

MEDICAL
BRIEFS

Flu shots

Michigan Visiting Nurses will offer flu shots for those 18 years and older. Flu shots are \$15 each and pneumonia vaccinations are \$25. The next local clinic is 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Tuesday, Nov. 20 at the Friendship Center, 1119 N. Newburgh, Westland. Please contact MVN for more information before attending the clinic (734) 677-0020 or (800) 880-0020.

Arthritis self-help

The Arthritis Foundation will host a self-help course 12:30 p.m. Wednesday, Nov. 28-Dec. 12 at Southeast Rehabilitation & Physical Therapy, 26771 West 12 Mile, Suite 103, Southfield. The three week course will meet for two hours to discuss how to talk to your doctor, nutritional habits, depression, exercise, etc. Cost is \$25 for registrant; \$5 for companion. Call (800) 958-3030 or (248) 424-9001 ext. 39.

Food drive ends

A two-week effort by St. Mary Mercy Hospital to collect food and other grocery items for the Michigan Harvest Food Gathering concluded. In all, 1,651 pounds of food was collected and will be distributed by Gladders Food Bank and local agencies to families and individuals in need.

PMS trial

Psychopharmacology Research Corporation of Farmington Hills are seeking volunteers to participate in a research study for people who suffer from symptoms of severe PMS also known as Premenstrual Dysphoric Disorder. This placebo-controlled research study will evaluate the safety and effectiveness of an investigational medication for the treatment of symptoms relating to PMDD. Volunteers 18-40 are being screened. Qualified participants will receive study-related medication and study-related health assessments. Call (866) 841-9090.

Hospice information

Civic Center Library, 32777 Five Mile, Livonia, has partnered with Hospice of Michigan during National Hospice Month, Nov. 1-30 to raise community awareness about hospice care. The library will offer books and videos on hospice care and an extensive bibliography of other books and videos on end-of-life issues that library patrons can use. For information on Hospice of Michigan call (888) 247-6181 or www.hom.org

Support groups

The Oakwood Cancer Center is offering 10 separate support groups for cancer patients and their families and supports. The meetings are all free of cost, and are not limited to patients currently attending an Oakwood facility for cancer care. Support groups are offered for site-specific cancer patients, such as breast cancer and prostate cancer and for patients who have undergone or are planning to undergo specific courses of treatment. Call (800) 543-WELL for meeting dates and times.

We want your health news

There are several ways you can reach the Observer Health & Fitness staff. The Sunday section provides numerous venues for you to offer newsworthy information including Medical Briefs (upcoming calendar events), Medical Newsmakers (appointments/new hires in the medical field), and Medical Briefs (medical advances, short news items from hospitals, physicians, companies). We also welcome newsworthy ideas for health and fitness related stories.

To submit an item to our newspaper you can call, write, fax or e-mail us.

CALL US:
(734) 953-2128

WRITE US:
Observer & Eclectic Newspapers
(Specify Detroit, Newsmakers or Briefs)
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THE BALANCING ACT

Healthy holiday food choices

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OK, let's be reasonable. Just how much weight do you think you can lose before the holidays... five or 10 pounds? Think again. Thanksgiving is just days away, and all that gravy and pumpkin pie can adhere to your mid-section like a double roll of bubble wrap.

The answer? Relax. Indulge on some days and cut back on others, say nutrition experts. It's a matter of moderation and balance.

"I don't recommend losing weight ahead of time as a buffer zone," said Beth Thayer, a registered dietitian and coordinator of Henry Ford Hospital's Heart Smart program. "Just try to maintain your weight."

Social stress makes dieting during the holiday season difficult, she added. "There's a kind of self-forgiveness in the air. Family and friends keep saying you can start your diet in January."

Whatever you do, forget the fad diets that promise miracle weight losses, said Thayer. "Fad diets in general can restrict whole food groups. The first question to ask about these diets is how are you getting all your nutrients?"

Health risks

Unfortunately, come January, most post-holiday indulgers will be tempted to go on a high protein diet. While such diets may produce a quick weight loss, they have no proven effectiveness in long-term weight reduction. What's more, they pose potential health threats for those who adhere to them for more than a short time, according to an advisory from the American Heart Association's Nutrition Committee in *Circulation: Journal of the American Heart Association*.

The advisory specifically targets such popular "quick weight loss" regimens as Dr. Atkins' New Diet Revolution, The Zone, Protein Power, Sugar Busters and Dr. Stillman's Quick Weight Loss Diet.

"High-protein items may also be high in fat. Some of the diets increase fat intake and reduce nutritionally rich foods such as fruits and vegetables, which is not a good approach to meeting a person's long-term dietary needs," said Dr. Robert H. Eckel, immediate past chairman of the AHA Nutrition Committee and co-author of the advisory. "Many of these diets fail to provide essential vitamins, minerals, fiber and other nutritional elements, in addition to their high fat content."

