their ability to perform everyday activities. Some of the cognitive functions that may be impaired include memory, communication and language, ability to pay attention, reasoning and judgement, emotional control, and social behavior.

There is no cure for Alzheimer’s disease, nor is there an effective long-term way to prevent potential mental decline. However, that has not stopped scores of researchers and medical teams that continue to study the efficacy of different drugs and therapies. The following are some of the more promising options in the works.

**LEUKINE**

A safety trial on the drug Leukine already is underway at the Colorado University Anschutz Medical Campus.

“Leukine is effective in removing the plaque or amyloid along the outside of nerve cells in the brain of mice. Researchers do not know the exact mechanism for removal, but the drug is working and working quickly. Leukine also may be helping the brain repair itself. The Alzheimer’s Association has donated $1 million toward financing the costs of the next phase of this trial.”

**INSULIN**

Neurologists at Rush University Medical Center are testing a type of insulin that is inhaled through a nasal spray to see if it improves cognition and memory function in people with mild cognitive impairment.

“There is growing evidence that insulin carries out multiple functions in the brain and that poor regulation of insulin may contribute to the development of Alzheimer’s disease,” said Dr. Huntington Potter, the director of Alzheimer’s research at the university. “That means it doesn’t have the side effects that so many other Alzheimer’s drugs have had, which are swelling in the brain and bleeding into the brain.”

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(BPT) – When you need to fix your car, learn the latest tech or finish a major home improvement, what do you do? You turn to the experts, those with in-depth knowledge on how to accomplish these tasks in the most efficient and effective way. And when you’re looking to improve your overall health by focusing on improving your diet, it’s also time to turn to the experts.

Nutritionists and registered dietitians are the thought leaders when it comes to improving your eating habits. So to learn from the professionals, we asked Registered Dietitian and nutritionist Dawn Jackson Blatner to offer her tips on how you can improve your nutrition and start living a healthier life today. She offers this advice:

• **Get organized.** Your environment can work for you or against you. Having an organized refrigerator can be the key to success on the journey to weight loss. Keep produce where it is easily visible and accessible. Storing foods like hard-boiled eggs, chicken breast and roasted vegetables at eye-level can really help to make smarter meal choices. Clear food containers will also help to keep already prepared meals top of mind and lessen food waste, which means saving money in the long run.

• **Practice superfood swaps.** Don’t cut out food cravings – embrace them! Eat the flavors that you crave but swap out overly processed stuff for fresh, wholesome ingredients. Avoid products with chemicals, refined sugars and flours, artificial flavors and preservatives and it will naturally lead to a healthier lifestyle. When you fill the house with healthier foods, you’ll automatically eat smarter when hunger strikes.

• **Eat your “green base.”** It can be difficult to make the right nutrition choices all the time. So when you are eating more decadent food like fried chicken, Chinese or pizza, put it on a base of leafy greens like spinach, spring mix or kale. That way you will get to eat what you want, but you’ll fill up more on your superfood greens and eat less of the high-calorie foods.

• **Set the table.** One of the simplest ways to start naturally eating less and enjoying food more is to eat all meals and snacks at the table. When you put food on a plate, eat at a table and sit in a chair you’ll eat much less than if you were eating while working on the computer, watching TV, standing in the fridge or driving.

• **Build a better breakfast.** A healthy diet starts with a nutritious breakfast. Think whole foods instead of pre-packaged foods high in calories and packed with preservatives. Eggland’s Best eggs contain double the omega-3s and more than double the vitamin B12 compared to ordinary eggs, which can be perfect for maintaining heart health. They also contain 25 percent less saturated fat, six times more vitamin D and 10 times the vitamin E of ordinary eggs. Plus, they taste great. Get your day started with this amazing recipe and you’ll be happier and healthier all day long.

**Spinach, Grape Tomato and Cheddar Frittata**

**Ingredients**
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 6 ounces baby spinach
- 1 cup grape tomatoes, sliced in half
- 8 Eggland’s Best eggs (large)
- 1/2 cup shredded cheddar cheese
- salt & pepper to taste

**Directions**
Preheat oven to 350 F.
Whisk eggs and milk together until smooth.
Heat cast iron or oven-safe skillet over medium-high heat.
Add olive oil and saute spinach until wilted and then add half of the grape tomatoes.
Pour eggs slowly into pan. Sprinkle cheese over eggs and spread remaining grape tomatoes evenly over the egg mixture.

Season with salt and pepper. Place skillet to oven and bake for 20-30 minutes or until eggs are cooked through and golden brown.
Remove skillet from oven and let rest for a few minutes.
Cut into wedges and serve warm.

To find more delicious recipes, tips and tricks to celebrate 25 years of a more nutritious egg, sign up for the EB newsletter, http://www.egglandsbest.com/newsletter/.
Simple ways to add physical fitness to your daily routine

(BPT) – Being resourceful with your daily routine can deliver big payoffs when it comes to increasing your activity level. Incorporating physical fitness into your everyday activities can save you time and also burn calories and help reduce stress.

Here are some tips to get moving throughout the day:

• Turn chores into exercise. Mow the lawn or do some gardening. The physical benefit is good for your health, plus gardening can enhance your mood, and the food you grow offers great nutritional benefits.
• Try bicycling to run errands. Turn chores into exercise.

Leave the car in the garage and bring your bike for a quick run to the grocery store.
• Turn household cleaning into a mini workout. “For example, mopping floors gives your shoulders and back a workout, and can burn more than 100 calories in just 30 minutes,” Johnson says.

Find fitness opportunities with friends.
• Instead of going out for dinner or drinks with friends, do something physical, like taking a walk, going for a bike ride or engaging in a physical activity like tennis or bowling.
• Take your dog to the park, or play with them in your own backyard. A game of fetch is not only great exercise for your furry friend – it works your muscles, too.
• Join or start a sports team with your friends. Whether it’s softball, basketball or soccer, taking part in a sport you enjoy will improve both your physical and mental well-being.

Stay curious and improve upon what you're already doing.
• Do you already walk daily? Try walking or choosing a challenging route with hills.
• Take up a new summer outdoor sport, such as canoeing, paddle boarding or inline skating.
• If there’s a cause you feel passionate about, try training and participating in a run or walk to raise funds.

