



February 2021

UNDER THE MICROSCOPE

MEDDAC Bavaria Preventive Medicine Newsletter



Just a thought (a Preventive Medicine Column)

Strategies for Coping with Pandemic Fatigue. After months of dealing with the fallout from COVID-19, many people have pandemic fatigue. It's a very real feeling of exhaustion stemming from the effects of the novel coronavirus on your life — from stay-at-home orders to the fear of getting ill to losing jobs. Here are some helpful strategies to combat pandemic fatigue:

Take care of your body: When you're wrapped up in what's going on in the world and at home, it's easy to forget to take care of yourself. Make sure you're getting enough sleep (at least seven hours a night) and maintaining a nutritious diet. Though it may be difficult to drum up the motivation, exercising every day is important too. Doing these things will boost your energy, lift your mood and strengthen your immune system.

Limit your news intake to once a day for an hour or less. It's good to stay up to date on the latest coronavirus information. But too much news can overload you with negative emotions and zap your energy. Take a break from the news for a day or two and see if you feel better.

Connect with others. Humans are social creatures by nature. Being alone and feeling isolated can be stressful. So it's crucial to connect with others during the pandemic. Although you should limit your physical contact with people outside your household, there are other ways to connect socially. You can:

Make phone dates/video dates with friends and family ~ Chat on social media ~ Take a live class online ~ Attend online religious services

Create new traditions. Usher more joy into your days by creating new traditions. You'll have something fun to look forward to and you might even decide to keep it up once the pandemic has passed. Many of us that live in Europe miss traveling, consider using your leave days to do a project that you've been meaning to do or having an at-home self-care day.

Check the Facebook page of your local health clinic for updates on flu drives & vaccination events in your community!



For all current and updated COVID-19 Limitations visit:
www.7atc.army.mil and the
U.S. Army Garrison Bavaria Facebook Page

No more excuses.
Become empowered now.
February is National Self Chec(k) Awareness Month
selfchec.org



NATIONAL SELF-CHECK MONTH is a reminder that every day of the year we can take charge of our health and increase our odds of avoiding chronic disease and other often preventable conditions. We all have our reasons for avoiding a checkup or self-check. We're too busy, or we don't want to know the truth. National Self Check Month brings to your fingertips a variety of self-empowering and proactive early detection and preventative resources and tools to guide us through healthcare related fears and concerns.

Even if you are proactive, someone in your life may not be. National Self-Check Month provides an opportunity for you to sit down with a loved one to share your concerns and offer ways to better health.

HOW TO OBSERVE It's time to do your important self-checks and/or visit your healthcare professional for a wellness check.

HISTORY Self Chec, a 501(c)(3) organization, founded National Self-Check Month to spread their simple mission: Provide the best and most comprehensive one-to-one tools and resources— free of charge — to help protect you and those you care about from cancer, heart disease and other chronic diseases that are often preventable and treatable if found early enough. In 2018, the Registrar at National Day Calendar proclaimed National Self-Check Month to be observed annually in February.

About Self Chec Most people are reactive when it comes to their health; they seek out information when they are already sick, or a friend has been diagnosed. *Self Chec* does the opposite, it nudges the public about the importance of proactive prevention, early detection and wellness care of chronic diseases, so they can reduce their odds of getting sick in the first place.

Source: www.selfchec.org

What is happening in February:

- AMD/Low Vision Awareness Month
- American Heart Month
- National Self-Check Month
- National Donor Day - 14 February 2021
- Valentines Day - 14 February 2021
- President's Day - 15 February 2021
- Heart Valve Disease Awareness Day - 22 February 2021



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Often considered to be a condition for the older generation, heart disease and other associated illnesses are on the rise across all age groups. That is why **Heart Month** is so important to us all.

February is a fantastic opportunity to find out of heart disease as well as the things that we can do in our ever day lives to mitigate risk to our hearts. Obesity, alcohol, smoking and high blood pressure are all things that people of all ages are affected by but yet are all things that we can do something about.

Supported by all the major health organizations in the US there is huge amounts of information available, but if you have specific concerns please contact your health provider.

You can find more information on:
www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health-topics/education-and-awareness/heart-month

What is low vision? It is a term that eye care professionals use to indicate partial sight, or vision that cannot be fully corrected with contact lenses, glasses, medications or surgery. Many think that low vision is a natural part of growing older but it isn't. It can happen to anyone at any age.

You hear about it more often as people age because as we grow older we are more likely to contract the diseases that can cause low vision. One of the most common diseases is Age-related Macular Degeneration, commonly known as AMD. AMD is a disease that blurs the sharp, central vision you need for straight-ahead activities and tasks such as reading and driving. The disease affects the macula; the part of the eye that allows you to see fine detail. It cannot be corrected by glasses, contact lenses or surgical options. But it can be treated to keep it from getting worse. There are treatment options available to help stabilize vision loss.

Prevention is the key to minimizing the risk of AMD. Studies suggest that following a healthy low-fat diet, wearing sunglasses for protection from ultraviolet rays and not smoking all help fight against the risks of contracting the disease. If you are a smoker, make a plan to quit as tobacco prevents the absorption of Lutein (an antioxidant) which is essential for eye health.

You should make it a point to see your eye care professional annually for a thorough eye exam.



BUSTING THE MYTHS

COVID-19 Vaccine

Myth: COVID-19 vaccines will give you COVID-19.

Fact: You cannot get COVID-19 from the vaccine. The Pfizer and Moderna vaccines do not contain any live or dead virus in it.

