Seventy percent of Americans do not get enough exercise. Time constraints and lack of motivation are just two of the excuses used to explain this inactivity. Ignoring fitness and health increases the risk for heart disease, stroke and other diseases. Inactivity is the problem, so what’s the solution?

Northern Michigan University’s Wellness Committee has partnered with the American Heart Association Start! Campaign to bring NMU employees a physical activity initiative to fight heart disease and stroke. It works by getting you moving through a workplace walking program.

Walking has the lowest drop out rate of any physical activity, and is the simplest positive change individuals can make to effectively improve their heart health. Research has shown that the benefits of walking and physical activity for just thirty minutes a day include lower blood pressure, reductions in body fat and a better control over body weight, enhancement of mental well-being and a lower risk of getting cancer. As a matter of fact, you can gain about two hours of life expectancy for each hour of regular exercise, even if you do not start until middle age.

By participating in this program you can significantly improve your health and live longer, stronger heart-healthy lives.

Kick-off events will be held during the week of January 25th. At these events, employees can sign up and get started!

For questions about the program please contact Jaime at extension 2519 or email wellness@nmu.edu.

Source: americanheartassociation/start.org

### American Heart Association Start! Program

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### National Drunk and Drugged Driving Month

This December it is important to consider what you can do to make injuries and deaths from impaired driving less of a threat. Every day, thirty six people are injured in motor vehicle crashes that involve an alcohol-impaired driver.

The Facts:

1. About three in every ten Americans will be involved in an alcohol-related crash at some point in their lives.
2. In 2006, 13,470 people died in alcohol-impaired driving crashes, accounting for one third of all traffic-related deaths in the U.S.
3. In one year, over 1.4 million drivers were arrested for driving under the influence of alcohol or narcotics. This accounts for less than 1% of the 159

(continued on page 5)
**Spinal Health Quiz**

By keeping your spine healthy, back and neck pain can be avoided. The following quiz will help you learn more about your spine and how to protect it.

1) How many doctor’s visits each year are because of back problems?
   A) 5 million.
   B) 12 million.
   B) 20 million.

2) The spinal cord is an extension of what?
   A) The pelvis.
   B) Legs.
   C) Brain.
   D) Arms.

3) One of the most common back injuries is a slipped, or herniated, disk. What does this mean?
   A) A spinal disk has moved down the spine.
   B) A spinal disk has twisted.
   C) Disk material has bulged into the spinal cord.
   D) None of the above.

4) What causes a slipped disk?
   A) A strain on the back.
   B) Age.
   C) Sudden twisting movement.
   D) None of the above.

5) A sprain or strain of the ligaments and muscles in the back is one of the most common causes of back pain. How can a sprain or strain occur?
   A) Lifting a heavy object.
   B) Exercising.
   C) In a fall or vehicular accident.
   D) All of the above.

6) What happens when osteoarthritis occurs in the spine?
   A) It damages the cartilage.
   B) It damages the joint in the spine.
   C) A and B.
   D) None of the above.

7) What can be done to prevent back pain?
   A) Maintain a healthy weight.
   B) Exercise regularly.
   C) Lift objects while bending at the knees.
   D) All of the above.

8) Spondylolysis can cause back pain in adult athletes. What is it?
   A) A virus that attacks the back muscles.
   B) A stress fracture in a vertebra.
   C) Curvature of the spine.
   D) All of the above.
   E) None of the above.

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**5 Foods for a Better Mood**

**Oatmeal:** If you’re feeling cranky and irritable, oatmeal may be able to help. Oatmeal is rich in fiber which helps balance blood sugar levels and prevent hunger by keeping you feeling full longer.

**Walnuts:** Walnuts are an excellent source of omega-3 essential fatty acids. Fatty acids are a type of fat the body needs for brain cells and mood-lifting neurotransmitters to function properly and possibly help prevent depression.

