



The Beacon

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Med-Cert Medical Management Resources

"Guiding your way to better health management"

HOW TO SURVIVE A HEART ATTACK WHEN ALONE

Many people are alone when they suffer a heart attack. Without help, the person who may be having a heart attack and who begins to feel faint, has only about 10 seconds left before losing consciousness. However, these victims can help themselves by coughing repeatedly and very vigorously. A deep breath should be taken before each cough, and the cough must be deep and prolonged, as when producing sputum from deep inside the chest. A breath and a cough must be repeated about every two seconds without letting up until help arrives, or until the heart is felt to be beating normally again.

Deep breaths get oxygen into the lungs and coughing movements squeeze the heart and keep the blood circulating. The squeezing pressure on the heart also helps it regain normal rhythm. In this way, heart attack victims can get to a hospital.

Did you Know...

If you have old cough and cold medicines in your medicine cabinet, be sure to check the labels for a potentially dangerous ingredient. The FDA recently issued a consumer advisory against using any medications that contain phenylpropanolamine, a common decongestant in cold remedies. According to the advisory, this ingredient could cause a small increase in a person's risk of hemorrhagic stroke.



MAY IS ASTHMA & ALLERGY AWARENESS MONTH

What is Asthma?

Asthma is a disease of the bronchial tubes, or airways of the lungs, characterized by tightening of these airways. Common symptoms include shortness of breath, cough, tightening in the chest, and wheezing. It is a chronic disease; people with asthma live with it every day and very often for their whole lives.

When a person breathes, air is taken into the body through the nose, and then is passed through the windpipe and into the bronchial tubes. At the end of the tubes are tiny air sacs called alveoli that deliver oxygen to the blood. These air sacs also collect unusable carbon dioxide, which is exhaled out of the body.

During normal breathing, the bands of muscle that surround the airways are relaxed, and air moves freely. However, in people with asthma, allergy-causing substances and environmental triggers make the bands of muscle surrounding the airways tighten, and air cannot move freely. Less air causes a person to feel short of breath, and the air moving through the tightened airways causes a whistling sound known as wheezing.

Who is affected by Asthma?

Asthma is a lung disease that affects 12-15 million Americans, including

approximately 10-12% of children under age 18. Asthma may occur at any age, although it is more common in younger individuals (under age 40). People who have a family history of asthma have an increased risk of developing the disease. Asthma is also more common in people who have allergies or who are exposed to tobacco smoke. However, anyone can develop asthma at any time.

Understanding Asthma Triggers

In people with asthma, the airways are very sensitive and react to a variety of external factors, or "triggers." There are many kinds of triggers. Reactions to triggers are different for each person and vary from time to time. Some people have many triggers while others have no identifiable triggers. Certain triggers may be harmless to some people but contribute to inflammation in others. Recognizing and avoiding these triggers when possible, is an important way to control asthma.

Keep in mind, however, that the best way to control asthma is with asthma medicines.

What are the most common Asthma triggers?

- **Upper respiratory infections:** cold and flu, bronchitis (infection of the large airways), or sinus infections
- **Outdoor allergens** -- tree, grass, and weed pollens; mold spores
- **Indoor allergens** -- molds, animal dander or hair, dust mites, cockroaches

- **Food allergens:** not a common trigger but can cause asthma symptoms; most common in children under age 5
- **Exercise**
- **Irritants**
 - Passive cigarette smoke
 - Smoke from wood-burning appliances or fireplaces
 - Strong odors from perfumes, cleaning agents, etc.
 - Air pollution
 - Occupational dust and vapors
- **Weather:** Cold air, changes in temperature and humidity
- **Strong emotions:** anxiety, crying, yelling, or laughing hard
- **Certain medications:** aspirin, nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (Motrin, Advil)

How do you recognize asthma triggers?

Determining what factors were present when your asthma symptoms started is the first step to recognizing your asthma triggers. Except for exercise, avoiding these triggers is one of the best ways to control your asthma. Although there are many different triggers, you may not react to all of them. Some people have only one trigger, while others have many triggers.

Your doctor may also recommend using a device called a peak flow meter. The peak flow meter measures how much and how quickly air is exhaled from the lungs. It can alert you to changes in your breathing and the onset of asthma symptoms, which also may help identify triggers. Ask your doctor or asthma care provider if using a peak flow meter would be helpful for you.

