



Pax Christi Healthline November, 2008

Thursday, November 20th is the Great American Smokeout,
It is never too late to kick the habit!



Update on Vitamin D...

The American Academy of Pediatrics has doubled the daily requirements of vitamin D from 200 units to 400 units daily for children and adults to age 50.

Most children will have to take vitamin D supplements, that includes breast-fed infants (even those who get formula because breast milk is deficient in the vitamin) and teens who drink little or no milk. Baby formula contains vitamin D, so infants on formula generally don't need supplements. Four cups of milk is what is needed daily, but most children and teens don't drink enough of it.

Supplements are available in drops, capsules and tablets.

Food sources of vitamin D are oily fish (tuna, mackerel, sardines, salmon), liver, eggs, orange juice and fortified cereals.



The best source of vitamin D is sunlight because the body makes it when sunshine hits the skin. A few times a week, 10 to 15 minutes of sun exposure on your face, arms, hands or back can help your skin create vitamin D. The amount you produce depends on many factors. People who live in northern, less sunny climates, people with dark skin, and those in their senior years typically make less of the vitamin. Because of sunlight's link with skin cancer, most experts recommend limiting exposure to the sun and wearing sun screen during the sun's peak hours.

There is mounting research about the potential benefits from vitamin D besides keeping bones strong, including suggestions that it might reduce risks for cancer, diabetes and heart disease.

Observational research has indicated that having low blood levels of vitamin D increases the risk of some cancers. It appears that the vitamin plays a role in regulating cellular growth, which could prevent cells from becoming cancerous.

Lower vitamin D levels are associated with a number of factors that impact cardiovascular health, including coronary artery calcification and possibly congestive heart failure.

The main function of vitamin D is to maintain normal blood levels of calcium and phosphorus. When you don't get enough, your body reacts by taking calcium and phosphorus from your bones. This can eventually lead to osteoporosis or osteomalacia (a bone softening condition known as rickets in children).

*From Associated Press Oct. 13, 2008 and Mayo Clinic Women's Healthsource,
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November is National Alzheimer's Disease Awareness Month



Living with Alzheimer's disease is a challenge for anyone. It's difficult to remember things, make decisions, and find your way around the way you used to. It can be frustrating for a good deal of the time, but there are good days and bad days. Here are some helpful tips and things you can do to make things easier for yourself—to make things feel a bit more normal again.

- Always keep a book with you to record important information, phone numbers, names, ideas, appointments, your address and directions to your home.
- Label cupboards and drawers with words or pictures that describe their contents.
- Use a calendar to keep track of important dates, use photos of people you see often labeled with their names.
- Find things to do that you enjoy and are able to do safely on your own.
- Always take directions for where you're going with you. Drive only in areas familiar to you.
- Have someone else drive you where you need to go.
- Ask someone to go with you when you go out.
- Allow yourself the time to do the things you need to do , and don't feel rushed or let other people rush you.
- If you tend to get lost or confused easily, consider alternative modes of transportation.
- The Department of Motor Vehicles will assess your driving skills if you're not sure whether you should drive.
- Local Alzheimer's organizations or your doctor will be able to tell you how to get help with things like shopping, housekeeping, meals (Meals on Wheels), and transportation.
- Keep a list of important and emergency numbers by the phone.
- Ask a neighbor you trust to keep a set of house keys.
- Ask someone to check things out around the house, such as electrical appliances and smoke detectors.
- Have family, friends, neighbors, or a community service program call or visit daily to ensure that everything is alright.
- Arrange for direct deposit of checks—retirement pension and/or Social Security benefits. Your bank may provide special services for people with Alzheimer's.



These are several tips that are available to you by going online to Web MD, www.webmd.com and enter the word Alzheimer's.

It is important to realize that at some point, it will become too difficult or dangerous for you to live by yourself. But, in the earliest stages of the disease, many people do manage on their own—with support and help from friends, family, and community programs and with simple adjustments and safety practices in place.

From Web MD and reviewed by the doctors at the Cleveland Clinic Neuroscience Center