**Tea:** Although tea has been shown to lead to a more positive mood and improved performance, much of it can leave you feeling nervous and hyper-sensitive. It can also cause headaches. Limit yourself to one cup a day and opt for caffeine-free green or chai tea for a second cup.

**Salmon:** Research has suggested that vitamin D may help relieve mood disorders by increasing levels of serotonin in the brain, a key neurotransmitter in the brain.

**Lentils:** Lentils are an excellent source of folic acid. Folate is a B vitamin that research suggests is essential for mood and proper nerve function in the brain. One cup of lentils provides ninety percent of the recommended daily allowance of folic acid as well as protein and fiber. Try tossing cooked lentils into your salad or making a homemade lentil soup.

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**Tips for Keeping Holiday Pounds Off This Year**

Eat! Doing double duty during the holidays makes it easy to blow healthy eating habits by skipping meals and hitting the vending machine for some late-night snack. If you do not do anything else during the holiday season, prepare for those ultra-busy days by keeping some healthy foods nearby. Nutrition bars, fruit and oatmeal are good choices.

While sitting, simply breathe in deeply through your nose, allowing your belly to bulge out with the inhale and exhale through your mouth very slowly, contracting your abs at the end. Repeat this a few times and you will be ready for anything!

Indulge moderately! Special occasions offer things we do not usually indulge in. It is easy to get caught up in the excitement and overindulge. The best way to enjoy great holiday fare without going overboard is to plan ahead. Do not go to a party hungry. Eat a healthy snack beforehand and grab a glass of water when you get there to fill up and keep you hydrated. Try to avoid high calorie drinks like Egg Nog and stick with wine. For every glass of alcohol you have, drink a glass of water as well. It will help you curb your drinking and stay away from empty calories.

Source: [exercise.about.com/od/weightloss/](http://exercise.about.com/od/weightloss/)
National Safe Toys and Gift Month

Holiday shopping and bargain hunting has officially begun! As shoppers begin to purchase toys and other gifts for children, it is important to be mindful of what gifts are safe.

According to the Consumer Product Safety Commission there were an estimated 235,300 toy-related injuries treated in emergency rooms across the country. Seventy three percent of the toy-related injuries reported were to children 14 or younger. In 2009 alone, the Consumer Product Safety Commission has recalled 38 toys. Consider using the following tips to help ensure the gift giving season is safer for all children.

- Make recommendations to family members and friends about gifts that you feel are appropriate for your child.
- Inspect all toys as much as possible before taking them out of the box. Once opened, go through each part of the toy to make sure that there are no small parts that could be choking hazards or have sharp edges.
- Avoid toys that shoot or include parts that fly off. BB guns and air guns should not even be considered toys. Flying toys caused 9,600 injuries in 2008.
- Gifts of sports equipment should always be accompanied by protective gear (eye goggles, batting or biking helmet).
- Educate yourself on what products have been recalled. Contact the Consumer Product Safety Commission at (800) 638-2772 or go to www.cpsc.gov.
- Keep toys meant for older children away from younger ones. Closely monitor all activities to make sure smaller children do not have access to toys that are not at their appropriate age level.
- Inspect toys for sturdiness. Your child’s toys should be durable, with no sharp edges or points. The toys should withstand impact. Dispose of plastic wrapping material immediately on toys.
- Never give toys with small parts to young children. If a part of a toy can fit inside of a toilet paper roll, the toy should be considered a choking hazard and is not appropriate for children under the age of three.

http://www.preventblindness.org/news/releases/112309_1.html

How can I change my recipes?

Making simple changes in the recipes you enjoy can significantly reduce the amount of cholesterol and saturated fat you eat! Cut out this article and display it in the kitchen as a quick reference guide!

Substituting low-fat ingredients:

Whole milk (1 cup) = 1 cup fat-free or nonfat milk + 1 Tbsp. unsaturated oil.

Heavy cream (1 cup) = 1 cup evaporated fat-free milk or 1/2 cup low-fat yogurt and 1/2 cup plain low-fat cottage cheese blended.

