



Your Health - It's CENTRAL

CMU Health Care
Committee

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Beware bogus cures and other online health frauds

The federal watchdog agency, the Food and Drug Administration, warns consumers about bogus cancer cures, weight loss products, tablets, teas, and tonics.

Beware of these online health frauds:

Cancer fraud: Among the many long-running cancer scams is the Hoxsey Cancer Treatment, an herbal regimen that has no proven benefit. Another scam involves products called black salves. These are offered with the false promise of drawing cancer out from the skin, but they are potentially harmful to tissues. Cancer requires individualized treatment by a specialized doctor. No single device, remedy, or treatment can treat all types of cancer.

HIV/AIDS fraud: There are legitimate treatments that can help people with the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV). While early treatment of HIV can delay progression to AIDS, there is currently no cure for the disease. Relying on unproven products and treatments can be dangerous and cause delays in seeking legitimate medical treatments that have been proven in clinical trials to improve quality of life.

Arthritis fraud: The U.S. Federal Trade Commission says consumers spend about \$2 billion annually on unproven arthritis remedies that are not backed by adequate science. For current, accurate information on arthritis treatments and alternative therapies, visit the Arthritis Foundation Web site at www.arthritis.org.

Fraudulent “diagnostic” tests: Doctors often use in vitro diagnostic (IVD) tests—in tandem with a physical examination and a medical history—to get a picture of a patient’s overall health. These tests involve blood, urine, or other specimen samples taken from the body. They help diagnose or measure many conditions, including pregnancy, hepatitis, fertility, HIV, cholesterol, and blood sugar. *Continued on Page 2*

Do doodle

Doodling while listening can help with remembering details, rather than implying that the mind is wandering as is the common perception. According to a study published in the journal *Applied Cognitive Psychology*, subjects given a doodling task while listening to a dull phone message had a 29% improved recall compared to their non-doodling counterparts.

Wellness Matters: Turning Wellness into a Family Affair

This past spring, Michelle Somes-Booher, CMU temporary faculty member decided to issue a challenge to her 10-year old son Charlie. Michelle had been tracking her exercise minutes for the Cash in on Wellness exercise awards and challenged her son to do the same. They both would track their minutes from April 1 to June 30, 2009.

Michelle told Charlie he would receive a prize if he achieved the goal of 1170 minutes. Both Michelle and Charlie met the goal and Charlie was impressed with his numbers! Michelle received a gift card for her efforts through the Cash in on Wellness program and she decided to reward Charlie with a gift card of his own.

Michelle found a great way to get her son in-

involved in activity and to encourage him to take charge of his own wellness.

Modeling healthy behaviors is a great way to get family involved in their own wellness.

Find ways to involve your family in wellness and make it a family affair. You can use Michelle’s idea or come up with one on your own!

Frauds continued from Page 1

It's rare that the use of only one of these tests can provide a meaningful diagnosis. You can buy IVD tests in stores, through the mail, or online. Many of these tests are regulated by FDA and sold legally. However, many others are marketed illegally and do not meet FDA's regulatory requirements. These tests may not work or may be harmful. To find out whether FDA has cleared or approved an IVD test for a particular purpose, check

www.fda.gov/opacom/backgrounders/complain.html.

Bogus dietary supplements: The array of dietary supplements—including vitamins and minerals, amino acids, enzymes, herbs, animal extracts, and others—has grown tremendously. Although the benefits of some of these have been documented, the advantages of others are unproven. For example, claims that a supplement allows you to eat all you want and lose weight effortlessly are false. A product that claims to treat diseases is considered a drug. Firms wanting to make such claims legally must follow FDA's approval process to show that the products are safe and effective.



Weight loss fraud: Since 2003, FDA has worked with national and international partners to take hundreds of compliance actions against companies pushing bogus and misleading weight loss schemes. FDA has recently enhanced efforts to stop sales and importation of—and to warn consumers about—weight loss products that contain dangerous prescription drug ingredients that are not listed on the label.

Sexual enhancement product fraud: FDA has warned consumers about numerous illegal drugs promoted and sold online for treating erectile dysfunction and for enhancing sexual performance. Although they are marketed as “dietary supplements,” these products are really illegal drugs that contain potentially harmful ingredients that are not listed on the label.

Don't be a victim. Never diagnose or treat yourself with questionable products. Always check with your doctor before using new medical products.

Don't be fooled by professional-looking Web sites. Avoid Web sites that fail to list the company's name, physical address, phone number, or other contact information. For more tips for online buying, visit www.fda.gov/buyonlineguide/.

The truth revealed: The magic bullet diet

Okay, there is no magic bullet for weight loss. Yet many fad diets offer such false hope, says registered dietitian Kris Clark, PhD, RD, Director of Sports Nutrition at The Pennsylvania State University. “Diet myths mislead and deceive women [and men] to believe a particular ingredient or diet plan will help them lose weight, when most of these are in fact incorrect and some can even be unhealthy.”

Dr. Clark reveals the truth about a few of the popular diet myths:

- **Eating at night makes you gain weight.** While a full belly might not make for the most restful night of sleep, our bodies don't metabolize food differently in the evening than at other times of the day. Weight gain has nothing to do with *when* we eat, but rather *what* we eat and *how much*.
- **Avoid high fructose corn syrup to lose weight faster.** Recent scien-

tific reviews confirm there is no unique link between high fructose corn syrup and obesity. In fact, high fructose corn syrup (often found in soft drinks and juices) is nutritionally the same as sugar, metabolizes in the body similarly, and is equally sweet with the same number of calories—4 per gram, compared to 9 calories per gram for fats. Dr. Clark adds, “No single food or ingredient is the cause of obesity or weight gain. Eating too many calories and getting too little exercise causes it.”

