

Institute for Disability Studies  
ShareCare Notes  
April 7, 2006  
Important Health Information and Upcoming Events

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1. Quick Test of Your Health/Fitness Knowledge

This first week of April is National Public Health Week, and Friday, April 7, is World Health Day.

(<http://www.who.int/world-health-day/2006/en/index.html>)

Here are six questions to determine your health/fitness knowledge. The answers will be in the next ShareCare Notes.

(1) Monounsaturated fats, found in these foods, help reduce cholesterol:

- A. avocados, canola and olive oils
- B. sesame, sunflower and safflower margarines
- C. beef, butter and cheese
- D. palm and coconut oils

(2) Menopausal women are susceptible to developing dry eyes, causing eyes to sting, burn or feel scratchy. Dry eyes can be caused by:

- A. poor tear quality and production
- B. medications such as diuretics, antihistamines, sleeping pills and some antidepressants
- C. smoke, sun, wind and indoor heating
- D. all the above

(3) Sinusitis, an inflammation of the sinuses, is most commonly caused by:

- A. food sensitivities
- B. viruses, bacteria and allergies
- C. fatigue and overexertion
- D. contact with a person who has sinusitis

(4) To prevent back pain, it's important to:

- A. exercise, eat right and practice good posture
- B. limit activity as much as possible
- C. wear a back brace regularly
- D. sleep on a soft mattress

(5) Which statement about depression is true?

- A. Depression is a normal part of aging.
- B. Depression is a normal part of menopause.
- C. About 12 million American women become clinically depressed each year.
- D. More men than women experience depression.

(6) A study in The Journal of American Medical Association says this vitamin may be more important than calcium when it comes to preventing bone fractures:

- A. Vitamin A
- B. Vitamin D
- C. Vitamin C
- D. Vitamin E

BE SURE TO CHECK OUT THE NEXT ISSUE OF SHARECARE NOTES TO FIND OUT THE ANSWERS TO THESE QUESTIONS.

This information was taken from "Health Keys: A Publication for Seniors," a newsletter published quarterly by Jaquith Nursing Home, a division of the Mississippi State Hospital.

## 2. Important Vision Information for Seniors

Vision impairment affects one out of three people over the age of 65. Aging-related health problems can contribute to this, such as diabetes or high blood pressure. It is vitally important to have your eyes checked on a regular basis. Some early indicators are blurred vision and flashes of light. There are four serious vision impairments that older adults need to be concerned about.

**Glaucoma** - This condition occurs when the normal flow of watery fluid between the cornea and the lens is blocked, causing pressure to build inside the eye. Typically, this condition occurs in both eyes. There are medications and/or eye drops that can be prescribed to combat glaucoma.

**Cataracts** - These are cloudy areas on the lens that block light from passing through to the retina. This can be caused by protein clumps that build up. Cataracts do not always require surgery but need to be assessed by your doctor. Factors that can help prevent cataracts are not smoking and wearing UV-protected sunglasses in the sun.

**Age-related macular degeneration** - This condition occurs when light-sensing cells in the macula, the central part of the retina, break down, often causing an irreversible loss of central vision. There are two types of this condition: dry and wet. Things that can help prevent this condition are eating lots of green leafy vegetables, controlling high blood pressure, and taking vitamins E and C.

**Diabetic retinopathy** - Chronic high blood sugar levels can damage vessels that feed the retina. Not controlling your blood sugar can lead to blurred vision which, in time, can cause blindness. It is important to see your doctor routinely if you are diabetic. Also, it is equally as important to take your diabetic medication and eat right to prevent this from occurring.

This information was taken from "Health Keys: A Publication for Seniors," a newsletter published quarterly by Jaquith Nursing Home, a division of the Mississippi State Hospital.

Please speak with your physician if you have concerns. To read more about vision impairment, causes and treatments, try <http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/visionimpairmentandblindness.html>

## 3. Drug Free Alternatives to Manage Arthritis Pain

The Arthritis Foundation has reported on the top ten advances in 2005 and has made predictions for the future. To read more about their predictions for the future, visit [http://www.arthritis.org/resources/top\\_ten/2005/Top\\_10\\_Advances\\_2005\\_Release.pdf](http://www.arthritis.org/resources/top_ten/2005/Top_10_Advances_2005_Release.pdf).

As they point out, several of the leading arthritis medications have been taken off the shelf due to dangerous side effects. One very important alternative is life style changes [http://www.arthritis.org/resources/arthritisistoday/2005\\_archives/2005\\_01\\_02/2005\\_01\\_02\\_medicine\\_1.asp](http://www.arthritis.org/resources/arthritisistoday/2005_archives/2005_01_02/2005_01_02_medicine_1.asp)

and, if you are interested, diet supplements <http://www.arthritis.org/conditions/supplementguide/>.

Here are some other alternatives to medication offered by "Health Keys: A Publication for Seniors."

**TENS** - Transcutaneous electrical nerve stimulation delivers safe, low volt electrical currents through electrodes taped on or near painful areas. This is a good short term pain reliever. It blocks pain messages to the brain and thus modifies the person's pain perception.

**Massage** - Therapeutic massage done by a certified therapist can reduce joint pain and stiffness. Done on a regular basis, massage can improve body's production of endorphins, which are natural painkillers. It can also improve sleep. We recommend that you seek out a professional at a reputable salon.

**Acupuncture** - This method uses fine needles to stimulate points in your body that release endorphins and fight inflammation. This may be especially beneficial for osteoarthritis. Again, we recommend that you seek a professional that is licensed.

Always speak with your physician before making any changes.

#### 4. Upcoming Events

On Thursday, April 13, 2006, Forrest General Hospital will have their monthly caregiver support meeting at 6 p.m. in the Elm room.

On Thursday, April 20, 2006, ShareCare will have its monthly member potluck dinner at Westminster Presbyterian Church. Everyone is invited. Bring your favorite covered dish and a friend. It is a great opportunity to meet other members and to see what ShareCare is all about.

On Wednesday, April, 26, 2006, ShareCare will host its monthly caregiver support group at Westminster Presbyterian Church at 10 a.m. We will begin the series "Powerful Tools for Caregivers." This series is designed to help family caregivers take care of themselves. We believe that you have to take care of yourself in order to be able to take care of your loved ones the way you would like to.

#### 5. ShareCare Bank Update

It is the beginning of April, and the last few months have been very exciting for ShareCare Bank. We have had lots of exchanges and have many more pending. We are looking forward to the months ahead to watch the Bank grow. We have a variety of services available, such as haircuts, computer drafting, companionship, transportation, housework, yard work and many more. If you are not currently a member of ShareCare

Bank, please join us at the potluck for a fun night and to learn how you can become a member of ShareCare Bank.