



QUARTERLY HEALTH AWARENESS NEWSLETTER

ST. EDWARD THE CONFESSOR PARISH NURSE MINISTRY

Quarterly Topics

- Thyroid Disease-** the Thyroid is a butterfly shaped gland located in the neck, It weights less than one ounce with a length of two inches. This small but powerful organ affect multiple organs in the body. The thyroid gland produces a hormone that can affect your, brain, heart, lungs, and your skin. Thyroid disease is more prevalent in older adults and women.
- Glaucoma –**Half of all people with glaucoma are undiagnosed. Glaucoma is still the number-one blinding disease among African Americans. People at risk are African Americans aged 40 years and older. Everyone 60 years an older, especially Mexican Americans, and people with a family history of glaucoma. People falling in these groups should have a dilated eye exam every two years by a eye care specialist.
- Cervical Health Awareness-** The most important things you can do to prevent cervical cancer is to get vaccinated against HPV, have regular screening test and go back to the doctor if your screening test results are not normal
- Heart Health, Healthy Supplement & Lifestyle-** Involves understanding your risk, making healthy choices, and taking steps to reduce your chances of getting heart disease. Improve over all health and wellbeing.
- Sleep Awareness-**About 50 to 70 million Americans have sleep disorders, and 1 in 3 adults do not regularly get the recommended sleep needed to protect their health

Thyroid Disease Awareness

Thyroid- problems are more common than you might expect. Ten percent of the population experiences thyroid disorders. Thyroid disease is most common in women..

The gland is in front of the windpipe and is shaped like a butterfly. The gland controls several functions of the body. They include regulating breathing, body temperature, heart rate, and body weight.

The Thyroid can malfunction, becoming overactive or underactive, and have important manifestations on the body

Hyperthyroidism

The thyroid can produce excessive levels of thyroid hormone, thyroxine. Sometime called overactive thyroid, the condition can cause the body to “rev up”

Symptoms

- Feeling excessively hot or sweaty
- Feeling that your heart is racing or beating irregularly
- Unintended weight loss
- Diarrhea
- Hair loss or thinning
- Irregular periods

Treatment

- Beta blockers to address the cardiac irregularity
- Anti thyroid medication, including methimazole, and propylthiouracil
- Radioactive iodine
- Surgery

Hypothyroidism

On the other hand, the thyroid can underperform, producing too little thyroid-stimulating hormone (TSH). This can make the body slow down. Some causes for hypothyroidism include autoimmune disease, such as Hashimoto's thyroiditis surgical removal of the thyroid, and radiation treatment.

Symptoms

- Feeling excessive cold
- Feeling Fatigued
- Brain fog
- Depressed
- Constipation
- Drier, course skin

Avoid Decongestions If you have Thyroid Disease

Especially if they contain pseudoephedrine or phenylephrine

Alternatives to decongestions would include :

- Nasal rinse
- Breath Right strips
- Benadryl
- Chlor-Trimeton
- Zyrtec
- Loratadine

Glaucoma

Glaucoma is an eye condition that damages the nerve.

- The nerve connecting the eye to the brain is damaged and is usually due to high eye pressure.
- Glaucoma can occur at any age and is the leading cause of blindness in adults over age 60.
- Four major types:
 - open-angle
 - angle-closure also known as closed-angle
 - congenital and secondary glaucoma
- The most serious form of glaucoma is closed-angle

Symptoms

Is dependent on the type and stage of each condition,

Most common symptom is hazy/ blurred vision, rainbow-colored circles around bright lights, nausea, vomiting and sudden sight loss.

Prevention

- Regular eye examinations, help detect glaucoma in its early stages (over the age of 40yrs old recommendations is every 2-4years)
- Wear eye protection (protect from sun rays)
- Take prescribed eye drops

Treatment

- Treatment includes regular eye exams to slow down/prevent vision loss. If disease is caught soon.
- Eye drops
- Oral medication
- Surgery and other therapies (laser, filtering therapy)

Ramona Sanchez-Brady, LPN

Cervical Health

Why is cervical health important?

- The cervix is the opening to the uterus and a part of the female reproductive system
- The cells of the cervix are at risk for infection and changes leading to cancer
- Cervical cancer is usually without symptoms until cancer is more advanced

How do I ensure good cervical health?

- Having a yearly exam with a gynecologist, OB/GYN or internal medicine doctor
- Having Pap test as recommended by your doctor or nurse practitioner/physician assistant
- HPV (human papillomavirus) testing as recommended by your doctor, NP/PA
- Getting a HPV vaccine

What is HPV?

- HPV is a virus that is sexually transmitted between partners
- It can be carried by female and males
- It causes warts that may or may not have symptoms
- Types 16 and 18 are the ones most likely to cause cancer
- HPV can lie dormant for many years before causing infection and cellular change of cervical cells

What is a Pap test or Pap smear?

- It is a test done in the doctor's office during an annual gynecological exam
- The doctor uses a speculum (plastic or metal) to open the vagina to allow access to the cervix
- It is important for the doctor to examine the cervix and then take a sample of the cells by scraping the cervix using a small spatula or brush
- Those cells and mucus are sent to a lab for evaluation for cell changes, precancer or cancer cells
- The cells can also be sent to lab for HPV testing
- The test can cause some cramping and bleeding but those don't usually last long
- Early testing can identify cells that need to be followed or treated to decrease the risk of cancer

What can I do to decrease my risk of HPV or cervical cancer?