How to get a handle on work-related stress issues

Work-related stress is an all too common problem in workplaces across the globe. According to the American Institute of Stress, 80 percent of workers report feeling stress on the job. Perhaps most troubling, nearly half of those people admit they need help in learning how to manage their stress.

The American Psychological Association notes that stressful work environments can contribute to a host of physical problems, including headache, sleep disturbances and short temper. Chronic stress can produce more serious consequences such as high blood pressure while also weakening sufferers’ immune systems. Stress at the workplace also can make it difficult to concentrate, which in turn can compromise workers’ abilities to perform at the peak of their abilities. That supports the notion that stress is a significant issue for many professionals coping with workplace stress. Employers can help workers develop their ability to focus purposefully on a single activity. That improved focus may help workers better navigate hectic working environments without succumbing to the stress such environments can produce.

Work-related stress is a significant issue for many professionals. But working in tandem with their employers can help professionals effectively cope with that stress.

Simple and natural ways to lower blood pressure

High blood pressure is a big problem. According to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, roughly one in three adults in the United States has high blood pressure. In Canada in 2014, slightly less than 18 percent of Canadians ages 12 and older reported being diagnosed with high blood pressure.

While such figures might be frightening, Johns Hopkins Medicine notes that there are some simple and natural ways for people to lower their high blood pressure.

• Opt for heart-healthy foods. Instead of foods that are high in sodium, eat a diet that is rich in whole grains, fruits, vegetables, and lean proteins. Check labels before buying processed foods at the grocery store, as many such foods are high in sodium.

  • Look for foods that contain probiotics. Johns Hopkins Medicine notes that studies have linked foods that contain probiotics to healthy blood pressure. Probiotics are consumable live bacteria, and while studies regarding the relationship between probiotics and blood pressure are ongoing, researchers believe probiotics may produce chemicals that, when absorbed in the blood stream, may activate receptors in the blood vessels to lower blood pressure.
  • Lose weight. People with high blood pressure who are carrying a few extra pounds should know that research indicates extra weight can cause injury to the heart. Dropping those pounds, especially through physical activity that can boost heart health, can help men and women lower their blood pressure.
Smoking has been linked to a number of negative side effects, including raising smokers’ risk of cancer and cardiovascular disease. Quitting smoking can greatly reduce the likelihood of both of those outcomes, but the additional benefits of kicking tobacco to the curb may surprise smokers.

According to the American Lung Association, smokers’ heart rates drop to normal levels within 20 minutes of quitting smoking.

The Office of the U.S. Surgeon General says quitting smoking is the single most important step smokers can take to improve the length and quality of their lives.

- **Quitting benefits blood pressure.** Smokers’ blood pressure levels can return to normal levels within two hours of quitting. Smokers may also notice their fingers and toes starting to feel warm shortly after they quit. That sensation occurs because quitting smoking also improves circulation.

- **Quitting decreases levels of carbon monoxide in the body.** When smoked, lit cigarettes release carbon monoxide, which compromises smokers’ ability to absorb oxygen into the bloodstream. That makes it difficult for red blood cells to carry oxygen. Body tissue that does not receive an adequate supply of oxygen can cease to function. But according to the American Heart Association, after 12 hours of smoke-free living, the carbon monoxide levels in smokers’ blood return to normal.

- **Quitting reduces risk of stroke.** Stroke is another of the myriad of cardiovascular diseases that has a connection to smoking. According to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, stroke occurs when the blood supply to the brain is blocked or when blood vessels in the brain burst and cause brain tissue to die. Smoking increases the buildup of plaque in blood vessels, which can block blood from getting to the brain. Smoking also causes blood vessels to thicken and narrow, again compromising the body’s ability to get blood to the brain. Within five to 15 years of quitting smoking, smokers’ risk of having a stroke is the same as that of nonsmokers.

- **Quitting can make it easier to exercise.** Many smokers experience shortness of breath, which can make it difficult to commit to the kind of exercise that promotes short- and long-term health. Smoking damages the cilia, which are tiny structures that push mucus out of the lungs. Cilia damaged by smoking begin to repair within one month of quitting smoking, resulting in fewer coughing fits and instances of shortness of breath.

Smokers interested in quitting can visit www.smokefree.gov for more information and support.

The Community Guidance Center is a private, non-profit outpatient mental health clinic. Its establishment on August 1, 1959, was a direct result of the efforts of the Indiana County Mental Health Association members. The Community Guidance Center’s purpose is to promote mental health and to provide outpatient mental health diagnostic treatment and supported services to adults and children in Indiana County and the surrounding counties in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

On January 1, 2014, Community Guidance Center completed a merger with Clearfield/Jefferson Community Mental Health Center. Through this merger, we now have offices in DuBois and Clearfield, where we offer a wide range of services including outpatient mental health services, outpatient drug and alcohol services, certified recovery specialist, psychiatric rehabilitation, mobile psychiatric rehabilitation, family based, and parent/child interaction therapy.

The Community Guidance Center is dedicated to team treatment. Open communication among all providers with the involvement of the consumer and family members is at the core of our clinical philosophy. We work closely with numerous community agencies in the counties we serve and are involved in many joint programs to benefit consumers.

Our staff is fully trained in best practice models and recovery principles. In 2007, CGC began the Consumer Advisory Council. The council is comprised primarily of consumers and family members who work without employees to develop services and initiatives to meet the needs of our consumers. Among its accomplishments, the council has conducted consumer surveys, developed consumer education initiatives, and designed consumer-friendly forms and brochures.

Revenues are generated through service fees from medical assistance (including Health Choices, the medical assistance managed care program), Medicare, insurance companies, and employer service contracts. We maintain a charity care policy and sliding fee schedule to assist individuals without adequate insurance. A contract for services with the county mental health-mental retardation programs in Armstrong-Indiana and Clearfield-Jefferson counties also provides revenues.

In 2007, Genoa Healthcare opened an in-house pharmacy at the Indiana location. Genoa is able to fill all health care prescriptions for consumers on site, not just prescriptions issued by the Community Guidance Center. A Genoa representative is now available at our DuBois office as well to help coordinate filling prescriptions for consumers, as well as answering questions and addressing concerns that a consumer may have about their medications.

