

HOW TO REACH US

If you have any suggestions for topics, articles or just need to talk to us, please feel free to contact us. You can reach **LET'S TALK..... NEWSLETTER** at Forum Health's Cancer CareCenters by calling (330) 884-4152 or (800) 222-4603.

ANOTHER "SILENT DISEASE"

Submitted by Linda Stickelmeyer, RN
Center For Breast Health



We have all heard the phrase "silent disease" or in some cases "silent killer" in reference to high blood pressure. Cancer can be silent for quite some time before a symptom surfaces. A disease that can also be placed into this category is osteoporosis.

Osteoporosis is a disease of the bone. Bones lose minerals especially calcium. The bones become brittle and can break leading to debilitating fractures. Symptoms may present themselves but maybe thought to be another problem back pain, loss of height, changes in how we stand and our posture, abdominal fullness after eating small amounts can be symptoms.

Women are most frequently diagnosed with osteoporosis. The majority of women are postmenopausal, Caucasian, smoke, underweight, and have a family member that has osteoporosis. There are medical conditions that can promote osteoporosis. Some of these conditions are chronic lung and liver disease, overactive thyroid, inflammatory bowel disease, lack of calcium, hyperparathyroidism and rheumatoid arthritis. Chronic use of steroids can also lead to osteoporosis. Alcohol consumption may also add to the risk. Calcium amounts can be lessened by alcohol consumption.

Nothing gets easier the older we become. Pay attention to your health. Eat a healthy diet, supplement what maybe lacking in your body such as calcium and vitamin D, exercise daily especially weight bearing exercises. Your physician may order a bone density test or a dexta scan. This is a non invasive x-ray that takes only a few moments. The scan measures the strength and health of your bones. An abnormal test may alert your physician to order medication that can help improve your bone health.

Screening for osteoporosis is indicated in postmenopausal women. A bone density test will more that likely be reimbursed by your insurance company if your physician feels you are at risk for development of osteoporosis. A follow up bone density exam will be recommended at an appropriate time depending upon the findings of your original exam.



FIGHTING THE FLU

Submitted by Pam Stephenson, RN, MSN
Clinical Nurse Specialist

It might seem early to be talking about it, but flu season prevention begins in October. The decision to get the "flu shot" is one that many people struggle with every year. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention have addressed some of the questions that people have. Their information is presented here to help you when making your decision about the flu shot this year. Of course, you could always consult with your doctor's office about whether or not the flu shot is right for you.

MYTH: "The flu isn't a serious disease."

FACTS: Influenza (flu) is a serious disease of the nose, throat, and lungs, and it can lead to pneumonia. Each year about 200,000 people in the U.S. are hospitalized and about 36,000 people die because of the flu. Most who die are 65 years and older. But small children less than 2 years old are as likely as those over 65 to have to go to the hospital because of the flu.

MYTH: "The flu shot can cause the flu."

FACTS: The flu shot cannot cause the flu. Some people get a little soreness or redness where they get the shot. It goes away in a day or two. Serious problems from the flu shot are very rare.

MYTH: "The flu shot does not work."

FACTS: Most of the time the flu shot will prevent the flu. In scientific studies, the effectiveness of the flu shot has ranged from 70% to 90% when there is a good match between circulating viruses and those in the vaccine. **Getting the vaccine is your best protection against the disease.**

MYTH: "Only older people need a flu vaccine."

FACTS: Adults and children with conditions like asthma, diabetes, heart disease, and kidney disease need to get a flu shot. Doctors also recommend children 6 to 23 months of age and pregnant women get the vaccination. (If you think you fall into one of these categories, please consult your doctor first.)

MYTH: "You must get the flu vaccine before December."

FACTS: Flu vaccine can be given before or during the flu season. The best time to get vaccinated is October or November. But you can get vaccinated in December or later.

"Myths" and "Facts" are taken from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention website:
www.cdc.gov/flu.



A STORM IS COMING

Submitted by Rev. Jim Melick, ThD, BCC
Director of Pastoral Care, WRCS

Years ago, a farmer owned land along the Atlantic seacoast. He constantly advertised for hired hands. Most people were reluctant to work on farms along the Atlantic. They dreaded the awful storms that raged across the Atlantic, wreaking havoc on the buildings and crops.

