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GOOD HEALTH STARTS WITH GREAT CARE.®

HealthNotes

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

Preventive Care Helps Your Health—and Wallet

You probably know that taking small, sensible precautions every day—from choosing healthy foods to taking your medicines as recommended—can help prevent many major medical problems. But research shows that simple preventive strategies also can help curb medical costs. Once a serious medical condition develops, the treatment or "cure" may require costly medication, surgery, and/or hospitalization.

A recent review in the *New England Journal of Medicine* found that nearly 40% of deaths in the U.S. every year could be prevented with economical measures such as quitting smoking, eating nutritiously, increasing physical activity, and lowering alcohol consumption.

But not all tests, screenings, and medicines will save you money in the long term. A reliable organization to consult is the federal Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ). For better health and lower medical costs, the AHRQ recommends these measures:

Stop smoking. This expensive habit harms nearly every organ of the body, causing multiple cancers, cardiovascular disease, bone damage, and adverse reproductive effects.

Vaccinate. Flu shots offer low-cost protection for all ages. Those older than age 65 should also get a pneumonia shot.

Move and eat right. Exercise regularly and eat a balanced, nutritious diet—one low in unhealthy fats and high in fruits and vegetables. These are the keys to avoiding obesity and related health risks.

Check your vitals. Men and women both need regular weight and blood pressure checks. Unhealthy levels can lead to early health problems.

Manage long-term diseases. Chronic conditions, such as diabetes, depression, high cholesterol, and high blood pressure, require daily self-management—from testing blood glucose to taking medicines. This care will help keep you well and out of expensive emergency rooms—and ward off debilitating complications.

Get screened. Women need periodic breast exams and Pap tests. Men need to discuss prostate exams with their healthcare providers. Both benefit from colorectal cancer screenings and other tests to identify warning signs of health problems early, when they are least expensive and most treatable.

Visit **www.olmstedmedicalcenter.org** for a full list of preventive health guidelines. Click on "Live a Healthy Life" and "Maintaining Your Health."

It's Never Too Early to Practice Healthy Habits

From June 15 to August 18, 2010, children enrolled in School-Age Child Care (SACC) programs in two southeastern Minnesota communities participated in the Säjai (pronounced "saw-jay") Wise Kids® program. Using workbooks, games, and activities, the nationwide program teaches kids about wellness and helps them make wise decisions about nutrition and exercise. It covers critical wellness concepts related to energy balance; that is, energy (or calories) in should equal energy (or calories) out to best manage weight and stay healthy.

The Säjai Wise Kids program was offered to 21–32 children per week in Plainview and Spring Valley. It was supported in part by a generous donation from an Olmsted Medical Center (OMC) physician. OMC dietitian and patient educator Bridget Ideker, RD, LD, led the nine-week program. OMC serves both communities through local branch clinics in each town.

Säjai Wise Kids participants learned that healthy eating can be fun, too!

 WINTER 2011

Staying Safe with Medication

When you visit Olmsted Medical Center (OMC), you can rest assured that systems are in place to help ensure you receive the right medications in the right doses. But at home, taking medication correctly can be a challenge.

One reason? We're taking more medication. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reports that more than 80% of Americans take one or more medications. Also, if you don't understand what substances interact with your medication, the medication may lose effectiveness, notes Linda Williams, MD, OMC's chief medical information officer.

Currently, OMC is participating in a national campaign to raise patient awareness about medication issues, says Chief Medical Officer David Westgard, MD. "We want patients to have the information they need to take medications safely and receive all the benefits they offer," he says.

If you have a medication question, call your healthcare provider or pharmacist immediately. In the meantime, the following information can help reduce the chance for unsafe interactions and help you feel better about what you take.

Correct doses matter. Some newer medications may be taken just once per week or month, which can make it harder to remember when you took them last, says Dr. Williams. A calendar can help you track doses so you don't take too little—or too much.

Honesty is critical. Your healthcare provider is your partner in healthcare. Being honest about medication practices is key to medication effectiveness, says Dr. Westgard. For example, instead of splitting pills to save money, talk with your healthcare provider about payment concerns. He or she may be able to prescribe cheaper medications with similar effects.

Make a list. The most important thing to do is keep a list of all medications, supplements, vitamins, and over-the-counter drugs you take and when. "Anything you take, including herbal supplements, vitamins, and over-the-counter drugs, can interact with your medications," Dr. Williams says.

Bring the bottles. Bring that list—or even the bottles themselves with your medications in them—to every physician appointment, Dr. Williams advises. "Your healthcare provider can see what you are taking and help make sure you're getting the best results."

It's in the Bag

To help you collect all your medications to review with your healthcare provider, OMC will provide you with a free bag during your next visit. Use this bag to collect all of your medication information (including the containers) to bring to your future appointments!

Help Your Healthcare Provider Help You

You take medications to feel better, not worse. In addition to the tips above, stay safe with these suggestions:

- ☐ Know what each medication you take does.
- ☐ Double-check to make sure you are taking the right medication.
- ☐ Always take the prescribed dose.
- ☐ Remember your medications if you are going to be away from home.
- ☐ Never take someone else's prescription medication, even if it worked for them.
- ☐ Talk with your healthcare provider before you stop taking prescribed medications.

Complementary and Alternative Medicine Offers More Choices

Perhaps you're coping with chronic back pain, seeking relief from anxiety, hoping to speed your recovery from surgery, or just wanting to stay healthy. For these and many other reasons, about 4 in 10 American adults use complementary or alternative medicine, or CAM.

CAM includes a range of treatments that historically haven't been available from medical doctors, nurses, or other mainstream healthcare providers.

