

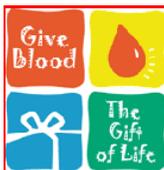


# The Beacon

The Newsletter of  
Med-Cert, Inc.  
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## Med-Cert Medical Management Resources

*"Guiding your way to better health management"*



**January is  
National Volunteer  
Blood Donor Month**

The American Association of Blood Banks, in conjunction with America's Blood Centers and American Red Cross, will launch National Volunteer Blood Donor Month 2004 to encourage donors to give or pledge to give blood.

Once again, the theme for this year's campaign, *"Give Blood...The Gift of Life,"* highlights the importance of giving the gift of life through the donation of blood.

January is usually a difficult month for blood centers to collect blood donations, due to fewer people donating during the holidays, poor weather, and more people getting sick. A reduction in turnout can put blood inventory at a critical low. In some parts of the country, blood centers are currently on critical appeal.

There is a continuous need for blood and most individuals do not realize that donated blood has a short shelf life - approximately 42 days for Red Blood Cells - which means that our blood supply needs to be constantly replenished. Our nation has a continuing critical need for blood throughout the year and our challenge is to keep meeting this need every day.

If you are at least 17 years of age (some states permit younger people to donate with parental consent), weigh at least

110 pounds and are in good health, you may be eligible to donate blood. Celebrate National Volunteer Blood Donor Month by "Giving the Gift of Life" and encouraging others to donate as well.

**High blood pressure is a key risk factor for heart attack and stroke. Learn your blood pressure numbers by having it checked with a quick (and painless) test during your next checkup.**

### Heart Attack, Stroke & Cardiac Arrest Warning Signs

#### Act in Time

The American Heart Association and the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute have launched a new "Act in Time" campaign to increase people's awareness of heart attack and the importance of calling 9-1-1 immediately at the onset of heart attack symptoms.

#### Dial 9-1-1 Fast

Heart attack and stroke are life-and-death emergencies -- every second counts. If you see or have any of the listed symptoms, immediately call 9-1-1. Not all these signs occur in every heart attack or stroke. Sometimes they go away and return. If some occur, get help fast! Today heart attack and stroke victims can benefit from new medications and treatments unavailable to patients in years past. For example, clot-busting drugs can stop some heart

attacks and strokes in progress, reducing disability and saving lives. However, to be effective, these drugs must be given relatively quickly after heart attack or stroke symptoms first appear. **So again, do not delay -- get help right away!**

#### Statistics

Coronary heart disease is America's No. 1 killer. Stroke is No. 3 and a leading cause of serious disability. That is why it is so important to reduce your risk factors, know the warning signs, and know how to respond quickly and properly if warning signs occur.

#### Heart Attack Warning Signs

Some heart attacks are sudden and intense -- the *"movie heart attack,"* where no one doubts what is happening. But most heart attacks start slowly, with mild pain or discomfort. Often people affected are not sure what is wrong and wait too long before getting help. Here are signs that can mean a heart attack is happening:

- **Chest discomfort** - Most heart attacks involve discomfort in the center of the chest that lasts more than a few minutes, or that goes away and comes back. It can feel like uncomfortable pressure, squeezing, fullness or pain.
- **Discomfort in other areas of the upper body** - Symptoms can include pain or discomfort in one or both arms, the back, neck, jaw or stomach.
- **Shortness of breath** - This feeling often comes along with chest discomfort, but it can occur before the chest discomfort.

- **Other signs** - These may include breaking out in a cold sweat, nausea or lightheadedness.

If you or someone you're with has chest discomfort, especially with one or more of the other signs, do not wait longer than a few minutes (no more than 5) before calling for help. Call 9-1-1... Get to a hospital right away. Calling 9-1-1 is almost always the fastest way to get lifesaving treatment. Emergency medical services staff can begin treatment when they arrive -- up to an hour sooner than if someone gets to the hospital by car. The staff are also trained to revive someone whose heart has stopped. You will be treated faster in the hospital if you come by ambulance, too.

### Stroke Warning Signs

The American Stroke Association says these are the warning signs of stroke:

- Sudden numbness or weakness of the face, arm or leg, especially on one side of the body
- Sudden confusion, trouble speaking or understanding
- Sudden trouble seeing in one or both eyes
- Sudden trouble walking, dizziness, loss of balance or coordination
- Sudden, severe headache with no known cause

If you or someone with you has one or more of these signs, do not delay! Immediately call 9-1-1 or the emergency medical services (EMS) number so an ambulance (ideally with advanced life support) can be sent for you. Also, check the time so you will know when the first symptoms appeared. It is very important to take immediate action. If given within three hours of the start of symptoms, a clot-busting drug can reduce long-term disability for the most common type of stroke.

Cardiac Arrest strikes immediately and without warning. Here are the signs:

- Sudden loss of responsiveness. No response to gentle shaking.
- No normal breathing. The victim does not take a normal breath when you check for several seconds.
- No signs of circulation. No movement or coughing.

If cardiac arrest occurs, call 9-1-1 and begin CPR immediately. If an automated external defibrillator (AED) is available and someone trained to use it is nearby, involve him or her.

For more information call:  
**AHA (American Heart Association)**  
 1-800-242-8721  
 Or  
**ASA (American Stroke Association)**  
 1-888-478-7653



### *Find a Reminder Buddy*

Make your New Year's resolution to exercise successful by finding a friend with whom you can set up a reminder system. In a study of older women, the study participants who received prompts each week reminding them to exercise had significant increases in their physical activity levels as a result. Choose a friend who also wants to get active and e-mail encouraging exercise reminders to each other every week. **Benefit:** Exercising regularly can make your RealAge as much as 9 years younger.

### *Axe the Ipecac*



If you are keeping syrup of ipecac on hand for emergencies, it is time to update your medicine cabinet. The American Academy of Pediatrics has reversed its recommendation on syrup of ipecac, an emetic, for poison control crises. Studies have revealed that it offers no improvement in patient outcome. **Instead, experts recommend that the first action after accidental poison ingestion should be calling a poison control center.**

**Benefit:** Actively patrolling your health can make your RealAge as much as 12 years younger.

### **Quotable Quote**

*" Always do what you believe to be right - even though it may not be the easy way out or the least painful path."*

Roy Beers

### *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).**  
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[www.medcertinc.com](http://www.medcertinc.com)

## **Recipe Corner**



### *Egg Ceptional Omelets*

*(A great brunch idea for those who like something a little sweet)*

- 2 egg yolks and 5 egg whites
- 2 tbs. non-fat half and half
- 1/8 tsp. Salt
- 4 oz. Low-fat cream cheese
- 1 cup crushed pineapple, drained

Mix cream cheese and pineapple, being sure pineapple is well drained first. Spray 10" non-stick frying pan. Whip eggs, salt, and half and half until quite frothy. Set heat to medium low—you want the omelet to cook slowly. Pour into pan and cover. When eggs are set, spread half of the omelet with the cream cheese mixture and flip the other half over it. *(Serves two)*

*To complete your treat, make a fresh fruit salad and the great sweet potato biscuits below.*



### *Sweet Potato Biscuits*

Take one cup mashed sweet potatoes and add enough low low-fat Bisquick to make "normal" biscuit dough. Follow the directions on the Bisquick box for kneading and baking. You can use a biscuit cutter or make drop biscuits.

*Great Idea – form dough into bun size and use them for veggie-burgers*



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