- Have recommended doctor exams
 - a) Began examines by age 21-25 even if you are not sexually active to get baseline
 - b) <39 years of age: every year to every other year as directed by your doctors
 - c) 30-65 years of age: If you have had 3 negative Pap test and are negative for HPV in 3 tests, many doctors recommended extending to every 3-5 years
 - d) >65 years of age: every 5 years if all test have been normal. Some women no longer need testing
 - e) You will no longer need testing if you had a hysterectomy that removed the cervix
 - f) Take barrier protection if you are sexually active unless in a monogamous relationship

Get the HPV vaccine:

- Recommended for Girls and Boys starting at age 11-12 until age 26
- Recommended for women 27-45 if they have risk factors
- Dosing (2-3) depends on age of starting the series

It is a vaccine to reduce the risk of cervical (and penile/oral) cancers **not** and STD vaccine to increase sexual activity in young people

- Don't smoke
- Have closer monitoring if you are HIV positive or immunosuppressed

Anne Casto, RN, MSN, NNP-BC

Heart Health and Life Style

A healthy diet and lifestyle are the keys to preventing and managing heart disease. Make the simple steps below part of your life for long term benefits to your health and your heart.

Use up at least as many calories as you take in.

- Increase the amount and intensity of your physical activity to burn more calories
- Aim for at least 150 minutes of physical activity (e.g.: brisk, walking, water aerobics, dancing (ballroom or social), gardening, tennis or biking each week.

Regular physical activity can help you maintain your weight, maintain weight lost , reach physical and cardiovascular fitness. Ideally, your activity should be spread throughout the week.

Eat an overall healthy dietary plan that emphasizes:

- A wide variety of **fruits and vegetables**
- Whole grains and products made up mostly **whole grains**
- Healthy sources of protein (**mostly plants such as legumes and nuts, fish and sea food**: low-fat or nonfat dairy; and, if you eat meat and poultry, ensuring it is lean and unprocessed)
- Liquid non-tropical vegetable **oils**
- Minimally **processed foods**
- Minimize **added sugar** intake
- Prepare food with little or no **salt**
- Limit or Obtain from **alcohol**
- Live **Tobacco Free**

Do not **smoke, vape, or use tobacco or nicotine products and avoid secondhand smoke**

Amy Reis, RN, BSN, CEN.

Sleep Health

Sleep is essential for good health. Not getting enough uninterrupted sleep negatively affects a person's attention, learning and memory, and physical health. 50-70 million Americans have sleep or wakefulness disorders.

Sleep deficiency and untreated disorders are associated with a growing number of health problems.

- Heart disease
- High blood pressure
- Stroke
- Diabetes
- Obesity
- Certain cancers

Key Sleep Disorders

- **Insomnia**- inability to initiate sleep, maintain sleep or inability to fall back to sleep after early morning awakening. Healthcare provider will rule out potential causes like other sleep disorders, side effects of medication, substance abuse, depression, and undetected illness.
- **Narcolepsy**- called (sleep attacks) excessive day time sleepiness including episodes of irresistible sleepiness combined with sudden muscle weakness, elicited by strong emotion or surprise
- **Restless legs syndrome**- unpleasant "creeping" sensation, feeling that originating in the lower legs. Also associated with aches and pains throughout the legs. Causing difficulty falling asleep and relieved by movement of the leg, like walking or kicking.
- This is associated with neurotransmitter dopamine abnormalities
- **Sleep Apnea**- is characterized by periodic gasping or snoring noises during sleep with momentary interruption. When sleep apnea is left untreated and co-morbidities such as high blood pressure, diabetes, and heart disease; can result in stroke, heart attack or death.

Treatments-

- **Insomnia**-sleeping pills and sleep hygiene (developing and maintaining healthy sleep habits that can help you get the best rest possible).
- **Narcolepsy or hypersomnia**- stimulants to increase alertness and concentration.
- **Restless legs**—lifestyle changes, natural supplements, anti-seizure drugs, Dopaminergic agents, Opioids and Benzodiazepines
- **Sleep Apnea**—lifestyle changes, e.g weight loss, use of a breathing assistance device when sleeping (Continuous Positive Airway Pressure –CPAP) machine

Cynthia Williams, MSN, ANP--BC

Bibliography

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<https://www.thyroid.org>

American Thyroid Association

2. Glaucoma

www.mayoclinic.org

www.nei.nih.gov

3. Heart Health & Lifestyle

www.heart.org

4. Cervical Health

https://www.cdc.gov/cancer/cervical/basic_info

www.healthline.com/health/pap-smear

www.hopkinsmedicine.org/health/pap-test

5. Sleep Apnea

American Academy of Sleep Medicine

www.sleepeducation.org

www.nhlbi.nih.gov

Additional Recourses and Handouts

NIH. Cancer.gov. Patient education

Childhood Cancer

Coping, Support & Screening

Family Caregivers

Tobacco cessation

Type of Cancers

Nhlbi.nih.gov “Your guide to Healthy Heart”

Nhlbi.nih.gov “Truth about Women and Heart Disease”

“Self-Measure Blood Pressure”

“Cholesterol & your Health”

“Are you a Healthy Weight”

“Tips on what to eat vs limit your eating”

“Coming Soon”

January 20th 2024- Advance Directives (check Bulletin for details)

Blood Pressure & Glucose Monitoring Clinic- Coming soon

Check Bulletin for dates and times

Your Parish Nurse Ministry