Myth: If you already had COVID-19, you do not need the vaccine.

Fact: Due to the severe health risks associated with COVID-19 and the fact that re-infection with COVID-19 is possible, people may be advised to get a COVID-19 vaccine even if they have been sick with COVID-19 before. At this time, experts do not know how long someone is protected from COVID-19 after being sick. The immunity someone gains from having an infection, called natural immunity, varies from person to person. Some early evidence suggests natural immunity may not last very long. Infectious Disease clinicians are estimating that natural immunity may last only four months.

Myth: The vaccine was developed really fast so they 'cut corners' to get it done and it may not be safe.

Fact: mRNA vaccines have been studied for five years so while the technology is still relatively new, it was not invented for this pandemic. In addition, the vaccines have undergone large clinical trials and have been vetted by multiple regulatory and government agencies that have shown these to be both safe and highly effective.

Myth: The side effects of the vaccine are really bad.

Fact: The most common side effects from this vaccine have included fatigue, muscle pains, joint pains, headaches, pain and redness at the injection site. These symptoms were more common after the second dose of the vaccine and the majority of side effects were mild.

Myth: Receiving an mRNA vaccine (the type of vaccine used by Pfizer and Moderna) will alter your DNA.

Fact: mRNA stands for messenger ribonucleic acid and can most easily be described as instructions for how to make a protein or even just a piece of a protein. mRNA is not able to alter or modify a person's genetic makeup (DNA). The mRNA from a COVID-19 vaccine never enter the nucleus of the cell, which is where our DNA are kept. This means the mRNA does not affect or interact with our DNA in any way. Instead, COVID-19 vaccines that use mRNA work with the body's natural defenses to safely develop protection (immunity) to disease.

Myth: The flu vaccine can help protect against COVID-19.

Fact: Getting a flu shot will not protect you against coronavirus. These are two different vaccinations.

Myth: Vaccines contain toxic ingredients.

Fact: Any substance, even water, can be toxic in large doses. The gelatin and egg proteins in some flu vaccines can cause allergic reactions in very rare cases. Those affected typically have a history of severe allergies to gelatin or eggs. If you have severe allergies, tell the nurse before your vaccine or talk to your doctor.

Myth: Natural immunity is healthier and more effective than vaccine immunity.

Fact: Vaccines allow you to build immunity without the damaging effects that vaccine-preventable diseases can have. These diseases can cause serious health problems and even be life-threatening. These effects can be avoided by simply getting vaccinated.

Myth: Vaccines can cause autism.

Fact: Vaccines do not cause autism. This incorrect claim stems from a study that has been discredited. Unfortunately, this flawed study has created much misinformation.

Myth: Vaccines have microchips and are used to microchip people.

Fact: This is entirely false and is not possible. This is a myth that stemmed from misinformation on the internet.



Happy Donor Day

Observed every year on February 14th, National Donor Day is an observance dedicated to spreading awareness and education about organ, eye and tissue donation. By educating and sharing the Donate Life message, we can each take small steps every day to help save and heal more lives, and honor the donor's legacy of generosity and compassion. National Donor Day is a time to focus on all types of donation—organ, eye, tissue, blood, platelets and marrow. National Donor Day is also a day to recognize those who have given and received the gift of life through organ, eye and tissue donation, are currently waiting for a lifesaving transplant, and those who died waiting because an organ was not donated in time.

Statistics at a Glance

- 109,000+** Number of men, women, and children on the national transplant waiting list as of September 2020.
- 39,718** transplants were performed in 2019.
- 17** people die each day waiting for an organ transplant.

We All Need to Register. Here's Why:

- 90%** of U.S. adults support organ donation but only **60%** are actually signed up as donors.
- every 9 minutes** another person is added to the transplant waiting list.
- only 3 in 1,000** people die in a way that allows for organ donation.

One Donor Can Save Eight Lives.

One person can donate up to 8 lifesaving organs: Heart, 2 Lungs, Liver, Pancreas, 2 Kidneys, Intestines.

Sources: www.organdonor.gov, www.donatelife.net, www.donoralliance.org

Did you know?



9.6 million

people die from cancer every year - this number is predicted to almost double by 2030.

The total annual economic cost of cancer is estimated at approximately **US\$1.16 trillion**.

70%

of cancer deaths occur in low-to-middle income countries.

At least one third of common cancers are preventable.

Cancer is the second-leading cause of death worldwide.

Less than 30%

of low-income countries have cancer treatment services available (compared to 90% in high-income countries)

Up to 3.7 million

lives could be saved each year through resource appropriate strategies for prevention, early detection and timely and quality treatment.



World Cancer Day is the one singular initiative under which the entire world can unite together in the fight against the global cancer epidemic. It aims to save millions of preventable deaths each year by raising awareness and education about cancer, and pressing governments and individuals across the world to take action against the disease.

Cancer is Not Inevitable. You probably know several people who have had cancer. In fact, it may seem like most people get cancer sooner or later. But the truth is, most people *don't* get cancer. According to the National Cancer Institute, 3 out of 5 people will never be diagnosed with cancer during their lifetime. For most people, cancer doesn't have to be a part of growing older. Many common kinds of cancer can be prevented. Screening tests can find breast, cervical, and colorectal (colon) cancers early, when they're easiest to treat. Break one link in the chain - prevent a sunburn, don't smoke, get screened for colon cancer, keep a healthy weight - and the odds of getting cancer go down.

To learn more about World Cancer Day, please visit:

www.worldcancerday.org

www.cdc.gov/cancer

www.uicc.org/world-cancer-day