### Community Guidance Center

**Your Premiere Mental Health, Drug & Alcohol, Developmental Disabilities and Early Intervention Provider.**

**Services Provided:**
- Adult Partial Program
- Intensive Outpatient Program
- Outpatient Therapy
- Drug & Alcohol Outpatient Therapy
- Certified Recovery Specialist
- Psychiatric Rehabilitation
- Blended Case Management
- Child/Adolescent Partial Program
- Family Based Mental Health
- Developmental Disabilities
- Early Intervention Services

[www.thecgc.com](http://www.thecgc.com)
Digest the potential benefits of probiotics

Is “probiotic” a marketing buzzword designed to boost sales, or is there really something to the trend of adding probiotics to food or encouraging consumers to take probiotic supplements? It might be hard to envision bacteria and yeasts – which are often painted in a negative light and associated with various illnesses – being beneficial to health. However, it’s important to note that the body is full of bacteria, and some of it can be helpful, particularly to the digestive system.

While probiotics, or those helpful bacteria and yeasts, occur naturally in the body, they also can be found in a growing number of foods and supplements. Yogurt, with its “live and active cultures,” is one source of probiotics.

An panel of experts convened in October 2013 by the International Scientific Association for Probiotics and Prebiotics found that a growing body of evidence supports the notion that probiotics can promote a healthy balance of intestinal bacteria, which has been linked to a wide range of health benefits. Since the mid-1990s, when probiotics first appeared on many people’s radars, clinical studies have suggested that probiotic therapy can help treat several gastrointestinal issues, delay the development of allergies in children and treat and prevent vaginal and urinary infections in women.

The Harvard Medical School notes that two large reviews suggest that probiotics reduce antibiotic-associated diarrhea by 60 percent when compared with a placebo. Antibiotics can kill harmful and beneficial bacteria in the gut. Probiotics help restore the balance. This may prove helpful to those with various gastrointestinal diseases, such as Crohn’s disease and ulcerative colitis.

There’s also interest in how gastrointestinal health may be linked to mental health. According to data published in the Journal of Neurogastroenterology & Motility in an article titled, “Effect of Probiotics on Central Nervous System Functions in Animals and Humans: A Systematic Review,” a review of 15 human studies found supplementing with bifidobacterium and lactobacillus strains for one to two months can improve anxiety, depression, autism, obsessive-compulsive disorder, and memory.

Research is still being conducted on probiotics’ influence on heart health, vaginal health, inflammation, immune system function, weight loss, and even some skin disorders like eczema. Probiotics are generally considered safe, but their use should be discussed with a doctor prior to taking them.

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Health benefits of strawberries

(BPT) – Eight strawberries, a single serving, delivers on a surprising checklist of benefits for anyone looking to live a healthier lifestyle. Strawberries are much more than a sweet and delicious treat – they are a versatile fruit that’s great for your health. What better time than National Strawberry Month to share six health benefits of strawberries that may be new to you. Grab a handful of strawberries and read on, because eating right has never tasted so good.

- Strawberries help you stay sharp. A recent study in the Annals of Neurology suggests that eating strawberries more than twice a week appears to delay cognitive aging by up to two and a half years.
- Loaded with nutrients. Strawberries pack a lot of healthy properties into a small package. Each berry is full of beneficial antioxidants and nutrients, including potassium, folate and fiber.
- Sweet without the sugar. The sweet taste of strawberries makes them a natural dessert topping, and strawberries are also low in calories and sugar – one serving of eight strawberries contains just 45 calories!
- A delicious source of vitamin C. When you think vitamin C, think strawberries. One serving of eight strawberries has more vitamin C than an orange, topping out at 140 percent of the recommended daily value. It’s the perfect power-packed boost that you can add to any meal or cold remedy.
- A healthy choice for diabetics. The American Diabetes Association has identified berries, including strawberries, as a perfect component of a diabetes meal plan. This is because strawberries have a low glycemic index and are loaded with vitamins, antioxidants and dietary fiber.
- Cholesterol fighter. Lowering your cholesterol is a common goal for many Americans these days, and strawberries can help. In addition to being packed with antioxidants and fiber, strawberries are also rich in phytochemicals, which have been shown to reduce overall cholesterol levels. In addition, the potassium found in strawberries may help control blood pressure and fight strokes.

It’s easy to see why you should eat eight strawberries each day. Grab a handful today – your body and taste buds will be glad you did.

To learn more about the health benefits of strawberries, visit www.californiastrawberries.com.

SMP has all your medical supply needs

We are a locally owned home medical equipment and supply business with a complete line of supplies and four offices to serve you in DuBois, Clearfield, St. Marys and Kane.

We maintain the cutting edge of technology and latest products on the market for home care in the home. According to Patrick Straub, COO of St. Marys Pharmacy, “The health care business is evolving very quickly. Coverages and benefits are always subject to change... reacting to change, patient needs, and strong customer focus is key to our success.”

“The home medical business has seen great strides in new technology development and the transition from hospital to the home setting is more important than ever. This benefits the patient by allowing them to recover in a comfortable setting with the best technology and keeps overall health care costs down.”

SMP Home Medical offers most everything medical for the home. Products include stationary and portable oxygen systems, CPAP, BiLevel and all other respiratory services; home accessibility items like stair lifts, ramps, porch lifts, bed lifts, and vehicle lifts; and mobility aids like walkers, wheelchairs, and powered mobility. Other items include beds, canes, and crutches. SMP Home Medical also offers a vast array of supplies such as wound care, ostomy, compression hosiery, diabetic shoes and testing supplies. We have fully trained respiratory staff and certified fitters in orthotics, compression, Mastectomy, and other products. SMP accepts most major insurances including Highmark “DME Select” Provider, UPMC, Geisinger and most others.

“We consider ourselves a leader in our markets, and we have constantly expanded our broad range of products and services with greater brand choice. Our loyal customer base has great expectations for quality of customer service, and a 24/7 on-call emergency service is our trademark and testament to this level of service,” according to Straub.

“Recently, we’ve launched ‘Healthy at Home Care Services,’ a free service which allows our trained staff to evaluate your home setting for possible suggestive products which improve your quality of life and improve overall safety. Ask for yours today.”