- **Detox from specific ingredients/food for quick, healthy weight loss.** There is no scientific evidence that points to detox dieting being an effective weight loss strategy. Experts agree that moderation is the key to a healthy diet. Extreme measures, such as food restriction and fasting, may do more harm than good.
- **High-protein, low-carb diets are**

best for weight loss. A recent Harvard study shows that regardless of protein or carb levels in the diet, total calories count when it comes to weight loss.

• **Acai berry is the best new food for losing weight.** This so-called superfood has recently received tremendous press that promises rapid and dramatic weight loss, but the truth is it has only been proven to be a healthy antioxidant.





Health Services Corner

by Sarah Yonder, MD- Health Center Physician

Your Immune System...Keep it Strong!

Following up the update on H1N1 from the August newsletter, I would like to focus on prevention and strengthening your immune system. Simply put, your immune system is a complex array of cells and chemical processes that detect and attack foreign agents in the body. It attacks everything from viruses and bacteria, to tumor cells. It also manufactures antibodies for future defenses. Your immune system can do wonders on its own, but you can help it along with easy tips to follow.

Regular and adequate sleep is critical to immune functioning. Maintaining a routine sleep schedule where a person goes to bed and gets up around the same time everyday is very helpful. A study at the University of Chicago found subjects with limited sleep showed a poor immune re-

sponse to a flu vaccine. Inadequate sleep may lead to an increase in a stress hormone in the body which results in more inflammation.

Adults should strive for 7-8 hours of sleep each night.

Another regular activity that helps is exercise. You don't have to join a gym or run a marathon either. Walking several times a week or playing tennis with a friend counts as exercise and if you do 20-30 minutes on three to four days of the week you are good. If you do more, great! Research has found regular exercise increases cells that fight infection called leukocytes or white blood cells.

Diet of course affects your immune system. Decreasing sugar and fat and increasing foods with antioxidants like berries, carrots, sweet potatoes, apples and spinach helps.

You want to look for and consume bright colored fruits and vegetables. Antioxidants help in the fight against free radicals in the body. Free radicals cause cellular damage leading to disease.

While we all deal with stress, having some relaxation time each day will help improve our immune system. Relaxation has been shown to decrease cortisol, the stress hormone in our bodies. Taking time out and giving your mind and body quiet time to relax will help you fight infection. Striking the right balance will keep you and your body strong!

Please check the following websites for H1N1 updates:

<http://www.cmich.edu/x22.xml>

<http://www.cdc.gov>

Featured Recipe: Take-A-Break Snack Mix

Whether your schedule is go-go-go or hurry-up-and-wait, you'll be glad you packed these tasty tidbits for healthy snacking.

Cooking spray

1/4 cup sliced almonds

1 tablespoon light brown sugar

2 teaspoons water

1/4 teaspoon ground cinnamon

1/8 teaspoon ground nutmeg

2 cups whole-grain oat cereal with yogurt-flavored coating

2 cups whole-grain wheat and bran flakes with raisins

1/2 cup dried unsweetened cranberries

1/2 cup dried unsweetened blueberries

Put a piece of aluminum foil about 12 inches square on a platter or baking sheet. Lightly spray with cooking spray. Set aside.

In a small nonstick skillet, dry-roast the almonds over medium heat for 2 to 3 minutes, or until lightly golden brown, stirring occasionally.

Stir in the brown sugar, water, cinnamon, and nutmeg. Cook for 1 to 2 minutes, or until the liquid has evaporated and the almonds are coated with the mixture, stirring constantly. Transfer to the foil. Let cool completely, 15 to 20 minutes.

Meanwhile, in a medium bowl, stir together the remaining ingredients.

Add the cooled almonds to the cereal

mixture, stirring to combine. Store in an airtight container for up to 7 days.

Cook's Tip: For variety, substitute different nutrient-dense dried fruits, such as cherries, apricots, and plums, for the cranberries and blueberries. Cut them into 1/4- to 1/2-inch pieces before adding them to the cereal mixture.

Serves 10 (1/2 cup per serving): 139 calories, 2 g fat, 124 mg sodium, 28 g carbs.

From the American Heart Association's Food Certification Program. Recipe copyright 2008 American Heart Association. For more information about heart-healthy grocery shopping, visit www.heartcheckmark.org.

**CMU Health Care
Committee**

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The committee welcomes input regarding healthcare and wellness issues. Please contact your representative with any questions or concerns you have regarding your medical benefits. Campus phone numbers, fax numbers and email addresses are available on the HCC webpage <http://www.hrs.cmich.edu/wellness/download/hcc-member-list.pdf>

“Act as if what you do makes a difference. It does.”

- William James

Benefits & Wellness presents....Understand Your Plan



Value-Added Benefits with The Hartford Insurance

Although everyone hopes that they never have to use their life, accidental death and dismemberment (AD&D) or long-term disability insurances, you can be comforted by the value-added benefits that these coverages provide to you and your beneficiaries.

The Hartford offers many value-added benefits in conjunction with their policies. Life insurance enhancements include terminal illness accelerated benefits, waiver of premium, plan conversion and portability, estate guidance (online will preparation) and counseling services for beneficiaries. The Hartford also of-

fers enhancements through the AD&D insurance that can assist you and your beneficiaries after an accidental injury or death. To see more details about these services, please visit http://cmich.edu/HR_Home/Benefits_and_Wellness/Employee_Life_Insurance.htm.

Through the long-term disability coverage The Hartford offers value-added benefits such as retirement income protection, cost of living increases, survivor income benefit, conversions, work-life counseling and WorldWide travel assistance. More de-

tails about each of these benefits can be found at http://cmich.edu/HR_Home/Benefits_and_Wellness/LTD_Summary.htm.