Sour cream = Low-fat cottage cheese plus low-fat or non-fat yogurt. Fat-free sour cream is also available.

Cream cheese = 4 Tbsp. margarine blended with 1 cup dry low-fat cottage cream. Add a small amount of fat-free milk if needed.

Butter (1 Tbsp.) =
1 Tbsp. polyunsaturated margarine or 3/4 Tbsp. polyunsaturated or monounsaturated oil. Use 1 1/4 Tbsp. margarine for 1 Tbsp. oil.

Shortening (1 cup) = 2 sticks polyunsaturated margarine (choose margarine low in trans fat or trans fat free).

Eggs (1 egg) = 1 egg white plus 2 tsp. of unsaturated oil, or use a cholesterol-free egg product.

Unsweetened baking chocolate (1 oz.) = 3 Tbsp. unsweetened cocoa powder or carob powder + 1 Tbsp. polyunsaturated oil or margarine. Carob is sweeter than cocoa, so reduce sugar in recipe by 1/4.

Using more vegetable oils:
Use liquid vegetable oils that have no more than 2 grams of saturated fat per Tbsp. when cooking requires using fat.

For example:
To brown lean meats and to pan or oven-fry fish and skinless poultry.
To sautéed onions and other vegetables for soup.
In sauces or soups made with fat-free milk.
In whipped or scalloped potatoes.
For popping corn.
In casseroles made with dried peas or beans.

Tips for reducing sodium:
Limit salt in cooking.
Use herbs and spices instead.
Read food labels and look for sodium in the ingredient list.

Source: americanheart.org

Source: americanheart.org
What is hepatitis C anyway?

Hepatitis C (HCV) causes inflammation of the liver. It is a slowly progressing disease that may take 10-40 years to cause serious liver damage in some people. There are approximately 3.9 million Americans affected with this virus and many show no signs or symptoms. Of the approximately 4 million people infected, 15-40% of them will clear the virus during the early, acute stage. Between 60-85% of people cannot get rid of the virus and develop long-term, or chronic, HCV infection. These patients will have the disease for the rest of their lives unless they are successfully treated with antiviral medicines. If left untreated, or if treated unsuccessfully, HCV can lead to potentially fatal liver diseases such as cirrhosis, liver failure and liver cancer. HCV is responsible for 8,000-10,000 deaths annually.

Most people with acute or chronic HCV have no symptoms at all. Many infected people are leading normal lives and are infected. It is not uncommon for the disease to persist for years before symptoms appear. When symptoms are present they may include joint pain, itchy skin, muscle soreness, abdominal pain, loss of appetite, fever, headaches and jaundice.

About one in ten people infected with HCV have had no identifiable exposure to the disease. However, there are several obvious risk factors for contracting the disease. The most common form of transmission is IV drug use, particularly the sharing of needles. It can also be transmitted through sharing a razor, toothbrush, or nail clipper with an infected person, accidental exposure to infected blood among health care professionals, exposure to unclean tattoo or body piercing instruments, and unprotected sex with an infected person. In rare cases, an infected, pregnant woman may pass the virus on to her baby. Breastfeeding is not known to transmit the virus.

HCV is diagnosed by a simple blood test. Routine physicals do not include blood tests for the virus. This is why most people do not know they have the disease. Some people discover they have the virus when they donate blood and others learn they have HCV when they undergo blood tests for other medical problems. If blood tests consistently show abnormal liver enzymes (a sign of liver damage) additional tests will be conducted to find the causes. These additional tests may reveal the HCV infection.

Treatment for HCV is available. The goal of treatment is to get rid of the virus from your body. If the virus is cleared, damage to your liver can be limited. Currently, the standard treatment medications are called peginterferons and interferons. These are usually used in combination. These drugs do not work for all patients. Depending
Cookie Mix in a Jar

This Oatmeal Raisin Spice cookie mix makes the perfect holiday gift! Consider them for your next cookie exchange or for your child’s teacher.