Visit our DuBois Mall home medical showroom or call 371-2780, or stop in the Clearfield store at 302 S. Second St. The phone number is 768-3500. If you prefer, call us toll free at 800-876-3442 or visit us on the web at www.smprx.com. SMP Home Medical...”We’re Keeping You Healthy at Home.” Don’t take our word for it...just ask your doctor about us!
Five facts about strokes that could save your life

(BPT) – Chances are you know someone who has had a stroke. An estimated 795,000 people in the United States have a stroke each year, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Despite how common strokes are, there are a lot of widely believed misconceptions. Unfortunately, not knowing the facts can put a person at a bigger risk for experiencing a stroke themselves, or, not being able to help someone else who may be experiencing a stroke.

To help separate fact from fiction, the medical experts at Life Line Screening share the truth about the top misconceptions about stroke:

**Misconception:** Strokes only happen to older people
**Fact:** Research found 61 percent of strokes happen in people over the age of 65. That means 39 percent of strokes happen to younger people.

**Misconception:** Strokes are not a problem in the United States
**Fact:** You may only know a few people who’ve had a stroke in their life, but someone has a stroke every 40 seconds in the U.S.

**Misconception:** A stroke will kill you
**Fact:** Approximately one out of eight strokes results in death within thirty days. The other seven instances leave the person disabled. Stroke is fatal in about 10 to 20 percent of cases and, among survivors, it can cause a host of disabilities, including loss of mobility, impaired speech, and cognitive problems.

**Misconception:** Strokes cannot be prevented
**Fact:** Up to 80 percent of strokes could be stopped before they start. Healthcare screenings are an effective way to identify and understand risk factors so they can be properly managed. Research shows nine out of 10 cardiovascular doctors support preventive health screenings for cardiovascular disease (plaque in the arteries) among patients with key risk factors. To learn more, visit http://www.lifeslinescreening.com.

**Misconception:** Only a doctor can identify a stroke
**Fact:** Everyone can and should know the signs and symptoms of stroke. By taking quick action, you could save a life.

According to the CDC, the most common signs of stroke are:

- Sudden numbness or weakness in the face, arm or leg, especially on one side of the body.
- Sudden trouble speaking or difficulty understanding speech.
- Sudden trouble walking, dizziness, loss of balance or lack of coordination.
- Sudden severe headache with no known cause.

If you or someone else has any of these symptoms, call 911 immediately. Understanding the facts about stroke helps empower you to control your own health. Even if risk factors are present, you can take proactive measures to help prevent stroke for yourself and loved ones.

Life’s Journey offers personalized care

Life’s Journey OB/GYN is a women-centered practice dedicated to treating each patient with individual attention and compassion. We offer personalized care to the women in Punxsutawney and the surrounding areas providing complete obstetric and gynecologic services in a caring environment. Our practice provides a uniquely safe and warm environment for patients by having a completely female staff as well as all female providers.

As of April of this year, we are proud to introduce midwifery care to our area. Patty Pajak brings 30 years of obstetrical experience, 17 years as a nurse-midwife and women’s health nurse practitioner. She comes to our community from Cenemaugh Memorial Medical Center in Johnstown, where she was the Obstetrical Hospitalist, working in collaboration with the other team members including nurse-midwives, OB/GYN physicians, maternal-fetal medicine physicians, and neonatologists. From low risk to high risk pregnancies and births, she prides herself on providing a unique and caring birth experience.

Life’s Journey OB/GYN was founded by Dr. Kelly Duckett, starting in 2013 in DuBois. In July of 2016, the Punxsutawney office was opened with a unique vision of a warm environment for patients where “Women Care for Women.” In addition to providing obstetrical services, Dr. Duckett offers laparoscopic hysterectomies and performs all major and minor gynecological/ pelvic surgeries. Using advanced and minimally invasive techniques, she spares women costly hospitalizations, large scars, and long healing times.

Also providing care for Life’s Journey OB/GYN is Punxsutawney’s own Ashley Parsons. Since 2012, Ashley has been providing women’s health care as a Family Nurse Practitioner. She provides exceptional care, and she is also certified as an International Board Certified Lactation Consultant and also is a Certified Menopause Practitioner. Ashley has spent 10 years developing her skills and learning what it is that every woman wants from a provider – someone to listen to their concerns. She prides herself on providing care that goes beyond the minimum and tries to make every woman’s experience unique.

Protect kids from preventable illnesses

(BPT) – Fall is an exciting time for kids – seeing old friends, getting to know new classmates, learning new skills and exploring classrooms. But with all this fun and interaction, it’s important to remember one of the best ways to keep your child safe and healthy is to make sure he or she is up to date on their vaccinations. Vaccines have made many once-common serious childhood diseases rare today. They are safe, effective and they save lives.

“It’s critical to make sure that you and your children receive vaccinations according to the schedule recommended by the Centers for Disease Control,” says John Meigs, Jr., MD, president of the American Academy of Family Physicians. “Vaccines are important not only for school-age children, but for babies and young children, pregnant women, teens and pre-teens, adults and seniors.”

How exactly do vaccines work?
According to the patient education website familydoctor.org, “Vaccines contain weakened versions of a virus or versions that look like a virus (called antigens). This means the antigens cannot produce the signs or symptoms of the disease, but they do stimulate the immune system to create antibodies. These antibodies help protect you if you are exposed to the virus in the future.”

Much like how an athlete trains to prepare for competition, vaccines train your immune system to respond in case the body is exposed to the virus. If it is, it knows exactly how to fight it off. Vaccines help you stay healthy, and if you do get sick, it might be less severe or for less time when compared to others who have not been immunized.

The CDC lists recommended immunizations for the prevention of 17 diseases to protect people from birth through old age. All states require children to be vaccinated against certain communicable diseases in order to attend school.

Information about recommended immunization schedules for people of all ages is available at familydoctor.org. On aafp.org, you can find an interactive map showing vaccine-specific coverage levels for each state.

If anyone in your family is behind on their vaccinations, it’s easy to catch up. Speak with your family physician about creating a plan. You might even be able to schedule vaccine-only visits, meaning you won’t even need an exam. Concerned about costs? Vaccines are typically covered by health insurance, so it’s likely you won’t have to pay anything. If you don’t have health insurance, reach out to your state public health department. Many offer assistance programs that provide vaccines at a reduced cost.

Things to share with your doctor

Eye health tips that are easy to visualize

It is important to be honest with a doctor about certain health habits, but sometimes it’s not so easy to forthcoming. Fear of being judged or discussing embarrassing situations may prevent some patients from telling medical professionals the whole story. However, the things people do not share could end up costing their health or prevent doctors from discovering certain ailments.

