OLMSTED MEDICAL CENTER
GOOD HEALTH STARTS WITH GREAT CARE.

HealthNotes

A Health and Wellness Publication from Olmsted Medical Center • www.olmstedmedicalcenter.org

Beat Dry Skin This Winter

Winter's cold winds and dry air can sap water and oil from your skin, leaving it cracked, dry, and itchy. Stress, aging, and smoking also contribute.

Here's how to put a damper on dry skin:

- Limit showers and baths to 10 minutes. Hot water strips skin's oils, so keep it lukewarm. Use a mild soap or nonsoap cleanser.
- Apply a moisturizing ointment or cream immediately after bathing to lock in moisture. Reapply throughout the day. Thick products (creams rather than lotions) work best.
- Minimize shaving irritation by replacing razors often and using shaving cream or gel. Shave in the direction hair grows.
- Drink plenty of water. Use a humidifier if you have forced-air heating or if the air in your home feels dry.

If severe dry skin lasts longer than two weeks, appears red and swollen, or oozes, contact a dermatologist. You may have an infection or other problem.

Give Heart Disease a Timeout with Tea

People worldwide drink tea more than any other beverage except water. Here's a reason to join them: Women who regularly drink tea appear to lower their chance of developing cardiovascular disease. It may help men, too, but scientists are still trying to sort out how much.

The journal *Arteriosclerosis, Thrombosis, and Vascular Biology* found that older women who drank at least three cups of tea every day had a reduced plaque buildup in their arteries. Fatty plaque deposits on blood vessel walls can cause dangerous clogs in blood flow that can lead to heart attack or stroke.

Women who drank one to two cups a day also had less plaque compared with nontea drinkers.

Black, Green Tea the Best Choices

In another study, frequent green tea drinkers had a 26% lower risk for death from heart disease and stroke than non-green-tea drinkers. Those who consumed more than 16 ounces daily had the best results, but even 3.4 ounces a day may help. While both genders benefited, green tea seemed most valuable to women.

Black tea, too, may help fight cardiovascular disease. One review of 17 different studies of both men and women showed drinking at least three cups a day may decrease heart attacks by 11%.

Brewed Is Best
For heart health, don't take shortcuts. Instant and ready-to-drink teas may not have the same amount of heart-healthy benefits as freshly brewed tea.

Drink Up for Healthy Blood Vessels

It isn't fully understood how tea works to prevent heart disease and stroke. However, studies have shown that tea's ingredients can assist cells that line blood vessels to work better.

Tea also may reduce inflammation—a key player in the development of cardiovascular disease.

Take Charge of Your Health!
Did you know you can find guidelines for additional preventive medicine on our newly redesigned website? Visit **www.olmstedmedicalcenter.org/live_healthy/guidelines.html.**

 WINTER 2009

Losing Weight and Staying Healthy with OMC's Help

Eight years ago, Jeremy Wahlstrom went to Olmsted Medical Center's (OMC's) emergency room with painful back spasms. With higher-than-normal cholesterol and blood pressure, she suffered knee and ankle pain too. "It came down to my weight," says Wahlstrom, who weighed just over 300 pounds at the time.

Wahlstrom, now 61, decided enough was enough. She had tried weight-loss programs in the past and had found little success. "I'd lose weight, but then gain it back—plus!" she says.

With the help of OMC, Jeremy Wahlstrom has lost weight safely—and kept it off.

She spoke with her doctor, who told her about OMC's Center for Weight Loss and Wellness, which offers medically supervised, effective weight-loss options that promote long-term health.

Three distinct food plans are available, and individualized activity programs are designed to complement a patient's food plan.

- **Medically Supervised Diet:** Health Management Resources (HMR®) meals with regular medical testing, weekly group session, and counseling
- **Healthy Solutions:** HMR meals plus fruits and vegetables, weekly group session, and counseling
- **HMR at Home® Diet Kit:** A do-it-yourself kit with HMR food, instructions, and follow-up materials with the option of added accountability

Wahlstrom found that the Medically Supervised Diet food plan was the right fit for her. "I enjoyed HMR meals," she says. "I even carried enough with me for a weeklong Costa Rican vacation!"

Compared with their typical food budgets, many people even save money using the meals, says Kari Forystek, behavioral health educator at the Center. "They're easy, too. Portions are automatically controlled, so there is no confusing calorie or point counting."

Wahlstrom also enjoyed the support she received during the weekly small-group coaching sessions. These sessions teach patients how to stay healthy in the long term. "The coach would suggest ways to stay on track—or recover if we got off," she explains.

For Wahlstrom, the Center for Weight Loss and Wellness was the solution she had always been looking for. Safely, she lost more than 140 pounds over the course of 10 months. She has returned to the program for additional support twice and has never come close to reaching her original weight. "My health is good, and I feel better," she says. "A side benefit is that I look better, too."

People who follow HMR programs are keeping off an average of 47 pounds two-and-a-half years later. **Call 507.292.7155** to schedule your **free, no-obligation orientation**. The first 100 readers who attend an orientation will receive a free gift bag, compliments of the Center for Weight Loss and Wellness. For more, visit **www.olmstedmedicalcenter.org.**

Exercise: What Are You Waiting For?

Work out now, and you'll reap the rewards decades later. More than 1,000 adults age 65 and older were asked how active they were between ages 20 and 60 and within the past year. Adults who had exercised when younger scored significantly higher on tests of their current ability to get around.