Complementary therapies work alongside standard medical care. **Alternative** therapies are used instead of conventional ones. This can mean, for instance, treating acute low back pain with chiropractics or massage in addition to, or instead of, prescription medicines.

Olmsted Medical Center (OMC) patients now may choose CAM treatments to supplement their providers' conventional care. For example, trained volunteers from OMC's Auxiliary are available to provide hand massages—a relaxing and soothing experience—to inpatients upon request. And music and art therapy are options that inpatients may choose through consultation with their attending provider.

Because they're fairly new, most CAM therapies lack scientific evidence to support them. Some therapies haven't been studied well, and others can cause harmful side effects, especially when combined with traditional therapies. For instance, if you take daily aspirin, ginkgo biloba can cause bleeding.

If you're considering CAM:

- **Talk with your primary healthcare provider.** He or she can help you make informed decisions and avoid harmful interactions.
- **Do your research.** Look up studies, and when selecting a practitioner, go through a professional organization. Or, get suggestions from your usual healthcare provider. Ask questions about education, licensing, and experience.
- **Be skeptical.** Dietary and herbal supplements often make big claims, and supplements don't have to be proven safe or effective before they hit the market. To find out which work, check with government agencies such as the National Institutes of Health, Federal Trade Commission, or Food and Drug Administration.

Take an active role in your health and wellness! Share information with your healthcare provider about the supplements, vitamins, and therapeutic substances you use. See page 2 for details. And learn more about CAM in the next issue of *Health e-Living,* our FREE quarterly e-newsletter. Sign up today at **www.olmstedmedicalcenter.org.**

Can Young Children Learn from DVDs?

Nearly 100 children took part in a study to find out if they could learn words from an educational DVD. All were between the ages of 12 and 25 months. Half the children were assigned to watch a 35-minute Baby Einstein DVD five times every two weeks for six weeks. The other group did not watch the DVD. At the end of the study no differences were found between the groups in number of words understood or spoken from the DVD.

CPR Helps OMC Surgical Tech Save a Life

Olmsted Medical Center surgical technician Kim Thomas-Schandorff hadn't planned on saving a life the morning of Sunday, June 13, 2010. But when she witnessed a local veterinarian experiencing a heart attack, she immediately dialed **911** and initiated CPR (cardiopulmonary resuscitation).

She continued CPR until emergency services arrived with an automated external defibrillator (AED) roughly eight minutes later. Due in large part to Kim's skillful efforts, her neighbor made it to the hospital and has since made a remarkable recovery. OMC is proud of the heroic acts its caregivers perform both at work and at home!

HealthNotes

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Recipe:

MULTIGRAIN CHICKEN SOUP

½ cup	brown rice, uncooked
⅓ cup	medium barley, uncooked
⅓ cup	red lentils, uncooked
⅓ cup	yellow split peas, uncooked
2 ribs	celery, sliced
4	carrots, sliced
2	garlic cloves, crushed
2 tbsp.	dried parsley
1 tbsp.	dried thyme
1 tsp.	powdered ginger
1 tsp.	marjoram
½ tsp.	salt
½ tsp.	ground black pepper
1 lb.	boneless, skinless chicken breasts, cut into bite-size pieces
12 cups	water

Directions
Put all ingredients in a large pot. Bring to a boil. Cover the pot and turn the heat down to simmer. Cook for about one hour, until all grains are tender. Check seasonings. Soup will be thick. You can thin, if you like, by adding water or chicken stock.

Yield: 8 servings
Serving size: 1½ cups

Calories	236
Total fat	3 g
Sodium	245 mg
Carbohydrate	30 g
Fiber	6 g
Protein	22 g

Helpful tip from OMC's registered dietitians: Before adding the herbs to the soup, crush the leaves between your fingers. This helps release volatile oils and increase the herbs' flavors.

Home Program Offers Critical Weight-Loss Support

In late 2009, as then 35-year-old Pastor Rance Settle struggled to carry his 303 pounds up a flight of stairs, he had a startling thought: "What if I can't make it? I want to be here for my wife and three children, and for my congregation."

The former football player made an appointment with his healthcare provider, who told him he had Type 2 diabetes, high cholesterol, and a poorly functioning liver.

Pastor Settle needed to lose weight. After researching several options, he chose the Health Management Resources (HMR) at Home® Program through the Center for Weight Loss and Wellness at Olmsted Medical Center (OMC). "It was the only program not based on deprivation," he says. "I could eat as many entrees as I wanted, and the weight still came off."

The program's motivational materials and meal home delivery are ideal for people who aren't able to attend in-person meetings, explains Fawn Hangge, the Center's program supervisor. "Participants just add fruits and vegetables to the meals," she says. "It helps them learn to prepare their own food once they reach their goal."

Pastor Settle received meal deliveries every two weeks for a year. At first, he says, it was an adjustment. But as he followed program tenets such as eating five to six small meals each day, his energy increased. He also started exercising, first riding a stationary bike and later adding workout videos.

OMC Center for Weight Loss and Wellness client Rance Settle credits the HMR At Home program for helping him adopt a healthier lifestyle.

Today, Pastor Settle is more than 100 pounds lighter. His diabetes is now under control, and his cholesterol and liver are back to normal. His success has inspired several of his congregants to start their own weight-loss journeys. And his thinking has changed. "HMR helped me learn about nutrition. I feel so much better," he concludes.

If you are ready to lose weight and regain vitality, call OMC's Center for Weight Loss and Wellness at **507.292.7155** to register for a free, no-obligation session where you can learn about the HMR program that fits your needs.