Resource Information:

American Academy of Asthma, Allergy and Immunology (AAAAI)
 611 East Wells Street
 Milwaukee, WI 53202
 (404) 272-6071 or 1-800- 822-2762
www.aaaai.org
 Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America (AAFA)
 1125 Fifteenth Street
 Washington, D.C. 20005
 (202) 466-7643 or 1-800-7-ASTHMA (727-8462)
 E-mail: info@aafa.org
www.aafa.org



MOOD MUSIC

If your emotional batteries are in need of recharging, try powering up with music.

Research suggests that music has a vital impact on emotional health and well-being. Professional music therapy has been shown to help relieve conditions such as depression and anxiety. Give yourself a musical mood fix during dinner, before bed, or on your way to work by listening to tunes that relax you.

Taking care of your emotional health and well-being can make your Real Age up to 16 years younger.

NATIONAL OBSERVANCES

April

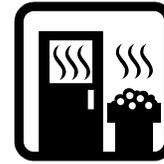
Alcohol Awareness Month
 Cancer Control Month
 Counseling Awareness Month
 IBS (Irritable Bowel Syndrome) Awareness Month
 National Autism Awareness Month
 National Child Abuse Prevention Month
 National Occupational Therapy Month
 National STD Awareness Month
 National Youth Sports Safety Month
 Women's Eye Health Safety Month

May

Asthma and Allergy Awareness Month
 Better Hearing and Speech Month
 Better Sleep Month
 Clean Air Month
 Correct Posture Month
 Hepatitis Awareness Month
 Huntington's Disease Awareness Month
 Lyme Disease Awareness Month
 National Arthritis Month
 National Digestive Diseases Awareness Month
 National High Blood Pressure Education Month
 National Melanoma/Skin Cancer Detection and Prevention Month
 Mental Health Month
 National Neurofibromatosis Month
 National Osteoporosis Prevention Month
 National Sight-Saving Month: Ultraviolet Awareness & Home Eye Safety
 National Stroke Awareness Month
 National Teen Pregnancy Prevention Month
 National Trauma Awareness Month
 Older Americans Month
 Skin Cancer Awareness Month
 Tuberos Sclerosis Awareness Month

June

National Aphasia Awareness Month
 National Scleroderma Awareness Month
 Vision Research Month



ALL STEAMED UP?

Can a steamy sauna session put a damper on colds? According to one study, it just might.

In a small Austrian study, people who regularly took steams in a sauna experienced significantly fewer colds compared to people who abstained from sauna use. What's more, if you already have a cold, the steam from a sauna session may help to alleviate some of your symptoms.

Actively patrolling your health can make your Real Age as much as 12 years younger.

Recipe Corner

Spanish Chili Potatoes



2lbs new or salad potatoes
 Frylight
 1 onion, finely chopped
 2 garlic cloves, crushed
 1 tsp tomato puree
 7 oz can chopped tomatoes
 1 tbsp red wine vinegar
 2-3 small dried red chilies, seeded and finely chopped, OR 1-2 tsp hot chili powder
 1 tsp paprika
 Salt and pepper

Halve potatoes if large, then place in a large saucepan and cover with water. Bring to boil, and then simmer for about 10-12 minutes or until just tender. Drain well and leave to cool, then cut in half and reserve. Heat a large pan and spray with frylight. Add the onions and garlic. Fry gently for about 5-6 minutes until just softened. Stir in the next 5 ingredients, and simmer for about 5 minutes. Add potatoes and mix into the sauce mixture until well coated. Cover and simmer gently for about 8-10 minutes until potatoes are tender. Season well and serve.

Ingredient question: I had several people ask about the ingredient "Quark" which is used in Cauliflower, Broccoli, and Cheese Soup, the recipe in January's newsletter. I was stumped at first, but this is what I found.

Quark is a white, fresh curd cheese made from cow's milk with a delicate, slightly sour flavor. Look for Quark in the chilled section or you can use a Low-Fat Soft Cheese instead.



This newsletter is brought to you courtesy of Med-Cert, Inc. Our sources for this edition were the National Cancer Institute, Real Age - Health Tools and Tips for Living Younger and the National Health Observances web sites.