Rather than omitting information, people need to be frank with their doctors. Honesty is important when speaking with a physician, even when the discussion turns to the following potentially sensitive topics.

1. Smoking: Even if you aren’t a daily smoker, mention if you smoke in social situations or a drag once in a while. Smoking increases the risk for many illnesses and can compound how effective some medications can be.

2. Alcohol consumption: Be honest about how much you drink, as alcohol can interfere with medications.

3. Supplement usage: Over-the-counter medicines, herbs and other supplements can affect overall health. A doctor needs to know the entire picture before prescribing treatment.

4. Exercise habits: Don’t claim to be a gym rat if you’re more of a couch potato. An accurate idea of their patients’ fitness levels and habits is a key diagnostic tool for physicians.

5. Unusual issues: Be forthright with any issues, even those that occur in embarrassing areas of the body. Remember, if you’re uncomfortable with your doctor, you can always get a referral for a specialist who treats those areas of the body daily.

6. Drug use: Prescriptions are written in dosages for the intended recipient. Taking drugs that are not prescribed to you, whether it’s a loved one’s prescription or an illicit drug, affects your body. If you have a medical issue, consult with your doctor so you can get your own legal prescription or begin working toward addressing your addiction.

(BPT) – Writer Leigh Hunt once said, “The groundwork of all happiness is good health.” It’s a mantra you heed because nothing is more important than your health. That’s why you watch what you eat, you exercise at least three times a week and you avoid tobacco or excessive alcohol use. You’re working hard to improve your body’s overall health, but there’s one integral part of your body that you have yet to focus on – your eyes.

It’s easy to take your eyes for granted, but they remain one of your body’s most important organs and, like the rest of your body, they will benefit from your efforts to improve their health. To support your eyes and maintain a healthy lifestyle, incorporate these five tips today.

• Consult an eye care professional. Just as you visit your doctor for your yearly checkup, you should also visit your optometrist once a year to review your eye health. Your optometrist can answer any questions you have about your eyes, and the checkup can help identify eye concerns such as glaucoma, diabetic eye disease and macular degeneration, which otherwise have no warning signs.

• Read smart. Whether it’s the morning paper, your favorite weekly magazine or a page-turning thriller, reading is one of your favorite hobbies, but sometimes the page can be hard to see.

In cases like this, support your eyes with Foster Grant® reading glasses. Foster Grant® offers high-quality, non-prescription reading glasses in a wide range of strengths suited for your individual eyes. These glasses are prescription-quality lens magnification without the prescription price, and they are available in a wide array of styles, allowing you to support your style as well as your health. Remember, 50 is the new 40, and there’s no reason you can’t look great and see great all at the same time.

• Give your eyes some downtime. If you spend long periods of time looking at a computer screen during the day, be sure to give your eyes a rest by employing the 20-20-20 rule. Look 20 feet away for 20 seconds after every 20 minutes of screen time to help reduce digital eyestrain.

• Embrace digital glasses options. Another solution to help limit digital eye strain caused from using tech devices is to add a pair of non-prescription digital eye glasses. Foster Grant® Eyezen™ Glasses not only help relax your eyes but also enhance your viewing experience. Most people spend at least 12 hours a day consuming media, according to The Vision Council’s 2016 Digital Eye Strain Report. Eyes Over Exposed: The Digital Device Dilemma. The report also found that it only takes as little as two hours in front of a screen to cause digital eye strain, so start protecting your eyes today.

• An apple a day. A healthy balanced diet benefits not just your overall health but your eyes as well. Carrots have a reputation for supporting eye health, but the most beneficial vegetables are leafy greens like kale or spinach. Collard greens and fish varieties such as salmon, halibut and tuna can also help support your eye health, so add them to your next meal.

You’re already taken the initiative to live a healthier, happier life, so don’t forget to add your eye health as well. By instituting these simple changes, you’ll be feeling and seeing your best. To learn more about reading and Eyezen digital glasses options from Foster Grant®, visit http://fostergrant.com/.

Beat the heat: Stay healthy and hydrated

(BPT) – Americans love summertime and with good reason. It is the best time for outdoor fun and travel with family. Many people enjoy outdoor activities such as bicycling, kayaking and hiking, and kids are more active with sports.

One thing to keep in mind when out and about in the summer heat is to stay properly hydrated. Unfortunately, many of us are not drinking enough water. In fact, 36 percent of American adults drink only three or fewer cups of water per day, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Here are some tips for healthy hydration.

Replace your electrolytes

Engaging in physical activity when it is hot outside means you lose water which has to be replaced. You are also losing electrolytes (sodium, potassium, calcium, magnesium and bicarbonate) which need to be replaced. Very high temperatures – especially for a prolonged period – can be dangerous, especially for seniors.

Ideally, anyone engaging in outdoor activity in the heat or even an indoor exercise program should drink 8 to 12 ounces of fluid every 15 to 20 minutes during a session. If exercising exceeds an hour, a beverage that contains electrolytes is preferable to plain water. That is why most sports drinks contain salt. Of course anyone can easily make their own sports drink by adding a quarter to a half teaspoon of salt per liter or 32 ounces of water.

Replacing lost electrolytes is important because they help to regulate cardiovascular and neurological functions, fluid balance and oxygen delivery.

Avoid hyponatremia

Replacing water without sufficient salt can produce hyponatremia, a potentially deadly condition caused by too little sodium in the bloodstream. Symptoms can range from mild to severe and can include nausea, muscle cramps, disorientation, confusion, seizures, coma and even death.

There have been several documented cases of illness and even deaths from hyponatremia over the past several years. According to the British Medical Journal, 16 runners have died as a result of too little sodium and overhydration, while another 1,600 have become seriously ill. It is true that water intoxication is more commonly seen among extreme athletes, but older individuals may also be at risk for several reasons.

Exercise and aging

It is important to be active but be careful not to push yourself especially in high heat. As we age, our kidneys become less efficient at conserving the salt we need when the body is stressed, such as from dehydration and high temperatures. When combined with common medications such as diuretics, which are commonly prescribed to treat hypertension, the result could be a greater risk for hyponatremia.

