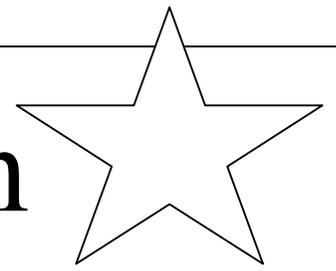


To Your Health



VA Palo Alto Health Care System ★ Patient Education Newsletter ★ Spring 2000

"Promoting good health through information."

WHAT EVERYONE NEEDS TO KNOW ABOUT HEPATITIS C

Rosemary Gill, R.N.

VA Palo Alto Health Care System will soon begin screening patients for the hepatitis C virus. Hepatitis C is a virus that can destroy the liver. It can lead to cirrhosis of the liver and liver cancer. Hepatitis C is the most common cause of chronic liver disease and number one reason for liver transplants in the United States. In many people the virus does not cause symptoms early on.

Am I at Risk?

The hepatitis C risk factor screening is being offered at VAs throughout the country because many of our veterans might be infected. Many veterans have risk factors for hepatitis C. Risk factors include IV drug use, blood transfusion before 1992, and other exposures to another person's blood.

Why Should I be Tested?

Treatment is available that may help some people with hepatitis C. It is also very important to learn if you have the virus so that you can take very good care of your liver (such as completely stopping alcohol). If you have hepatitis C it is important to take steps to lower the risk of spreading the virus to others. The nurses and doctors in the clinic have information that can help you with these issues. If you would like more information, please ask. ★

★ RECIPE FOR HEALTH ★

Red Hot Fusilli Serves 4

- 1 Tbsp olive oil
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 1/4 C freshly minced parsley
- 4 C ripe tomatoes, chopped
- 1 Tbsp fresh basil, chopped or 1 tsp dried
- 1 Tbsp oregano leaves, crushed or 1 tsp dried
- 1/4 tsp salt
- Ground red pepper or cayenne to taste
- 8 oz uncooked fusilli pasta (4 cups cooked)
- 1/2 lb cooked chicken breasts, diced (3/4 lb raw)

1. Heat oil in a medium saucepan. Saute garlic and parsley until golden.
2. Add tomatoes and spices. Cook uncovered over low heat 15 minutes or until thickened, stirring frequently. Add chicken and continue cooking for 15 minutes until chicken is heated through and sauce is thick.
3. Cook pasta firm in unsalted water.
4. To serve, spoon sauce over pasta and sprinkle with coarsely chopped parsley. Serve hot as a main dish and cold for the next day's lunch.

Calories	398	Cholesterol	44mg
Total Fat	7G	Sodium	325mg
		Saturated Fats	1G

Recipe from the American Heart Association

Prevention Points

Test Your Sleep I.Q.

1. Sleep is a time when your body and brain shut down for rest and relaxation.
2. The primary cause of insomnia is worry.

T	F
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3. If you regularly doze off unintentionally during the day, you may have a sleep disorder.
4. People need less sleep as they grow older.

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Answers on back page

HOW TO USE YOUR METERED-DOSE INHALER THE RIGHT WAY

Noelle Hasson, Pharm.D

Using an inhaler seems simple, but most patients do not use it the right way. When you use your inhaler the wrong way, less medicine gets to your lungs. For the next 2 weeks, read these steps aloud as you do them or ask someone to read them to you. Ask your doctor or nurse to check how well you are using your inhaler.

Getting ready.

1. Take off the cap and shake the inhaler.
2. Breath out all the way.
3. Hold your inhaler the way your doctor said.

Breath in slowly.

1. As you start breathing in *slowly* through your mouth, press down on the inhaler one time. (If you use a holding chamber, first press down on the inhaler. Within 5 seconds, begin to breath in).
2. Keep breathing in slowly, as deeply as you can.

Hold your breath.

1. Hold your breath as you count to 10 slowly, if you can.
2. For inhaled quick-relief medicine (beta2-agonists), wait about 1 minute between puffs. There is no need to wait between puffs for other medicines. ★

From NIH Publication No. 97-2339

Healthy Hints

May 3, 2000 is World Asthma Day!

The goal is for every person with asthma to:

- ✓ Have a timely diagnosis
- ✓ Receive appropriate treatment
- ✓ Learn to manage their asthma in partnership with a health professional
- ✓ Reduce exposure to environmental factors that make their condition worse

To Your Health is published quarterly for VAPAHCS veterans and their families.

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Prevention Points

Sleep

1. **F.** Although it is a time when your body rests and restores its energy levels, sleep is an *active* state that affects both your physical and mental well-being. Adequate restful sleep, like diet and exercise, is critical to good health. Insufficient restful sleep can result in mental and physical health problems and possibly premature death.
2. **F.** Insomnia has many different causes, including physical and mental conditions and stress. Insomnia is the perception that you don't get enough sleep because you can't fall asleep or stay asleep or get back to sleep once you've awakened during the night. It affects people of all ages, usually for just an occasional night or two, but sometimes for weeks, months, or even years. Because insomnia can become a chronic problem, it is important to get it diagnosed and treated if it persists for more than a month.
3. **T.** Many people dose off unintentionally during the day despite getting their usual night of sleep. This could be a sign of a sleep disorder. Approximately 40 million Americans suffer from sleep disorders, including sleep apnea, insomnia, narcolepsy, and restless legs syndrome. An untreated sleep disorder can reduce your daytime productivity, increase your risk of accidents, and put you at risk for illness and even early death.
4. **F.** As we get older, we don't need less sleep, but we often *get* less sleep. That's because our ability to sleep for long periods of time and to get into the deep restful stages of sleep decrease with age. Older people have more fragile sleep and are more easily disturbed by light, noise, and pain. They also may have medical conditions that contribute to sleep problems.

From NIH Publication No. 96-3797

