

WELLNESS WORKS!

Fuel for Change...Fuel for Life

Volume 1, Issue 4

July 15, 2005

Editor: Lauren R. Shapiro

SMART HEALTH CARE CHOICES

Periodontal (Gum) Disease

www.ada.org

Did you know that good oral hygiene is also a step toward a healthier life? Given that recent research suggests potential links between the bacteria that cause periodontal (gum) disease and systemic diseases, prevention of periodontal disease is an important step in maintaining overall health.

Periodontal disease is an infection of the tissues that support your teeth. Your gum tissue is not attached to the teeth as high as it may seem. There is a very shallow v-shaped crevice called a sulcus between the tooth and gums. Periodontal diseases attack just below the gum line in the sulcus, where they cause the attachment of the tooth and its supporting tissues to break down. As the tissues are damaged, the sulcus develops into a pocket: generally, the more severe the disease, the greater the depth of the pocket.

Periodontal diseases are classified according to the severity of the disease. The two major stages are gingivitis and periodontitis. Gingivitis is a milder and reversible form of periodontal disease that only affects the gums. Gingivitis may lead to more serious, destructive forms of periodontal disease called periodontitis.

Some factors increase the risk of developing periodontal disease:

- Tobacco smoking or chewing
- Systemic diseases such as diabetes
- Some types of medication such as steroids,

some types of anti-epilepsy drugs, cancer therapy drugs, some calcium channel blockers and oral contraceptives

- Bridges that no longer fit properly
- Crooked teeth
- Fillings that have become defective
 - Pregnancy or use of oral contraceptives

Several warning signs that can signal a problem:

- Gums that bleed easily
 - Red, swollen, tender gums
 - Gums that have pulled away from the teeth
 - Persistent bad breath or bad taste
 - Permanent teeth that are loose or separating
 - Any change in the way your teeth fit together when you bite
 - Any change in the fit of partial dentures



It is possible to have periodontal disease and have no warning signs. That is one reason why regular dental checkups and periodontal examinations are very important. Treatment methods depend upon the type of disease and how far the condition has progressed. Good oral hygiene at home is essential to help keep periodontal disease from becoming more serious or recurring. You don't have to lose teeth to perio-

Inside this issue:

Smart Health Care Choices: <i>Periodontal (Gum) Disease</i>	1
Stress Management <i>You Can Reduce the Effects of Stress</i>	2
You Make the Call— <i>Alcohol Content</i>	2
Personal Wellness Goal	2
Diet / Nutrition : <i>Top 10 Nutrition Tips</i>	3
Fitness / Weight Management: <i>Exercise Won't Harm Aging Bones</i>	3
Spotlight On: The Sun & Your Skin	4

Open Enrollment

What is required of You:

- Review the Pre-Printed Employee Election Form and correct any information that is incorrect.
- Actively enroll in or waive a Medical Plan this year – **REQUIRED.**
- Sign the form and return it to Human Resources by **Friday, July 15, 2005.**

IMPORTANT: If you elect to waive any Medical, Dental, or Vision coverage for this plan year, special rules apply as to when, and if, you will be able to enroll in the future. See the back of your Pre-Printed Employee Election Form for details.

ALL ELIGIBLE EMPLOYEES MUST RETURN YOUR ENROLLMENT FORM TO HUMAN RESOURCES EVEN IF YOU ARE NOT MAKING ANY CHANGES!

Periodontal Disease...continued

dontal disease. Brush, clean between your teeth, eat a balanced diet, and schedule regular dental visits for a lifetime of healthy smiles.

The importance of regular dental check-ups cannot be overemphasized. In addition to checking your

teeth, your dentist looks also for signs of diseases such as oral cancer. Alert your dentist to any sores, swelling or discoloration that you find on your tongue, lips, cheek, throat, jawbone, or palate. Because the majority of oral cancers

occur in people older than 45, dental checkups are increasingly important to detect cancerous lesions in early, more easily treatable stages.

