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May is American Stroke Awareness Month

Stroke is the fifth leading cause of death in the U.S. and a leading cause of adult disability.

Someone in the U.S. has a stroke about once every 40 seconds. Major risk factors for stroke include high blood pressure, smoking, diabetes, high cholesterol, heart disease and atrial fibrillation.

Recognize the Signs and Symptoms of Stroke

If you think someone may be having a stroke, act F.A.S.T. and do the following simple test:

F—Face: Ask the person to smile. Does one side of the face droop?

A—Arms: Ask the person to raise both arms. Does one arm drift downward?

S—Speech: Ask the person to repeat a simple phrase. Is the speech slurred or strange?

T—Time: If you see any of these signs, call 9-1-1 right away.

Note the time when any symptoms first appear.

This information helps health care providers determine the best treatment for each person. Do not drive to the hospital or let someone else drive you. Call an ambulance so that medical personnel can begin life-saving treatment on the way to the emergency room.

Acting F.A.S.T. can help stroke patients get the treatments they desperately need. The stroke treatments that work best are available only if the stroke is recognized and diagnosed within 3 hours of the first symptoms. Stroke patients may not be eligible for these if they don't arrive at the hospital in time.

When someone is having a stroke, every minute counts. Just as putting out a fire quickly can stop it from spreading, treating a stroke quickly can reduce damage to the brain. If you learn how to recognize the telltale signs of a stroke, you can act quickly and save a life maybe even your own.

Stroke – there's treatment if you act FAST.



NC COOPERATIVE EXTENSION

Choose Med Instead of Meds

Celebrate Mediterranean Diet Month

For many years, Family and Consumer Science Extension agents with North Carolina State Cooperative Extension with have been promoting a low-fat diet for good health. Sad to say after teaching this method for a long time, we still have too many individuals who are consuming too much unhealthy fat and not enough of the fruits, vegetables and whole grains which were encouraged. May is a great time to try something different.

The Mediterranean-style eating pattern incorporates the basics of healthy eating that are traditionally practiced in countries that border the Mediterranean Sea. Eating and exercising like those who live in this region has been shown to promote health and decrease the risk of many chronic diseases. Foods which you once thought as being too high in fat or unhealthy, including nuts, olive oil, olives and whole grains can be part of your everyday diet.

Use the following tips to help you eat the Med way:

- **Eat** at least 5 cups of fruits and vegetables every day. The whole fruit or vegetable is a better choice than juice. An apple a day may keep the doctor away, but 5 apples a day would give you a stomach ache. Select an assortment of fruits and vegetables and eat a variety of different colors. There are so many produce items to try. No one should be bored from eating the same things every day. Dark green leafy vegetables are especially good. Try collards, kale, turnips and spinach.

- **Choose** whole grains often. When choosing bread and pasta, look for the word “whole” as the first ingredient on the ingredient list. Shopping for bread can be a challenge if you don’t read the label. Many breads look like a whole grain, but are wheat bread with added color to make them brown. Look for recipes that include oatmeal, quinoa and brown rice. Popcorn is a whole grain and makes a great snack.
- **Include** lots of beans and legumes. There are some great recipes which use beans as a substitution for meat. Not only are these delicious, they are good for our health and our wallets.
- **Nuts** and seeds are a nice addition to recipes and salads. The key is moderation. The recommendation is three small handfuls of nuts and seeds a week. Measure out your nut servings so you don’t get too much of a good thing. Sprinkling a few on the top of your food gives you the yummy flavor without adding too many calories.
- **Choose** olive oil to replace solid fats (butter and margarine) and other oils. You can use olive oil in homemade salad dressings and even on your toast. Just put a little olive oil in your pan and toast the whole-wheat bread on both sides. The increased consumption of olive oil, up to four tablespoons per day while keeping within your calorie budget, is probably the biggest change in the Mediterranean diet over previous low-fat diet recommendations. Olive oil has healthy fat and it makes our food taste great.
- **Replace** salt with herbs and spices to make food taste delicious. Try growing your own herbs in flower pots or around your home. It is a lot of fun to go outside and cut fresh herbs when you need them for a recipe and they make a huge difference in flavor.
- **Meat** matters. Eat seafood at least three times a week and poultry at least twice. The recommendation for red meat is 2-3 times a month. This is probably a different way of thinking for some of us and may encourage us

to try some new meatless recipes.