Ingredients:
- 1 cup all-purpose flour
- 1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- 1/2 teaspoon ground nutmeg
- 1 teaspoon baking soda
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 3/4 cup raisins
- 2 cups rolled oats
- 3/4 cup packed brown sugar

1/2 cup white sugar

Directions:
1) Mix together flour, ground cinnamon, ground nutmeg, baking soda and salt. Set aside.
2) Layer ingredients in the following order into a 1 quart, wide-mouth canning jar: Flour mixture, raisins, rolled oats, brown sugar, and white sugar. It will be a tight fit, make sure you firmly pack down each layer before adding the next layer.
3) Attach a tag with the following instructions: Oatmeal Raisin Spice Cookies. 1) Preheat oven to 350 degrees. 2) Empty jar of cookie mix into large bowl. Use your hands to thoroughly mix. Mix in 3/4 cup softened butter or margarine. Stir in one slightly beaten egg and 1 teaspoon of vanilla. Mix until completely blended. You will need to finish mixing with your hands. Shape into small balls. Place on cookie sheets two inches apart. 4) Bake 11-13 minutes in preheated oven, or until edges are lightly browned. Cool five minutes on cookie sheet. Transfer cookies to wire racks to finish cooling.


Facts about Skin Cancer

Skin cancer is the most common cancer in the United States. Each year more than one million new cases are diagnosed in this country. Early signs of the main types of skin cancer can be detected. With early treatment, most cases are curable. Skin cancer is not just a summer concern. It is a year-round wellness issue.

Monthly self-exams and a yearly skin exam by a doctor are recommended for staying ahead of this condition. Use the following methods to start your monthly self-exams.

Using a full length mirror and a hand-held mirror, become familiar with your pattern of moles and other skin marks. Report any changes or irregularities to your doctor.

1) In a brightly lit room, examine the front and back of your body in a mirror. Lift up your arms and check your left and right sides.
2) Bend your elbows and examine your forearms and the back of your upper arms. Then check your palms.
3) Sit down and examine the backs of your legs and feet. Be sure to check between your toes, as well as the soles of your feet.
4) Examine the back of your neck and scalp, using a hand mirror. Part your hair in order to get a better look.
5) Use a hand mirror to help you examine your lower back.

Identifying Melanoma: When checking to see if moles are benign (noncancerous) or melanoma (malignant) use the ABCDE rule.

- Asymmetry: Benign moles usually are symmetrical (round). Melanoma tumors usually are asymmetrical (one half does not match the other half).
- Border Irregularity: Benign moles, usually have even, smooth borders. Melanoma tumors generally have ragged or notched borders.
- Color: Benign moles usually are a single shade of tan or brown. Melanoma tumors have several shades and can turn red, blue, or white.
- Diameter: Benign moles generally are smaller than one quarter inch. Melanoma tumors often are larger than one quarter inch.
- Evolving: Melanoma tumors change in size, shape, or color over time. Benign moles resemble each other.

Source: www.positivehealthpromotions.com

National Drunk and Drugged Driving Month continued...

Three studies have found that zero tolerance laws were passed.

2) 0.08% BAC laws. Fatal alcohol-related crashes declined about 7% after 0.08% BAC laws were passed.

3) “Zero tolerance” laws for young drivers. Three studies have found that zero tolerance laws resulted in declines in fatal crashes among drivers ages 18-20 years of between 9% and 24%.

Source: http://www.cdc.gov/MotorVehicleSafety/Impaired_Driving/3d.html

Source: http://www.cdc.gov/MotorVehicleSafety/24%.

Studies have found that raising the Minimum legal drinking age (MLDA) to 21 has reduced crash rates by about 16% among people ages 18-20

5) Alcohol-related crashes in the United States cost over $51 billion a year.