Brushing and flossing daily, eating a balanced diet and limiting snacks, and regular visits to your dentist will help you maintain a healthy smile. ❖

"Good oral hygiene at home is essential to help keep periodontal disease from becoming more serious"

STRESS MANAGEMENT

Reduce the Effects of Stress

www.health.discovery.com

Stress is a way of life for most of us. But stress takes a huge toll on Americans every year. Between 75 and 90 percent of primary care doctor visits are for stress-related problems. Stress has also been linked to all the leading causes of death, including heart disease, cancer, lung ailments, accidents, cirrhosis, and suicide, according to the American Institute of Stress.

Rana Walker, M.Ed., one of the "health cops" on "Sentenced to Health" is a mental health therapist and president of [Diamond Cutter LLC](http://DiamondCutterLLC.com), a company that promotes wellness of mind, body and spirit. She offers these seven tips for reducing stress in your life.

1. Check out.

Maybe taking a vacation seems like the last thing you can afford to do when you're stressed out, but if you're overwhelmed with anxiety, can you afford

not to? If you're sleeping poorly (or taking sedatives regularly to help you snooze), anxious and tense all the time, shifting your eating habits in an unhealthy way or using drugs, alcohol, caffeine or cigarettes as a coping aid, these are clear indications you need a break from your current situation, says Walker.

"Take a vacation that suits your time frame," she says. Two weeks would be ideal, but if that's not possible block out a week, a week-end or even a day for yourself. The more time an individual spends away from their every day environment, the more they step outside of the box and see themselves and their problems in a new perspective. "We encourage our clients to be with nature because it's a very calming environment," says Walker. "Take a hike, lay on the beach or go on a picnic."

2. Work out. Quite simply, exercising

makes you look better and feel better. Consider it an integral part of your day, like brushing your teeth or eating dinner. "If you make it a way of life, it becomes part of your life, not just something you have to make time for," says Walker.

3. Express yourself. Unloading all your worries and concerns is a terrific way to clear your mind and reduce your stress level. Find a friend or a therapist whom you can talk to; it's important not to keep everything inside. You can also write everything down in a journal. Moving things out of your head and onto paper can help you release a lot of the chaos you're feeling. Doing both is the best combination.

4. Claim your peace. Affirmations, sentences you write down and put up in a place like a bathroom mirror where you repeat them five to ten times a day, can help you become the person you'd like to be, says Walker. "The more you say it, the more it becomes part of your psyche." Craft something that's right for your situation, such as "I am calm. I am peaceful, and all is in order."

5. Read up. Connecting with something bigger than yourself can help you gain perspective on your problems. Walker recom-



Personal Wellness Goal:

Make your Doctor your Partner in Healthcare!

Carroll's medical plans do not require that you select a primary care physician, but having a doctor as a partner to manager your healthcare may help you make more informed healthcare decisions. A primary care physician can help you determine if a specialist is necessary and may help prevent drug interaction disasters.

Don't Forget: Have a Good Laugh!, Drink more Water! and Make physical activity a regular part of your day!

mends books with a spiritual focus such as "Anatomy of the Spirit" by Caroline Myss and "Seat of the Soul" by Gary Zukav.

6. Don't avoid. If there's something in your life that's a source of worry, seek out things that will help you feel in control. "When we procrastinate or we think something is overwhelming, it's usually not as bad as we thought it was," says Walker. If you're suffering from financial problems, for example, read some books on gaining control of your financial life or seek the counsel of a financial planner.

7. Breathe deeply. For those moments when you're so tense that you feel like you might explode, go back to the basics. Inhale to a slow count of ten, and exhale at the same speed through your nose. Before you respond to a situation, breathing deeply will help center you. ❖

You Make The Call:

Blood Alcohol Content

As anyone who's been to a cocktail party has found out, we absorb alcohol at different rates. Weight is the chief reason, but a number of other factors affect Blood Alcohol levels, including your body type, metabolism, and any medication you're taking, not to mention the strength of your drinks and if you've eaten recently. For almost everyone, impaired physical and mental acuity arrive on the heels of that first drink.