One of the most compelling arguments against following a high-protein diet, said Eckel, is that these diets have not been documented to deliver on their promise of sustained, long-term weight loss. The safety, credibility and effectiveness of the revised AHA nutritional guidelines, on the other

hand, are backed by scientific documentation.

"It's important for the public to understand that no scientific evidence supports the claim that high-protein diets enable people to maintain their initial weight loss," said Eckel. "In general, quick weight-loss diets don't work for most people."

Sherri Isaak, registered dietitian and diabetes educator at St. Mary Mercy Hospital in Livonia, says high-protein diets — which are often high in saturated, animal-based fats — increase the risk of coronary disease, diabetes, stroke and several types of cancer.

"One of my major concerns is that you are limiting your fruits, vegetables and whole grains. You are not getting your phytochemicals, which are plant chemicals that actually have the capability of reducing the risk for cancer, diabetes and heart disease," she said.

In addition, many people can't metabolize protein effectively, especially those with kidney disease, liver disorders and osteoporosis, said Isaak. For diabetics, excessive amounts of protein could lead to kidney problems; for women, it increases the risk of osteoporosis by leaching calcium in the urine.

Still not convinced that a high-protein diet is not the best way to lose weight? Here's another reason to avoid them: Bad breath.

"The ketones (an organic chemical compound) your body produces give a breath odor of a cross between nail polish and over-ripe pineapple," said Thayer.

Common sense

If you throw away your common sense and go on a high-protein diet before the holidays, keep in mind it can drain you of much-needed energy. Such diets induce quick weight loss primarily through the loss of body fluids due to the diuretic effect of eliminating most carbohydrates. Glycogen, the form of sugar used by the body for energy, is lost in the muscles as well. The result is fatigue.

"At first people say they have more energy, but I



think later on if you're not getting the carbohydrates, you're not as energetic," said Isaak.

Fortunately, it is possible to survive the holidays with lots of energy, little guilt and without resorting to fad dieting.

Nutritionists at Saint Joseph Mercy Health Stop offer the following tips:

- Don't skip meals. This only sets you up for overeating later.
- Eat something small before going to a gathering so you're not starving when dinner is served.
- Circle the buffet table first and decide which food you really want. Want something of everything? OK, but try to limit your portion size. Try one spoonful of stuffing, not half a plate.
- Have that piece of Grandma's pumpkin pie, but take a smaller piece. And try fat-free whipped topping.
- Load up on the high-fiber fruits, vegetables and whole grains. Food low in fiber will leave you feeling less full and satisfied.
- Continue your exercise regimen. It's difficult to get back on track once you stop.
- Lastly, keep your perspective. One slice of pie at Aunt Mary's house didn't put the weight on. As they say, the proof is in the plum pudding. It was repeated overeating and lack of exercise that caused you to slowly but surely gain weight.

Serve the safest holiday turkey at your table

As the holiday season draws near, the Wayne County Environmental Health Department cautions home cooks to be aware that Salmonella, a disease-causing bacteria, is sometimes found in raw poultry.

"When raw turkey is stuffed, the bacteria from the turkey may be transferred to the stuffing," says Steve Tackitt, Wayne County Department of Public Health's Environmental Health Director. "Proper cooking kills this harmful germ and helps to eliminate food poisoning, which causes flu-like symptoms, headaches, diarrhea, vomiting, stomach cramps and fever."

The appropriate temperature to kill Salmonella is 165 degrees F. Because the stuffing is placed inside the turkey, extra cooking time may be required to reach this temperature.

"Use a meat thermometer to measure the internal temperature of the stuffing in the turkey," adds

Thaw frozen foods in the refrigerator or under cold running water, says the Wayne County Health Department.

Tackitt. "Pop-up thermometers that come with some turkeys only measure the temperature of the turkey, not the stuffing."

Tackitt recommends that if you do not own a meat thermometer, then cook the stuffing separately.

The Environmental Health Division offers these other tips to prevent food-borne illness from striking your family during the holiday season:

- Prepare food on clean surfaces, using a diluted bleach mixture to sanitize food preparation areas (2 capfuls of household bleach per gallon of water).

- Wash hands with soap and water before and after food handling.

- Thaw frozen foods in the refrigerator or under cold running water.

- Never thaw foods, marinate meat or leave leftovers at room temperature.

Holiday Turkey Preparation:

- Keep hot foods hot and cold foods cold.
- Don't use the same knife to cut raw meat and poultry and chop vegetables.
- Wash cutting boards and knives with hot, soapy water between uses.
- Don't use the same plate for raw and cooked meat and poultry.

For more information, contact the Wayne County Department of Public Health's Environmental Health Unit at (734) 727-7400.