When you exercise, your body’s metabolism works at a much higher rate, breaking down and regenerating tissues and creating waste metabolites that need to be flushed out of your system. However, regardless of your level of activity, you still need to maintain good hydration. So remember to always drink plenty of water to beat the heat, but you may also want to up your intake of electrolytes.

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3. At the end of the trial period, decide if the hearing aids are right for you. If you love them, fantastic! You can then make the decision to purchase and enjoy the sounds of life for years to come. If not, you simply walk away. You owe nothing.

Make your appointment with Dr. Foust today. You can phone the Clearfield office at 814-765-8284, the DuBois office at 814-371-1085 or the St. Marys office at 814-834-7721.

Try more outdoor sleep time

People who periodically experience difficulty sleeping may benefit from spending more time outdoors. According to researchers at the University of Colorado Boulder, sleeping outside can be beneficial to the sleep-wake cycle. That’s because spending time under the stars increases melatonin levels in the body. Melatonin is a hormone that controls wakefulness. Higher levels help the body relax and induce sleep. The researchers found that individuals who spent a weekend in the woods camping out at night fell asleep earlier and rose an hour and a half earlier in the morning. For those who don’t like to camp, increasing exposure to day light and then avoiding sources of artificial light (i.e., televisions and cellphones) at night can help create a similar effect.
Some simple ways to alleviate back pain

Back pain can be so significant that it results in a loss of function that impedes daily activities. In fact, according to the 2015 Global Burden of Disease report, back pain is the single leading cause of disability in most countries.

The role insulin plays in the body

Insulin plays a key role in metabolic functions in the body. People with diabetes have an intimate knowledge of insulin, particularly if they do not produce enough naturally. However, the rest of the public may be less knowledgeable about the role of insulin and its impact on overall health.

Insulin is produced in the pancreas of the human body. Its most important function is the way it interacts with glucose (blood sugar) to allow the cells of the body to use that glucose as energy. Insulin can be viewed as a type of key that unlocks glucose to the cells and enables glucose to enter. The pancreas senses when there is a spike in glucose in the bloodstream and reacts by producing insulin.

According to the Hormone Health Network, insulin also works to ensure the liver stores excess glucose so that it is not actively in the blood. Stored glucose is called glycogen. This glycogen can be converted into fat when it is needed. Insulin also affects other metabolic processes, such as the breakdown of protein or fat.

Type 1 diabetes occurs when the pancreas fails to produce enough insulin. Supplementation with insulin will be necessary to avoid drastic changes in blood glucose levels.

When a person has type 2 diabetes, cells fail to respond to insulin properly. This is referred to as insulin resistance. As the disease progresses, a lack of insulin may develop. Typically with this type of diabetes, excessive body weight and not enough exercise are the culprits in insulin resistance. Eating a healthier diet and becoming more physically active can help reverse the condition.

Too little glucose in the blood (hypoglycemia) can make a person feel irritable, tired or confused. Low blood sugar can lead to loss of consciousness. That is why it is crucial that blood sugar concentrations remain relatively stable.

Without insulin, the body could not effectively make use of the energy obtained through eating and drinking. Insulin helps unlock cells so that glucose can be used to its full potential.

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Surprising health benefits of cherries, this summer’s superfruit

(BPT) – Have you ever said no to a cherry? Probably not. This summertime treat is simply delicious. And if you’re looking for another reason to indulge, you’ll be pleased to know that cherries are surprisingly good for you. Recent research indicates that this summer’s superfruit offers a variety of health benefits, including the four outlined below.

**Reduced risk of heart disease and diabetes**
Heart disease and diabetes threaten the health of millions of Americans every year, and cherries can help. Research from Michigan State University found that 20 cherries provide 25 milligrams of anthocyanins, which reduce inflammation by shutting down the enzymes that cause tissue inflammation. This helps protect the arteries from the damage that leads to heart disease. Further research shows that those same anthocyanins also help lower blood sugar levels in animals, leading scientists to speculate that a similar blood sugar lowering effect could occur in humans.

In addition to being packed with anthocyanins, cherries also have a low glycemic index, making them a good choice for people with diabetes. Foods with a high glycemic index cause blood glucose to soar and then quickly crash. In contrast, foods with a low index, like cherries, release glucose slowly and evenly, helping you maintain a steady blood sugar level — as well as leaving you feeling full longer and potentially helping you maintain a healthy weight.

**Combating arthritis and gout**
More than 8.3 million Americans suffer from gout, a form of arthritis characterized by severe pain, redness and tenderness in the joints. This condition is commonly associated with elevated levels of uric acid in the blood. A study conducted by researchers at the University of California at Davis found that people who ate sweet cherries showed reduced levels of uric acid. In addition, research from the Boston University School of Medicine showed that people who ate cherries had a 35 to 75 percent lower chance of experiencing a gout attack.

**Sleep support via melatonin**
Everyone understands the value of a good night’s sleep, but sometimes your body simply doesn’t want to cooperate. When you find yourself wide awake and restless, your melatonin levels might be low. Melatonin is the chemical that controls your body’s internal clock to regulate sleep and promote overall healthy sleep patterns. Studies show that cherries are a natural source of melatonin, and researchers who have studied the melatonin content of cherries recommend eating them an hour before bedtime to help stabilize your sleep cycle.

**Fiber for weight loss**
Many Americans struggle with weight issues, and poor diet is often identified as a major culprit. But although there is a great deal of discussion about what people shouldn’t be eating, there isn’t as much talk about what people should be eating, like fiber. Most Americans’ diets are fiber-deficient, falling short of the 25-35 grams per day recommended by the USDA Dietary Guidelines. These guidelines recommend two cups of fruit daily, and cherries are an easy and delicious way to meet that target.

**Enjoy a bowl of superfruit today**
In addition to all these health benefits, cherries also possess cancer-fighting properties, according to a study by the USDA’s Western Human Nutrition Research Center. So whether you’re looking to boost your health or you enjoy the taste of this juicy treat — or both — there are plenty of reasons to reach for a bowl of cherries for your next snack or to add them to the menu at your next meal. Whatever your preference, be sure to get them quickly before cherry season is over.

To learn more about the health benefits of cherries, visit NWCherries.com.

