



The Beacon

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Med-Cert, Inc.
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Med-Cert Medical Management Resources

"Guiding your way to better health management"

May is Better Sleep Month

The Better Sleep Council Urges Americans to Evaluate the Quality of Their Sleep During the Month of May

We all know that proper diet and regular exercise are important for maintaining a healthy lifestyle. However, many people underestimate the value of sleep. Like proper nutrition and exercise, sleep is essential to feeling your best. Adults need between seven and eight hours of sleep a night – individual needs may range from five to ten hours.

Not merely a "break" from your day, sleep is vital to maintaining good health and well-being. When you go to sleep, your body goes to work, consolidating the day's learning into memory and improving your ability to absorb and remember everyday skills. A good night's sleep also re-energizes you and helps you prepare for the day ahead.

When you do not get enough sleep, daily life can become more stressful and less productive. We all have too much to do, so take time out and recharge yourself by getting a good night's sleep. The quality and quantity of your sleep can make all the difference in how productive you'll be the next day. Here are ten tips to help you get the sleep you need and deserve.

- **Give yourself "permission" to go to bed.** As hard as it may be to put away your "to do" list, make sleep a "priority."
- **Unwind early in the evening.** Try to deal with worries and distractions several hours before bedtime.

- **Develop a sleep ritual.** Doing the same things each night just before bed signals your body to settle down for the night.
- **Keep regular hours.** Keep your biological clock in check by going to bed around the same time each night and waking up close to the same time each morning – even on weekends.
- **Create a restful place to sleep.** Sleep in a cool, dark room that is free from noises that may disturb your sleep.
- **Sleep on a comfortable, supportive mattress and foundation.** It is difficult to sleep on a bed that is too small, too soft, too hard, or too old.
- **Exercise regularly.** Regular exercise can help relieve daily tension and stress – but don't exercise too close to bedtime or you may have trouble falling asleep.
- **Cut down on stimulants.** Consuming stimulants, such as caffeine, in the evening can make it more difficult to fall asleep.
- **Don't smoke.** Smokers take longer to fall asleep and wake up more often during the night.
- **Reduce alcohol intake.** Drinking alcohol shortly before bedtime interrupts and fragments sleep.

Did you Know...

To keep your family safe from food-borne pathogens, set your refrigerator at 40 degrees Fahrenheit. The U.S. Food and Drug Administration recommends this temperature for storing perishable items, such as meats and dairy products, because disease-causing bacteria can grow at temperatures above 40 degrees Fahrenheit. Also, do not leave perishable foods sitting out on the dinner table for more than 2 hours.



Employee Spotlight

**Carol Williams, RN, BSN, CPUM,
ABQUR
Director of Utilization Management**



Carol, supervisor of the Utilization Management department, has a wealth of experience and knowledge. Carol was born in the beautiful tropical island of St. Kitts. Her 20+ years of nursing experience has taken her to England, New York (where she received her Bachelors degree in Nursing), California and finally Florida. The first half of her career involved being a Hospital Nurse Manager for medical surgical, and high-risk obstetric units. Carol has been in Quality Management and Utilization Management for the past 10 years, working in both the hospital setting and the private sector. Carol is an avid reader and loves to travel. She has toured Spain, France and the Caribbean. Her favorite way to relax is to take long early morning and late evening walks with her dog 'Benji'.



A quick quiz: What is the most common type of cancer in the US? Lung? Breast? Not by a long shot.

Skin cancers are by far the most commonly diagnosed cancers, with over a million cases popping up each year. That is about as many as *all* other cancers combined.

Most cases of skin cancer are either basal cell cancers or squamous cell cancers. Because they grow slowly and do not usually spread, these cancers are usually cured by surgery.

Melanoma, the other main type of skin cancer, makes up only about 10% of all cases, but accounts for more than 75% of skin cancer deaths. When caught early, it can also be treated with surgery. However, if it is allowed to spread, it can be very difficult to treat.