Drinking responsibly means knowing how alcohol affects you and the amount you can drink without endangering yourself or others. A person with a Blood Alcohol level in the range of .08 to .10 is considered legally intoxicated, and it takes only a few drinks to get there. Let's say you are a male weighing 200 pounds and are at the O's Game. During four hours of yelling and cheering you have downed 8 beers. What is your blood alcohol content? **0.1066** – definitely legally intoxicated – better give someone else the keys!

DIET / NUTRITION

Top 10 Nutrition Tips

www.nutrition-citizen.org

So what is the best way to lose weight (fat). The answer is very simple: Eat nutritious food, in the proper amounts, at the right time. We all realize that this is very difficult to do in our fast-paced society. But properly nourishing your body is the key to increased energy, reduced body fat, a healthier look and an elevated immune system.

Here are top ten tips to nourish your body and keep it functioning at optimum levels.

1. Focus on improving your eating habits rather than participating in restrictive diets. Always keep in mind that what you eat and drink has a direct impact on how you look, feel and perform.
2. Go to the grocery store at least once a week to buy some fruits, vegetables and nourishing food. Leave the junk food on the shelves, because what you buy, you will eat. Also, don't buy the junk food for your kids, spouse or relatives. They don't need it either.
3. Try to focus on fueling your body with nourishing food rather than filling your belly with empty, sugar-loaded calories. Your body is a wonderful machine that needs nourishing



food to function at optimal levels.

4. Try to eliminate casual calories that often contain no nutritional value. They include: soda, juices, candy, energy drinks and triple mocha caramel double fudge latte coffees. Remember, consuming too many calories will cause you to gain weight. It doesn't matter if these calories come from foods or drinks.

5. Don't fall victim to diet and weight-loss marketing professionals. Carbohydrates do not make you fat. Protein does not make you fat. Fat does not make you fat. Consuming more calories than your body burns will cause you to gain weight. It's that simple. Bottom line: Don't eliminate or dramatically restrict your intake of carbohy-

drates, protein or fat.

6. Eat smaller portions more frequently throughout the day to help keep your blood sugar levels stable. Stabilized blood sugar levels not only help increase energy, they also will help you burn unnecessary body fat. Try to include some carbohydrates, protein and fat in

each meal.

7. When eating fast food or dining out, order the meal as "cleanly" as possible. That means asking for sauces, dips and dressings on the side. Try to order a meal that contains some carbohydrates, protein and fat. Always keep in mind that the chef does not care if you are overweight or unhealthy. Order food with your health and fitness in mind.

8. Try to eliminate all deep-fried foods. They are loaded with trans-fatty acids. And yes, this includes french fries. We know they taste good, but they have a negative impact on how you look and feel.

9. Try to limit your intake of breads, bagels, potatoes and pastas (these are not the best source of carbohydrates) and replace with fruits and vegetables that will nourish your body with valuable nutrients. Fruits and vegetables also help to slow the aging process and boost your body's immune system.

10. Read food labels. Not all brands are equal and the manufacturers do not care if you are overweight or unhealthy. For example, some items are labeled "fat free," yet if you read the food label you will see that the product contains "mono and diglycerides". This is fat! Also, try to limit foods that contain "hydrogenated or partially hydrogenated oils as these oils can contribute to heart disease. ❖

FITNESS / WEIGHT MANAGEMENT

Exercise Wont Harm Aging Bones

www.healthday.com

In fact, vigorous workouts may strengthen them, study finds

Exercise helps maintain and, in some cases, improve bone mass in people ages 55 to 75, according to a new study that challenges the idea that fat-burning exercise harms bone health in this age group.

"Fat loss with exercise did not result in a loss of bone mass, a problem commonly seen when patients lose weight with diet alone," co-author and endocrinologist Dr. Suzanne Jan de Beur, an assistant professor at Johns Hopkins University, said in a statement.

The study of 104 men and women found that six months of aerobic exercise using a bicycle, treadmill or stepper, combined with weightlifting, resulted in better overall fitness and fat loss without significant change in bone mineral density.

In fact, the study volunteers who exercised the hardest and had the greatest increases in aerobic fitness, muscle strength and muscle tissue showed bone mass increases of 1 percent to 2 percent, the researchers found.