Protect Yourself and Your Family and Friends:

1) Plan ahead! Always designate a non-drinking driver before any holiday party or celebration begins.
2) Take the keys. Do not let a friend drive if they are impaired.
3) Be a helpful host. If you are hosting a party this holiday season, remind your guests to plan ahead and designate their sober driver, always offer alcohol – free beverages, and make sure all of your guests leave with a sober driver.

Our local community is also committed to reducing alcohol and drug-impaired driving by enforcing the following methods:

1) Minimum legal drinking age (MLDA). Studies have found that raising the MLDA to 21 has reduced crash rates by about 16% among people ages 18-20

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Source: http://www.cdc.gov/MotorVehicleSafety/Impaired_Driving/3d.html

Ingredients:

- 3/4 cup packed brown sugar
- 3/4 cup raisins
- 1/2 cup white sugar
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1/2 teaspoon ground nutmeg
- 1/2 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- 1 cup all-purpose flour
- 3/4 cup rolled oats
- 1 teaspoon baking soda
- 1 teaspoon ground nutmeg
- 1/2 cup brown sugar
- 1 egg
- 1/2 cup softened butter or margarine
- 1/2 cup beaten egg
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 3/4 cup all-purpose flour

 Directions:

1) Preheat oven to 350 degrees. 2) Empty jar of cookie mix into large bowl. Use your hands to thoroughly mix. Mix in 3/4 cup softened butter or margarine. Stir in one slightly beaten egg and 1 teaspoon of vanilla. Mix until completely blended. You will need to finish mixing with your hands. Shape into small balls. Place on cookie sheets two inches apart. 4) Bake 11-13 minutes in preheated oven, or until edges are lightly browned. Cool five minutes on cookie sheet. Transfer cookies to wire racks to finish cooling.


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National Drunk and Drugged Driving Month continued...

three self-reported episodes of alcohol-impaired driving among U.S. adults each year.

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Source: http://www.cdc.gov/MotorVehicleSafety/Impaired_Driving/3d.html
Greening the Holidays
The following tips will help you be more environmentally conscious this holiday season.

Lighting: LED lights are the way to go, as they use far less energy and last much longer than the other kind.

Wrapping paper: How about using that newspaper you read? Then you can recycle it or compost it. Consider using a gift bag that you received from someone last year. If you have the time, sew gift bags that can be continuously used.

Gifts: How much more stuff do you really want? Giving experiences can be good— theatre, concert or movie tickets, a dinner out, an afternoon of snowshoeing, swimming lessons, or a home-cooked meal to be put in the freezer can all be wonderful gifts.

Trees: Live trees are biodegradable whereas artificial ones are not, and many fossil fuels were used to make the artificial tree and get it to your home. If you get a live tree, consider getting it chopped into mulch rather than have it disposed of in a landfill.

Source: http://blog.wellness.tips.ca/blog/?p=149

Five Holiday Wellness Tips:
Holidays are often times filled with family, laughter and love; however, as demands for our time increases and unrealistic expectations begin to build, the holidays can become anxiety ridden. Here are five simple things you can do to deal with the stress.

1) Exercise before you leave your bedroom in the morning. Do some stretches, yoga, or calisthenics. Get them done before anyone knows you are awake and you have them out of the way. It is a great way to start the day!

2) Take a walk. An after-dinner walk can be just the thing to escape the chaos of the holidays and reinvigorate you. You can even make it a family tradition by asking if anyone would like to join you for a stroll.

3) Do not stress about parking. Instead of searching for a parking spot close to the store, do not even bother and find a spot in the back and get a short walk in. You will save yourself time, frustration and burn a few extra calories.

4) Laugh and be a kid again. Get outside and play with the kids. Take the family ice skating. Play a game of tag. Go see your friends. And laugh. Laughing is a great tension reliever. It burns calories, reduces stress and makes you feel better all around.

5) Peace and quiet. Take some time for yourself. Spending time with friends and family is an essential part of the holiday, but it is also important to take at least five minutes for yourself to relax. Practice deep breathing during that time.