It has been known for some time that excess sun exposure is an important risk factor. The sun's ultraviolet (UV) rays can damage a cell's genetic blueprint, known as DNA, which can increase cancer risk.

People who spend a lot of time out in the sun are more likely to develop basal cell and squamous cell cancers, and those who had severe sunburns as children are known to be at higher risk for melanoma. Having lighter skin has been associated with a higher risk of skin cancer in many studies. African Americans are much less likely than whites to get skin cancer, although their risk is not zero. The reason for this is higher levels of a pigment called melanin in the skin. Melanin provides some protection against UV rays.

A mix of methods—such as finding shade, wearing hats, sunglasses, and clothing—are needed to shield your skin from the sun. Sunscreen alone is usually not enough protection.

Med-Cert provides:

Utilization Management, Maternity Management, Large Case and Wellness Disease Management, Transplant Coordination and Stop Loss Assessments

For information on any of our services, please call 866-261-5657 (toll free).

We are on the Internet. Visit us at:
www.medcertinc.com

NATIONAL OBSERVANCES

April

Alcohol Awareness Month
Cancer Control Month
Counseling Awareness Month
IBS 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 and Safety Month
National Donate Life Month
Sports Eye Safety Month
National Facial Protection Month
Foot Health Awareness Month
Sexual Assault Awareness Month

May

Light the Night for Sight Month
Tuberous Sclerosis Awareness Month
Healthy Vision Month
Asthma and Allergy Awareness Month
Better Hearing and Speech Month
Better Sleep Month
Correct Posture Month
Hepatitis Awareness Month
Huntington Disease Awareness Month
National Arthritis Month
Nat'l Digestive Diseases Awareness Month
Nat'l High Blood Pressure Education Month
National Neurofibromatosis Month
Mental Health Month
Lyme Disease Awareness Month
Clean Air Month
Older American's Month
National Stroke Awareness Month

June

National Scleroderma Awareness Month
National Aphasia Awareness Month
Vision Research Month
Myasthenia Gravis Awareness Month

A Message on Massage

Do you think of massage as just a relaxing indulgence? Science says it may be a benefit to emotional health, too.

In a recent study of people with low back pain, massage appeared to confer benefits to both body and mind. People in the study who underwent massage therapy not only experienced less back pain, but they also experienced less depression and anxiety and enjoyed better sleep quality compared to people using non-massage forms of relaxation therapy.

Benefit: Taking care of your emotional health and well-being can make your RealAge up to 16 years younger.



Make Your Mouth Happy

Don't miss out on

regular dental exams. Your appointments may reveal more than just a healthy smile.

Dental exams are not only a good way to keep up on the health of your teeth, but they also give dentists the opportunity to examine your mouth for clues to overall health. Oral cancers, diabetes, and osteoporosis are just a few of the conditions that a dental exam may help to diagnose. Schedule your checkups every six months to one year.

Benefit: Flossing and brushing your teeth daily can make your RealAge as much as 6.4 years younger.

Recipe Corner



Colache

This all-vegetable stew from the early days of California is served warm or at room temperature. Serves 4-6

- 2 pounds Winter squash (like acorn or butternut), peeled and diced
- 4 tablespoons Olive Oil
- 1 medium Onion, diced
- 1 teaspoon Garlic, minced
- 1 large Green bell pepper, seeded and diced
- 10-½ ounce Tomatoes, canned, seeded, peeled, and diced
- 1 cup Green beans
- 1 cup Corn
- 2 teaspoons Chili powder
- 1-½ cups Chicken broth

Heat the oil in a heavy pot with a lid (like a Dutch oven) over a medium flame. Add the squash and cook about 5 minutes. Add the onion and pepper. Cook for an additional five minutes. Add the remaining ingredients, cover and simmer for 20 to 30 minutes or until all the vegetables are soft. Adjust the seasoning (salt and pepper) to your personal taste.



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