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**The effects of breathing ozone**
Ozone, the main ingredient in smog, is a harmful air pollutant that can have negative effects on human health. Breathing ozone can be especially harmful to children, whose lungs are still developing. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency notes that children’s susceptibility to the harmful effects of ozone is greater because they breathe more air per pound of body weight than adults. So that means children who breathe in air that contains ozone are getting a higher dose of that ozone for their weight than adults. Children also tend to spend more time outdoors than adults, increasing the likelihood that they will suffer the harmful effects of breathing ozone. When ozone is breathed in, it harms the respiratory system by inflaming cells that line the upper airways and the lungs. The EPA notes that this damage is similar to the damage done to skin as a result of sunburn. Breathing ozone can make it more difficult for people of all ages to breathe deeply and vigorously while also causing a sore or scratchy throat. Asthma sufferers may even experience more frequent attacks when breathing ozone than they would when breathing cleaner air. And according to the EPA, ozone might still be damaging the lungs after symptoms have subsided.

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**Wigs ‘n More offers special services**

The shop carries a large selection of wigs, human hair wigs and partial hairpieces. When it comes to bras, they carry a wide range of sizes from 28A-52L. Custom bra fittings are available as part of their services. They offer hair styling and have compression sleeves for those who have lymphedema.

“We also carry sun hats, purses, shoes, jewelry and sports bras in large sizes,” she said.

The store is a credited facility and is BOC certified. Hours are Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., Thursday from 10 a.m. to 7 p.m., Friday from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. and Saturday from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. Customers interested in personal fittings and other services are asked to make an appointment.

Wigs ‘n More, Inc. and Mastectomy Boutique is located at 5924 Route 981 in Latrobe. They can be reached at (724) 532-1901.

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**Surprising health benefits of cherries, this summer’s superfruit**

**By DESTINY PIFER**
Of The Spirit

LATROBE – Wigs ‘n More, Inc. and Mastectomy Boutique helps those who have undergone a mastectomy, lumpectomy and reconstructive breast surgery. The store carries wigs, hats, turbans, camisoles and prosthetics.

Owner Kathleen Hendrickson has been in business for 29 years with the specialized products and services that are essential for the recovery process after surgery. Hendrickson said they offer bras, cover prosthetics and shell prosthetics.

Some insurances, she explained, cover custom prosthetics. They also carry nighttime, swimwear and active wear. “These items hold their value of a good night’s sleep, even though your body doesn’t want to cooperate. When you find yourself wide awake and restless, your melatonin levels might be low. Melatonin is the chemical that controls your body’s internal clock to regulate sleep and promote overall healthy sleep patterns. Studies show that cherries are a natural source of melatonin, and researchers who have studied the melatonin content of cherries recommend eating them an hour before bedtime to help stabilize your sleep cycle.

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To learn more about the health benefits of cherries, visit NWCherries.com.
Get on the road to better health

(BPT) – Here’s a sobering statistic for you: 20 percent of all deaths in the United States can be attributed to poor lifestyle factors and behavioral choices. It’s difficult to swallow, but fortunately new research also finds that those who take the time to establish a simple screening routine improve their chances of modifying their behavior toward a healthy lifestyle.

The research, appearing in the Journal of Community Medicine and Health Education, shows that individuals who had undergone a cardiovascular screening were more likely to take action to modify their lifestyles after the screening. In addition, these steps toward potential better health appear to exist regardless of the actual screening results.

The survey gathered information from 3,267 individuals who were set to receive a cardiovascular screening through Life Line Screening. Participants were predominantly over 50 years of age and mostly women. The survey respondents were divided into two groups: those who were surveyed after they had their cardiovascular screening and those who were screening before, meaning they had yet to undergo a cardiovascular screening.

Both groups were asked questions about their current and future health plans and once the surveys were completed, results from the two groups were then evaluated to determine a participant’s motivation to modify their lifestyles. This evaluation took into account the act of the screening and whether the presence of a completed screening modified behavior.

Results of the research show a statistically significant difference between those who had been screened and those who hadn’t with regards to modifying future behavior. These behavior modifiers included healthy initiatives such as enjoying a healthier diet or adding exercise to a person’s daily lifestyle.

Perhaps more interesting, researchers found participants were more interested in improving their healthy lifestyle after the screening regardless of their individual screening results. In addition, patients who tested normal, abnormal or even critical during their screening were all more likely to make health changes after the screening when compared to their prescreening counterparts. Those who recorded abnormal or critical results also reported being more likely to follow their doctor’s exact directions and take all of their medications on the predetermined schedule.

You can’t know where you’re going if you don’t know where you are

Heart disease remains the No. 1 killer of men and women in the United States, accounting for roughly one quarter of all deaths according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Yet despite this shocking statistic, many people remain unaware of their current cardiovascular health.

Enrolling in a cardiovascular screening is a fast, easy way to understand your current cardiovascular health and provide you a basis for future health care decisions. It’s an important first step and one that can ultimately lead to a healthier, longer life.

To learn more about cardiovascular screening and to find screening options in your area, visit www.lifelinescreening.com.

Make realistic lifestyle-changing goals

The American Psychological Association recommends that men and women interested in making lifestyle changes begin by making realistic short- and long-term goals and then starting small. Unrealistic short-term goals can compromise people’s efforts at making positive changes, ultimately derailing their efforts. But realistic short-term goals can pave the way to realizing the loftier long-term goals. For example, the APA recommends that people who set a long-term weight loss goal of 20 pounds begin by aiming to lose one pound a week. Accomplishing that short-term goal can give people the confidence and satisfaction they need to propel them toward achieving their long-term goal. The APA also advises that men and women who want to change unhealthy behaviors do so one unhealthy behavior at a time, unless several unhealthy behaviors are putting their overall health in imminent danger. Quitting smoking and eating healthy requires considerable effort and dedication, and individuals may encounter problems when they try to do too much at one time. As a result, the APA recommends waiting until one new healthy behavior has become routine before attempting to change another unhealthy behavior.

Breakfast Mondays on tap at Mahoning Hills Social Center

Senior citizens are invited to share breakfast next Monday, Aug. 21, at the Mahoning Hills Social Center at 19298 Route 119, just south of Punxsy. Walk-ins are welcome.

A freshly cooked breakfast of French toast, sausage, coffee, juice and fresh fruit will be served from 9:30 to 11 a.m. The price is $2.00.

Beginning in September this breakfast deal will be offered every Monday.