American Journal of Preventive Medicine, vol. 31, no. 3

Serving Our Communities

Olmsted Medical Center (OMC), a not-for-profit healthcare organization, is an active, contributing partner in the communities it serves. Nothing says this better than our employees' high level of volunteer involvement. Nearly 400 employees responded to OMC's 2008 employee volunteer survey. Nearly all respondents said they volunteer at another not-for-profit or other community program.

Organizations and groups benefiting from this volunteer work include:

- programs promoting fitness, healthy lifestyles, and safety for youth and children (29%)
- pre-K through grade 12 education (31%)
- education for adults entering health professions (28%)
- programs for health and wellness promotion (22%)
- human service organizations (21%)
- professional associations (11%)
- service clubs (10%)
- arts and culture organizations (5%)
- animal-related organizations (13%)
- neighborhood groups (12%)
- diversity or multicultural communities (4%)
- faith communities (30%)
- government (4%)
- environmental/conservation organizations (7%).

These employees spent 7 to 13 hours per month engaged in volunteer work. According to Independent Sector, a leadership forum promoting philanthropy, the estimated dollar value of volunteer time was $19.51 per hour for 2007. This means the average OMC volunteer's time and effort each month carry a value between $136.57 and $253.63—or between $1,639 and $3,044 per year. That makes the total annual value of volunteer time spent by the 301 employees who shared their volunteer contributions through this survey worth between $493,339 and $916,244!

Want to give back through OMC?
Contact the OMC Regional Foundation for opportunities to share your gift of time or treasure. Call **507.292.7200** or e-mail **foundation@olmmed.org.**

Note: Percentage total does not add up to 100%. Survey respondents were encouraged to check off all groups with which they worked.

IS BEING ACTIVE THE FOUNTAIN OF YOUTH?

Need another reason to get active? A new study suggests that it might turn back the clock on aging. Researchers took blood samples from 2,401 healthy adults. They looked at the length of telomeres, which are sequences of DNA. Telomeres are thought to be a measure of biological aging because they shorten with age. Less active men and women had shorter telomeres than those who were more active, regardless of age. In fact, adults who spent about three hours a week being active had telomeres the same length as inactive adults 10 years younger.

Archives of Internal Medicine, vol. 168, no. 2

When Is a Fever Too High?

Fever isn't an illness in itself. It's usually a sign that your body is fighting an infection or other condition.

Normal body temperature is anywhere from 97 to 100.4° Fahrenheit. Mild fevers usually get better without treatment. Get immediate help for:

- anyone with a fever of 104° or higher—brain damage may occur if body temperature tops 107.6°
- children younger than 3 months with any temperature higher than normal
- children ages 3 to 36 months with a temperature of 102° or higher
- children having seizures, refusing to eat, not responding, or having trouble breathing during a fever
- a fever lasting more than a few days
- any child with recurrent fevers
- children with both fever and a chronic condition (cancer, heart disease, etc.).

HealthNotes

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Recipe:

BREAKFAST ON THE RUN

Serves six; serving size is ½ muffin with topping.

Ingredients

4 tbsp.	apple butter
2 tbsp.	Dijon-style mustard
3	whole wheat English muffins, split and lightly toasted
6	1/2-oz. slices low-fat cracked-black-pepper- OR deli-style ham, chopped
2 tbsp.	minced green onion tops
3 oz.	shredded low-fat sharp cheddar cheese

Directions

In a small bowl, combine apple butter and mustard. Spread 1 tablespoon mixture on each muffin half. In another small bowl, combine ham, onion, and cheese. Spread each muffin half with this mixture. Broil until topping is bubbly. (Both mixtures may be prepared in advance and stored separately for a quick breakfast.)

Per Serving

Calories	137
Total fat	3 g
Cholesterol	11 mg
Sodium	400 mg
Total carbohydrate	19 g
Dietary fiber	2.5 g
Protein	10 g

Can't Stay Home with a Cold or Flu?

Feel Better Now

You're under the weather—but you can't miss that big meeting or your child's birthday party just because of a cold.

Life doesn't stop when you get sick. Try the following methods to get rid of cold and flu symptoms and get on with your day:

- Saline nasal drops can help clear out your nose and moisten raw skin. Petroleum jelly also can relieve dry skin on your nose.
- Avoid drinking alcohol, smoking, or inhaling secondhand smoke.
- Drink plenty of water and eat soup—clear liquid can loosen mucus and prevent dehydration.
- Soothe a sore throat with sprays or lozenges. Or try gargling with salt water a few times a day.
- Take aspirin or acetaminophen to relieve pain and fever. However, don't give aspirin to children or teenagers. Tepid baths and cool sponges also can help lower your temperature.
- Over-the-counter medicines can help relieve symptoms such as watery eyes, a runny nose, congestion, and coughing.

If you have the flu, ask your healthcare provider about antiviral medications.

If you have a fever, chills, body aches, or a severe cough—or your symptoms came on suddenly—it's best to stay home or go home if possible. You may have a more serious viral infection. It's also a good idea to stay home if you feel you may be contagious or pose a risk to others.

If you have to be out of the house, cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when you cough or sneeze. Wash hands with soap and water or use an alcohol-based hand cleaner. If you don't have a tissue, cough or sneeze into your upper sleeve, not your hands.

Though it's mom-approved, vitamin C may *not* help prevent colds. Research shows vitamin C is not effective in reducing the incidence of the common cold.

It's not too late to get your annual flu shot! Call **507.292.7183** to schedule an appointment.