- **Moderate** amounts of red wine are an option. Consume up to 5 ounces per day for women of all ages and men over 65. Younger men can have 10 ounces a day.
- **Physical** activity is key. Go for a brisk walk for at least 30 minutes, 5 days a week.
- **Limit** sugar sweetened beverages and sweets to no more than 3 servings per week
- **Rarely** choose fast foods or highly processed foods. By the time you eat all the foods which ARE recommended, you may not be hungry for the less healthy convenience foods and they won’t taste nearly as delicious.

Purchase fresh fruits and vegetables, plan your meals and try out some new recipes. No time like the present to make some positive changes in your health. For more information, visit medinsteadofmeds.com.

When Was The Last Time You Cleaned Your Cell Phone?

Stop and think about how dirty your cell phone may be? Everywhere your phone goes, germs follow. Check your owner’s manual for cleaning instructions specific to your phone. Wipe screen daily with a microfiber cloth. Take the protective cover off weekly. It can trap dirt along the edges. Use a disinfecting wipe on the inside and outside of the case. Let dry before putting back on. Wash your hands before using your cell phone to minimize germs. Just because you can’t see the germs doesn’t mean they aren’t there. A recent study found that most cell phones have more bacteria than our toilet seats. Take a moment and clean yours today, and everyday. Source: American Cleaning Institute



Much like you anticipated turning 16 and getting your driver's license, you must anticipate and plan for becoming a Medicare beneficiary. Don't wait until you're 65 to start thinking about your Medicare choices, start now and let SHIP, the Seniors' Health Insurance Information Program, help you understand your options and get you on the road to Medicare. There is a planned **Welcome to Medicare – 65th Birthday Celebration** on Friday, May 8, 2020, 10:00 a.m. at the Surry County Senior Center in Mount Airy. There is no charge to attend, but please call 336-401-8025 to reserve your space. Refreshments and handouts will be provided.

The Seniors' Health Insurance Information Program (SHIP) is a division of the North Carolina Department of Insurance that offers free, objective information about Medicare, Medicare supplements, Medicare Advantage plans, Medicare prescription drug plans and Medicare fraud and abuse.



Clean Hands Can Save Lives

Sometimes it takes a serious concern before people make changes in their habits. We have been talking about the importance of handwashing for years, but the spread of Coronavirus is reinforcing the point. Watching the news and hearing the information about new cases which continue to develop, who wouldn't want to try to keep themselves and their families safe. Washing your hands is easy and it's one of the most effective ways to prevent the spread of germs. Follow these five steps from the Center for Disease Control (CDC) every time you wash.

1. **Wet** your hands with clean, running water (warm or cold), turn off the tap, and apply soap.
2. **Lather** your hands by rubbing them together with the soap. Lather the backs of your hands, between your fingers, and under your nails.
3. **Scrub** your hands for at least 20 seconds. Need a timer? Hum the "Happy Birthday" song from beginning to end twice.
4. **Rinse** your hands well under clean, running water.
5. **Dry** your hands using a clean towel or air dry them.

When do we need to wash hands? Handwashing is especially important during these key times when you are likely to get and spread germs:

- **Before, during, and after** preparing food
- **Before** eating food
- **Before** and **after** caring for someone at home who is sick with vomiting or diarrhea
- **Before** and **after** treating a cut or wound
- **After** using the toilet.
- **After** changing diapers or cleaning up a child who has used the toilet
- **After** blowing your nose, coughing,

or sneezing

- **After** touching an animal, animal feed, or animal waste
- **After** handling pet food or pet treats
- **After** touching garbage

Clean hands can stop germs from spreading from one person to another and throughout an entire community—from your home and workplace to childcare facilities and hospitals. If we look for the positives in serious illnesses like the flu and Coronavirus, maybe more people will get in the lifelong habit of handwashing. Take the time and make the effort. You never know when the steps you take to keep your hands clean is what is keeping you and your family healthy.

Source: CDC



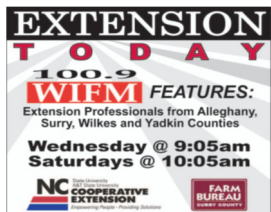
Canceled Events

We continue to work with local and state health officials, as well as NC State and N.C. A&T State Universities, to monitor the evolving coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. To help prevent the spread of the virus, N.C. Cooperative Extension's Surry County Center is cancelling ALL events, meetings, workshops, etc. until at least mid-April.

We sincerely appreciate your patience and understanding, and will provide additional information as it becomes available.



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