This is believed to be the first study to examine the impact of exercise independent of other factors, primarily diet, on bone mineral density and the risk of osteoporosis and fractures, the researchers said.

"Older people are very concerned about how best to reduce their body fat as a means of preventing other health problems, such as heart disease and diabetes. However, excess fat does have the benefit of maintaining bone mass," study lead investigator Kerry Stewart, professor of medicine and director of clinical exercise physiology and heart health pro-

grams at Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine and its Heart Institute, explained in a prepared statement.



"But fat loss through diet alone can lead to loss of bone, worsening the body's natural bone loss due to aging, a major risk factor for bone fractures," she said.

"Our results show that moderate-intensity exercise can increase fitness and reduce body fat, which are important for overall health, but gains in bone density were found only among those who achieved the greatest gains in fitness in six months," added de Beur, who specializes in bone health.

She recommends that older people either exercise at a higher level of intensity or for longer than six months to achieve a substantial increase in bone density. ❖



CARROLL WELLNESS COUNCIL
2700 Loch Raven Road
Baltimore, Maryland 21218

Phone: 410-235-1066
Fax: 410-235-3842
Email: wellness@carrollfuel.net
Website: <http://wellness.carrollfuel.com>

Fuel for Change... Fuel for Life

**Do You Have Ideas for the
Wellness Works! Newsletter?**

**Submit your ideas to
wellness@carrollfuel.net**

**Or visit our website at
<http://wellness.carrollfuel.com>**

Spotlight On:

The Sun & Your Skin

www.healthandwellnessclub.com

It's no fun thinking about skin cancer, but it's even less fun having it. Reading this bulletin just might save your skin.

Some facts

- If you've ever had a blistering sunburn, you're a prime candidate for the most common cancer: skin cancer.
- There's no such thing as a safe tan.
- Most people get 85 percent of their sun exposure by age 18.

The good news

- The two most common types of skin cancer -- basal cell and squamous cell -- start in the top layer of your skin and are easily resolved, if you catch them early.
- Melanoma -- the most dangerous, dreaded and deadly skin cancer -- can often be prevented. Unfortunately, only 34 percent of Americans even know it's skin cancer, and only one-fourth of us realize that a new or changing mole can be a sign of melanoma.

- Early detection can dispel your nightmares about skin cancer.
- The zinger? The world's most important secret to youthful looking skin: Avoid the same sun damage that causes skin cancer.

Meet your skin

Your skin's top layers include the 20-cell-deep epidermis and the dermis beneath it (containing flexibility- and strength-giving elastin and collagen). Abnormal growths -- tumors -- are benign or malignant. A malignant tumor is called cancer.

Fair skin increases your risk of sun-induced premature skin aging and skin cancer. If you're a person of color, your skin's pigment provides nearly as much protection as sun-screen. Dermatologists (following the lead of Harvard's Thomas Fitzpatrick) discuss six skin types, based upon skin's response to the sun's ultraviolet radiation (UVR):

"We should all know our skin like we know the backs of our hands," says David J. Leffell, M.D., professor of dermatology and surgery,

Yale School of Medicine, and author of *Total Skin: The Definitive Guide to Whole Skin Care for Life*. Your skin is your body's largest organ (by area) and reflects your internal health. It's amazingly reliable and durable, varying in thickness and flexibility. Thin skin lets you blink and allows eyes to be very expressive, while stiff skin on your palms and soles prevents damage when a knife slips or when you cross the street barefoot.

Get to know your skin type and the warning signs. Most moles, for example, aren't cancerous. But know where yours are (most people have 20 to 40 of them) and note any changes. Normal moles have regular borders and are evenly pigmented (colored), usually tan, brown or skin-colored. If you have at least one mole that's different, have a dermatologist check it regularly. More men than women die of skin cancer -- probably because they avoid taking skin conditions seriously and seeking treatment. Any new growth on your skin or a wound that doesn't heal -- or reappears, after you thought it had healed -- deserves a trip to the doctor. ❖