As the farmer interviewed applicants for the job, he received a steady stream of refusals.

Finally, a short, thin man, well past middle age, approached the farmer. "Are you a good farm hand?" the farmer asked him. "Well, I can sleep when the wind blows," answered the little man.

Although puzzled by this answer, the farmer, desperate for help, hired him. The little man worked well around the farm, busy from dawn to dusk, and the farmer felt satisfied with the man's work.

Then one night the wind howled loudly in from offshore. Jumping out of bed, the farmer grabbed a lantern and rushed next door to the hired hand's sleeping quarters. He shook the little man and yelled, "Get up! A storm is coming! Tie things down before they blow away!"

The little man rolled over in bed and said firmly, "No sir. I told you, I can sleep when the wind blows."

Enraged by the response, the farmer was tempted to fire him on the spot. Instead, he hurried outside to prepare for the storm. To his amazement, he discovered that all of the haystacks had been covered with tarpaulins. The cows were in the barn, the chickens were in the coops, and the doors were barred. The shutters were tightly secured. Everything was tied down. Nothing could blow away. The farmer then understood what his hired hand meant, so he returned to his bed to also sleep while the wind blew.

When you're prepared, spiritually, mentally, and physically, you have nothing to fear. Can you sleep when the wind blows through your life?

The hired hand in the story was able to sleep because he had secured the farm against the storm. We secure ourselves against the storms of life by grounding ourselves in our faith. We don't need to understand, we just need to trust in the Almighty to have peace in the middle of storms.



RESEARCHER DISPELS MYTH OF DIOXINS AND PLASTIC WATER BOTTLES

Submitted by Shari Harmon, RN, CPON,
Clinical Nurse Manager and Research
Coordinator
Pediatric Hematology/Oncology

The internet has been flooded with e-mail warnings to avoid freezing water in plastic bottles so as not to get exposed to carcinogenic dioxins. In a recent article by researcher Rolf Halden, PhD, PE, assistant professor in the Department of Environmental Health Sciences and the Center for Water and Health at John Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health, dispels the myth of dioxins and plastic water bottles.

Dioxins are organic environmental pollutants. They are a group of chemicals which when exposed to can cause chloracne, a severe form

of skin disease, as well as reproductive and developmental effects, and more importantly, liver damage and cancer. It is now generally accepted that a principal source of dioxins are various combustion processes, including natural events such as wild fires and even volcanic eruptions. Today, the critical issue is the incineration of waste, especially the incineration of hospital waste, which contains a great deal of polyvinyl chloride plastics and aromatic compounds that can serve as dioxin precursors.

There are no dioxins in plastics. Freezing actually works against the release of chemicals. Chemicals do not diffuse as readily in cold temperatures, which would limit chemical release if there were dioxins in plastic, and they don't think there are.

So is it ok for people to drink out of plastic bottles? People should be more concerned about the quality of the water rather than the container it is coming from. The truth is that city water is much more highly regulated and monitored for quality. Bottled water is not. It can legally contain many things we would not tolerate in municipal drinking water.

What about cooking with plastics? In general, whenever you heat something you increase the likelihood of pulling chemicals out. Chemicals can be released from plastic packaging materials like the kinds used in some microwave meals. If you are cooking with plastics or using plastic utensils, the best thing to do is follow the directions and only use plastics that are specifically meant for cooking. Inert containers are best, for example heat-resistant glass, ceramics and stainless steel.

One more thing to add is don't be afraid of drinking water. It is very important to drink adequate amounts of water this is in addition to all the coffee, beer and other diuretics we consume. – 2006, John Hopkins University.

HOPE

*Submitted by Polly DeCarlo, LISW
Pediatric Hematology/Oncology*



Having worked in Pediatric Oncology department for a year now, I have learned a lot about hope. It is a stabilizing force when faced with seemingly insurmountable odds. I happened to read a recent article in COPING, July/August 2006, entitled *Cultivating Hope* by Rev. Mary Martha Thiel that

explained hope in a very articulate manner. Since I couldn't have said it any better, it seemed appropriate to share some of the article in this newsletter. The following is an excerpt:

There is always hope. You have every right to hope. The task is to identify and nurture yours. Your hope is as individual as your fingerprints. Hope makes a difference. Hope makes it possible to keep going, with meaning and purpose. Hope brings a focus to living each day. Hope helps us make decisions. Hope connects us to our deepest values and to those we love most dearly.