Processed Foods—Recipe for Disaster
Processed and packaged foods have taken over the American diet. Unfortunately, despite their convenience, these foods are full of additives and stripped of nutrients. They also contain excessive amounts of sweeteners, salts, artificial flavors, factory-created fats, colorings, and chemicals that alter texture. The other problem with these foods lies in what has been taken out of them. As previously mentioned, these foods are stripped of nutrients designed to protect your heart; for example, soluble fiber, antioxidants, and “good” fats. Below are the four red flags of processed foods that you should look out for.

Trans fats:
Trans fats are commonly found in bakery muffins, crispy crackers, microwave popcorn, and fast-food French fries. Research has revealed that trans fats are twice as dangerous for your heart as saturated fats and cause an estimated 30,000 to 100,000 premature heart disease deaths each year.

Trans fats are worse for your heart than saturated fats because they boost your levels of “bad” HDL cholesterol and decrease “good” HDL cholesterol. To identify trans fat look for words “partially hydrogenated,” “fractionated,” or “hydrogenated.” in the ingredient list. The higher you find one of these ingredients in the list, the more of it there is in the product.

Replacing transfats with good fats could cut your heart attack risk by 53 percent!

Refined Grains:
Choosing refined grains such as white bread, rolls, sugary low-fiber cereal, white rice, or white pasta over whole grains can raise your heart attack risk by up to 30 percent. Do not be fooled by deceptive label claims such as “made with wheat flour,” or “seven grain.” These are usually the same old refined stuff that raises your risk for high cholesterol, high blood pressure, heart attacks, insulin resistance, diabetes, and belly fat. Read the ingredient list on the packaged grain products. One of the first three ingredients should be whole wheat or another whole grain, such as oats. The fiber content should be at least three grams per serving.

Salt:
Three-quarters of the sodium in our diets is not from the salt-shaker. Processed foods, such as canned soup and vegetables, soy sauce, Worcestershire sauce, fast-food burgers, and bacon have excessive sodium in them.

When your body gets more salt than it needs it retains fluid simply to dilute the extra sodium in your bloodstream. This raises blood volume, forcing your heart to work harder; at the same time, it makes your veins and arteries constrict. This combination raises blood pressure.

Your daily limit for salt intake is 1,500 milligrams. This equals approximately three-fourths of a teaspoon of salt.

The “Nutrition Facts” panel on a food package will give you the real sodium count. Do not rely on the front of a package claiming to be “sodium-free.” These foods could still have up to 5 milligrams per serving.

High-Fructose Corn Syrup:
High-fructose corn syrup costs less to make and is sweeter to the taste than traditional sweeteners. This syrup is found in many frozen foods, hamburger buns and English muffins, beer, bacon, spaghetti sauce, soft drinks and even ketchup. It gives some whole-wheat bread its brown color and soft texture.

Research has suggested that high-fructose corn syrup may upset the human metabolism, thus raising the risk for heart disease and diabetes. Researchers have also claimed that corn syrup’s chemical structure encourages overeating. Fructose may also deplete your body’s reserves of chromium, a mineral important for healthy levels of cholesterol, insulin, and blood sugar. To spot fructose on a food label, look for the words “corn sweetener,” “corn syrup,” “or syrup solids,” or “high fructose corn syrup.”

Source: http://www.nut.com/living-healthy/4-most-harmful-ingredients-in-packaged-foods/article14901.html
Safe Driving Tips for Winter Conditions

The winter driving season has arrived! During this time, many crashes occur because motorists do not anticipate the road surface conditions. The following tips can help you get back into the winter driving frame of mind after the summer months.

Driving Tips: If you do find yourself beginning to slide on snow or ice, DON’T PANIC. Take your foot off the gas and DO NOT hit the brakes. If your vehicle begins to skid, (do not brake) and steer the vehicle in the direction you wish to go. This technique is used in both front- and rear-wheel drive vehicles. If you must use the breaks, in ABS-equipped vehicles, use a firm, steady pressure without pumping. If your car is not equipped with ABS, gently pump the brake pedal without locking up the brakes.