The menu for September is:

- Monday, Sept. 4 – Labor Day – closed
- Monday, Sept. 11 – pancakes, sausage, coffee, juice and fresh fruit
- Monday, Sept. 18 – French toast, sausage, coffee, juice and fresh fruit
- Monday, Sept. 25 – buckwheat cakes, ham, coffee, juice and fresh fruit

Manager Mary Beth Wilson says that Breakfast Mondays are always popular among the Mahoning Hills participants. Where else can you enjoy a tasty breakfast for that low price?

Wilson also announces a wine tasting event will be held on Sept. 29.

For more information about activities at Mahoning Hills, call (724) 286-3099.
Taking opioids for pain? Speak up, ask the hard questions

(BPT) – Opioids often are the go-to pain killer for everything from back aches and injuries to post-surgical pain, as evidenced by the more than 300 million prescriptions written each year. While they can help with moderate to severe short-term pain, opioids are not without risk. Because they have significant side effects, including an increased risk of addiction and overdose, the American Society of Anesthesiologists suggests those who take opioids ask some tough questions – including if it is time to consider alternatives.

Kathleen Callahan understands the dilemma. She suffers from a condition that causes painful cysts that require multiple surgeries resulting in post-surgical and chronic pain for which she took opioids for years. Despite being on a high dose of opioids, she still had chronic pain. So she turned to Anita Gupta, D.O., Pharm.D., a physician anesthesiologist who specializes in pain medicine.

“When I was on opioids long-term I couldn’t function, couldn’t be involved in my children’s lives and my work was suffering,” said Kathleen. “Dr. Gupta helped me manage my pain so life is livable. Now I exercise, go out with friends and go to my kids’ activities.”

“Kathleen and I had some difficult discussions. I didn’t think the medications were helping her anymore and I was truthful with her,” said Dr. Gupta. “She asked some hard questions, and I helped her move forward and cope with her pain. Since she’s been opioid-free Kathleen is vibrant and energetic. She has her life back.”

If you are taking opioids or your physician has prescribed them, the American Society of Anesthesiologists suggests asking yourself (and your physician) some tough questions:

• Are opioids affecting my quality of life? Opioids have many side effects, ranging from severe constipation, mental fog, and nausea to depression. Kathleen said she was “exhausted, cranky, depressed, constipated and gaining weight.” She realized the side effects of opioids were worse than the pain itself, motivating her to seek other options.

• What are my concerns about taking opioids – or stopping them? With the media attention surrounding opioid risks, many people worry they:
  – are being judged by others;
  – may become addicted or overdose;
  – won’t be able to control their pain if they stop taking opioids.

Ask your physician about obtaining naloxone, a drug that can reverse an overdose. If you take opioids when you don’t have pain or use more than directed, you may develop a dependence. Talk to your physicians about alternatives to manage your pain.

• Is it time to consider other methods of pain management? Opioids are most effective in the short term. If they are taken for chronic pain, they should be part of a “multimodal” plan that includes other methods of pain management, including:
  – Injections or nerve blocks, which can short circuit muscle and nerve pain.
  – Electrical stimulation and spinal cord stimulation devices that send electrical impulses to block pain.
  – Physical therapy, which strengthens muscles to improve function and decrease pain. Whirlpools, ultrasound and massage can help, too.
  – Alternative therapies, such as acupuncture, biofeedback, meditation, deep breathing and relaxation, which help you learn how to ease muscle tension.

• What type of physician can best help manage my pain? If you have severe or ongoing pain, be sure to see a physician who specializes in pain management, such as a physician anesthesiologist. These specialists have received four years of medical school and additional training in a medical specialty, followed by an additional year of training to become an expert in treating pain. They have the expertise to best help you manage your pain.

“If I was still on opioids I would be overweight, inactive, not involved in my children’s lives and depressed,” said Kathleen. “When you have a physician like Dr. Gupta who you trust and who shows you there’s another way, it’s just amazing. It’s night and day.”

For more information, download ASA’s Asking the Hard Questions About Opioids. To learn more about the critical role physician anesthesiologists play before, during and after surgery, visit www.asahq.org/WhenSecondsCount.

Things parents need to know about HPV

(BPT) – Being a parent means looking out for your kids. When they were small it meant making sure they wore a helmet, crossed the street carefully and wore sunscreen. As they get older, the health challenges they face change.

As they become adolescents, you can’t always be with them, so you warn against things like the dangers of alcohol and drugs and sharing too much on social media. But what about human papillomavirus (HPV) – a virus that can cause certain cancers and diseases? Learning about health risks your children may be exposed to as adolescents or young adults that can affect them later in life is the first step toward helping to protect them.

You may have heard about HPV, but you may not be aware of the impact it may have. As your children become adolescents it’s more important than ever to be their health advocate and learn about potential future health concerns, including HPV.

Here are five HPV facts for parents:

1. HPV is more common than you may think. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), about 79 million Americans are currently infected with HPV, and there are approximately 14 million new HPV infections in the United States each year. Half of these infections occur in people ages 15-24. For most, HPV clears on its own. But for others who don’t clear certain types, HPV can cause significant consequences in both males and females.

2. When HPV does not clear, it can cause certain pre-cancers, cancers and other diseases. These can develop very slowly and may not even be diagnosed until years later. There’s no way to predict who will or won’t clear the virus.

3. You may have only heard of HPV as a cause of cervical cancer in women, but there are other HPV-related diseases that can affect males, as well as females. Certain types of HPV cause cervical, vaginal and vulvar pre-cancers and cancers in females and other HPV types cause genital warts and anal cancer in males and females.

4. HPV often has no visible signs or symptoms, so many people are not even aware that they have it. This means people can pass on HPV without knowing it. It may take only one sexual encounter to be infected with HPV. HPV can be transmitted through experimentation that involves genital contact of any kind – intercourse is not necessary but is the most common.

5. You may think it’s too soon to worry about how HPV could affect your son or daughter, but the best time to get the facts about HPV is before they may be exposed.

As a parent you never stop looking out for your kids, and the more we learn about health risks for our children, the more we can do to help protect them as they grow up. Take action now, while you are still managing your adolescent’s health care. Speak with your child’s doctor for more information and be sure to ask about ways to help prevent HPV-related cancers and diseases, including vaccination.