



Wellness Newsletter

July 28 is World Hepatitis Day.



Viral hepatitis is inflammation of the liver caused by a virus. As many as 5.3 million persons in the US are living with hepatitis and most of them are unaware of their infection, meaning they can unknowingly transmit these viruses to others. In addition, they may not be receiving the care they need that could prevent the progression to liver disease, including liver cancer, in later life. For more information, go to www.worldhepatitisday.info, and talk to your doctor about reducing your risks, getting tested, and whether a vaccine is right for you.

Tai chi—Just What You Need

If you suffer from common knee osteoarthritis, try tai chi. Tai chi is a traditional Chinese mind-body practice that combines meditation with slow, gentle movements and deep breathing. It involves a series of exercises that flow from one to another, with emphasis on correct posture. The repeated movement and compression of the joints gets the synovial fluid in the joints flowing better to help them move more freely. And since tai chi is low impact, knees and other joints don't get overly stressed. Tai chi has other benefits as well. It can increase strength, flexibility, balance and coordination. As a bonus, tai chi can improve sleep, while reducing stress, anxiety and depression. Maybe tai chi is just what you “knee’d.”



A Good Reason to Get Moving

A new study found that exercise may significantly reduce your risk of breast, colon and lung cancer, as well as an additional 10 or more cancers. Overall, a higher level of physical activity was associated with a 7 percent lower risk of total cancer.



Other cancers of reduced risk include leukemia, myeloma, cancers of the esophagus, liver, kidney stomach, endometrium, rectum, bladder, head and neck. The highest reduced risk was 42 percent for esophageal cancer.

What's the best exercise? The one you enjoy enough to keep at it!

Source: JAMA Internal Medicine, May 2016.

Karen's Wellness Corner

I believe there is a “key” to everyone’s personal health challenge that will unlock their ability to manage or conquer that challenge. Whether it’s a medical condition, addictions, excess weight, or simply lack of exercise, the key may be an insight, a motto, some information, or a program. I know this to be true from personal experience, and these success stories are common: someone tries for years to lose weight or quit smoking or overcome health conditions, and finally they succeed. So **don't give up**. If you give up today, you may miss the key that awaits you tomorrow. Many medical conditions can't be cured, but you *can* raise the standard for how you feel. So open your mind to new information, stay informed, talk to others in your position, find a doctor who will listen to your ideas. Believe that your key is within your grasp.



Karen DeBonis
R&K Wellness Director

Swimmer's Ear



Swimmer's ear is an infection that occurs when water stays in the ear canal, allowing bacteria to grow. The infection causes redness and swelling of the ear canal, drainage or discharge, and pain when the *outside* of the ear is touched. (Most other ear infections cause pain *inside* the ear.)

To prevent swimmer's ear, always dry ears with a washcloth or towel, *not* cotton swabs, after swimming. If a hair dryer is handy, use the low setting and place the dryer about one foot away from the ear to dry it. Over-the-counter drops are available to prevent swimmer's ear, but they should not be used by children with ear tubes, individuals with ruptured ear drums, or anyone who has had ear surgery.

If you do suspect swimmer's ear, see your healthcare provider, who will prescribe ear drops and may advise you to avoid swimming for a week to 10 days.

Bedtime Vision Scare

Bedtime smartphone users may get a scare that results in undue anxiety, needless tests and unnecessary medical visits.

When an individual lays on one side to look at their cell phone, their vision in that eye may be blocked by the pillow. The blocked eye will adapt to the dark, but the other eye adapts to the light of the cell phone. When the cell phone is turned off, there can be temporary and scary vision loss in the light-adapted eye until it adjusts to the dark.

The simple solution: be sure your eyes are both free from interference so they will adapt at the same time.

Source: New England Journal of Medicine, June 2016.



When Heat is a Hazard

In hot environments, our bodies get rid of excess internal heat through sweating and by circulating blood to the skin. When the air temperature is close to or warmer than our body temperature, blood circulated to the skin cannot lose its heat. Sweating then takes over, but it only works if the humidity level is low enough to allow evaporation, and if the fluids and salts that are lost are adequately replaced.

If the body cannot get rid of excess heat, it will store it. This can lead to heat-related illnesses: heat rash, heat cramps, heat exhaustion and heat stroke. Symptoms of heat exhaustion may include a fast heart rate, headache, confusion, irritability, nausea, excessive sweating, and cool moist skin. Heat stroke, the most serious heat-

related illness, can cause a loss of the desire to drink, seizures, hot dry skin, fainting and even death.

If you are suddenly exposed to working in a hot environment, either as a first time or after being away, you are especially vulnerable. But heat-related illnesses can be prevented. Take advantage of air conditioning and ventilation that cools the environment, practice work/rest cycles, drink water often, and try to build up a level of tolerance to working in the heat. Also, it's important to know and look out for the symptoms of heat-related illness in yourself and others during hot weather.

Acting quickly can save lives!



Brought to you by Rose & Kiernan, Inc.

The information provided in this newsletter is not intended to be applicable to all individuals and employees. This publication provides general education only. Individuals are advised to follow the advice of their physicians and healthcare providers. Thank you.

To see past editions of the R&K Wellness newsletter: www.rkinsurance.com/employee_benefits/group_benefits/rk_publications/wellness_newsletters/