Vehicle Maintenance: Motorists need to make sure their vehicle is in good mechanical condition as weather conditions can cause unwanted vehicle issues. Make sure antifreeze is at the proper level. Install new wiper blades and fill the washer reservoir. Make sure your battery terminals are clean and if the battery is more than three years old, have it tested by a technician. Check your tire treads. Do not assume your tires will make it another winter. A good tip is to take a penny and stick it into the tread (head first). If you can see Lincoln’s head, it is time for new tires. You should also check your tire’s air pressure monthly. At the very least, have your tires checked by a reputable tire dealer.

Emergency Supplies: Unexpected events can and do happen. By having an emergency kit prepared ahead of time and in your vehicle, you can increase your chances of arriving at your destination safely. Items in your emergency kit should include: warm clothes, boots, hat, gloves, flashlight with batteries and flares, small shovel, sand or kitty litter, blankets and fresh first-aid supplies. Drinking water, snacks, candles, matches and a charged cell phone should also be considered.

Other basic safety tips include: Allow extra time to arrive at your destination. Slow down and be alert for other vehicles around you. Always keep extra space between you and other vehicles. Always wear your safety belt and ensure others in your vehicle are properly restrained. During inclement weather, always let someone else know you are traveling and the route you are taking. Lastly, stay alert and take breaks as needed.


Hepatitis C continued...

on the type of HCV you have, the treatment has a 40-80% chance of getting rid of the virus. These drugs have potentially severe side effects. Most people experience flu-like symptoms early on that may get better with time. Later side effects may include tiredness, hair loss, low blood count, trouble with thinking, moodiness, and depression. In some cases, the side effects are so severe treatment has to be stopped.

Between 20-30% of HCV patients are able to have sustained viral response (non-detectable in the blood) with proper treat-ment. Between 70-80% of HCV infections reported each year become chronic. Within the chronic group, about 20% go on to develop cirrhosis. Of this group, 25% go on to develop liver failure.

If you have been diagnosed with HCV you should be under the care of a doctor who specializes in the liver, stay on any prescribed medications, get the hepatitis A and B vaccines to protect yourself from another liver infection, avoid alcohol, and avoid spreading your blood to others (do not share razors, toothbrushes, or nail clippers). If you have any of the identified risk factors or have been exposed to the blood of an infected person you should talk to a doctor about getting tested for the disease.


Healthy Holiday Gift Ideas

This holiday season show you care with a gift that encourages good health for the body and mind.

Gifts for an active body:

- **Exercise videos or DVDs:** Speak to a fitness professional or read consumer product reviews online to assist you in finding a credible video that personalizes interests and goals.

- **Gym membership, fitness class card, or personal training session:** Look into holiday or seasonal specials for gym memberships.

- **Pedometer:** This is a simple tool that helps people get motivated to move more and keep track of the number of steps they take each day.

Gifts for a healthy diet:

- **Grill pan:** This type of pan makes it easy to prepare healthy recipes with little to no fat. It can be used to grill steaks, chicken or fish.

- **Juicer:** A juicer can be a great choice for a fruit juice lover.

- **Vegetable Steamer:** Steaming vegetables are a great way to get maximum benefits out of them.

Gifts for the Mind:

- **Massage or spa treatment gift certificate.**

- **Yoga class, yoga book, DVD or video.**

- **Aromatherapy candles, soap, bath beads or lotion.**

- **Books of puzzles or crosswords.**

http://www.aarp.org/health/staying_healthy/stress/healthy_gift_ideas.html?print=yes
Spine Health Quiz Solutions

1) B. Eight in ten people will have back pain at some point in their lives.