What is hope? Hope is nothing short of a life force. It is a confident expectation of achieving something in the future that is personally significant to you and realistically possible, though not certain. Hope connects you to what and who are most important in your life right in this moment.

When does hope emerge? Two things seem to set the context for hope to emerge. One is challenging circumstances. A cancer diagnosis, treatment, and living with cancer fit this definition to be sure. The second is caring and understanding relationships. Hope tends to grow in relationships that let you express your truest feelings. These relationships might be with your healthcare providers, a clergy person or therapist. They might be with other cancer survivors. They might be with friends or family members. They might even include your relationship with God. You can build or cultivate such relationships (pg.13)

The full article is worth reviewing and goes on to talk about how hope can change, what it might look like, and things that could enhance hope. At the end of each day, it is hope that gets us through and out of the bed to face whatever comes our way. Hope that we can continue to support our families, hope that we can share some part of ourselves with another person, hope that we have a positive effect upon someone's life, and hope that we can continue to face life's challenges with grace and dignity.





A WAY WITH WORDS, FOUNDATION, INC.

Submitted by Brenda M. Rider

A Way With Words Foundation, Inc. has two upcoming events:

Saturday, October 7, 2006 at Barnes & Noble in Boardman. We will have an all day book fair. Vouchers will be available at the hospital, awaywithwordsfoundation.com website and at the door. A percentage of everything purchased that day with a voucher; the ROCcK Children's choir receives a portion.

Saturday, October 21, 2006 3-7 PM at Immaculate Heart of Mary Parish Hall in Austintown. There will be a NASCAR/Celebrity auction. Some of the items include an autograph Grady Sizemore bat, 1984 vintage Jaguar, autographed "Grease" poster from John Travolta, autograph NASCAR drivers Kasey Kahn, Kyle Petty, Dave Blaney and others. Also a spaghetti dinner from 3-7. Cost \$5.00 for adult \$3.00 kids 3-10 years of age. Under 3 free. Second helpings available for \$2.00.

There will be autograph signing for the book "The Gift of Giving" written by local poets of various ages. Cost of the book \$10.00.

ROCcK Children's Choir

The ROCcK Children's Choir recently performed in Cleveland for "The Wigs for Kids" Zoo walk. One of our kids donated her hair for the event. The media coverage for the ROCcK Choir brought more events and hearts to touch.

The ROCcK Children's Choir has a seven song CD currently available for \$5.00.

There will also be a concert by various local talented people; all donations will go to A Way With Words, Foundation, ROCcK Children's choir and the Silver Lining Fund. For more information contact Brenda Rider (330) 360-3300.

ANGELS WITHOUT WINGS

Submitted by Brenda M. Rider

God bless the caregivers, and the gift they give.
Helping the sick and those to live.
It may be as simple as holding a hand,
Till sleep arrives and we understand.

They are the ones who always smile,
Looking pas appearances and all the while.
Ready with a kind word and a positive spin,
To pick you up when you need it again.

These angels without wings, soar beyond,
Till the gravity of uncertainty is gone.
Lifting the spirits to heights unknown.
Realizing that all of us may have grown.

The angels in my home all play a part,
Keeping me safe with joyous hear.
To face each day as a brand new thing,
God bless the angels without wings.



HOLDING HANDS

Whatever happened to
The practice of holding hands?
Is it right or even polite?
Have you ever watched a movie
Or a play holding hands?

When taking a walk or
A stroll, isn't it better
To be holding hands?
We still shake hands, hug
And even kiss, but
Whatever happened to holding hands?

Holding hands is a lost art
That should be revised and
Encouraged by young and old.
Try it, you will find it
To be a tantalizing experience.
May I hold your hand?

Thomas P. Gilmartin, Sr.
From Back to Basics II