2) C. The spinal cord is part of the central nervous system (the brain is the other part). The spine is made up of bones called vertebrae that are separated and cushioned by disks of cartilage. The vertebrae are also covered by cartilage and are held in place by ligaments and muscles, which keep the spine stable. The spinal cord runs within the spine. Spinal nerves branch off from the cord and emerge through the spaces between the vertebrae. These nerves connect with nerves throughout the body. The spinal cord is also protected by meninges, a three-layer membrane that also encases the brain. Spinal fluid flows around the spinal cord inside the meninges.

3) C. Disks are made of tough, elastic tissue. They are found between each of the vertebrae of the spine. The elastic tissue acts as a shock absorber for the vertebrae.

4) D. The most common cause of a slipped disk is aging. The elastic tissue of the disk breaks down and weakens with age. The ligaments holding the disk in place also weaken as you grow older. Some people are more prone to having a slipped disk, so sudden twisting or sudden strain on the back may result in one.

5) D. Back strains and sprains that occur when exercising may be caused by weight lifting, turning quickly when dribbling a basketball, or swinging a bat or golf club. Back injuries occur more often when a person isn’t in good physical shape and his or her back muscles are weak. Other causes of back sprain or strain include poor posture, obesity, and fatigue.

6) C. When osteoarthritis occurs in the spine, the cartilage deteriorates and the space between the vertebrae decreases. The spinal nerves can become pinched, causing pain. As the condition worsens, the person may feel numbness, weakness in the back, muscle spasms and stiffness.

7) D. According to the National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke do not slouch while sitting or standing; do not stand or work in one position for a long time; do not smoke; sleep on your side with your knees drawn up; try to reduce stress in your life that causes muscle tension.

8) B. The fracture usually occurs in the fourth or fifth lumbar vertebrae of the lower back. A similar condition, called spondylolisthesis, is a stress fracture caused by degenerative disk disease in women older than forty.

Spending the Holidays Alone

Sometimes life circumstances require us to spend the holidays alone. This doesn’t have to be a sad occurrence! Take this opportunity to create your own special day full of tradition and good memories just for yourself. Here are a few ideas of what you can do for the holidays when you are by yourself.

1) Have a day of pamper: Spending the holidays alone are the perfect opportunity to pamper yourself. You can take that bubble bath that you have been planning! You should take the opportunity to make it as loving and nurturing as you can.

2) Catch up on your reading. If you know you will be alone for the holidays plan in advance to have a few of your favorite books around. Take a trip to your local library or treat yourself to an Amazon.com splurge so that you will have ample activity for your mind that day.

3) Cook an excellent meal. If you have been meaning to try out some new recipes, why not use this day to do so. There is no reason not to make a fabulous holiday meal just because you will be alone. This can actually be a great time to experiment without the pressure of having to have it perfect.

4) Start a simple project. There are tons of small craft projects that you could start and finish in a day. Some ideas are soap-making, candle-making, jewelry making, knitting, crocheting, painting, etc. The Marquette Michael's craft store is sure to have an extensive collection of great inexpensive kits to choose from.

5) Bake cookies for yourself. Get into the holiday spirit of cookie making and make a bunch of scrumptious batches for yourself or your local church.

6) Write out New Year's cards. It is usually hard to find the time to write out holiday cards. You can use your free day then to spend some time writing out all of your New Year’s cards in a relaxed and calm state. Doing this after you take your bath and while you are eating your cookies would be perfect.

7) Have a movie marathon. This idea is pretty self-explanatory. Grab up your favorite series or bunch of movies from the local movie store a day before and enjoy catching up on something new or your old go to favorites.

8) Make plans for the new year. While you have this quiet time to yourself, spend some of it planning how you want your next year to go. You will be in a fabulous mood after your pampering and good food and so you will be in a good place mentally to visualize the goals that you want for the new year.

The holidays alone can be a very positive, rejuvenating experience if you approach it the right way. If you will be alone for the holidays, why not make it a special day for yourself!

Source: https://mylifestages.org/MyLifeStages/healthcenter/Quizzes.page?R=sw40-SpineBackQuiz

Source: http://www.bellaonline.com/articles/