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IT'S DIABETES AWARENESS MONTH

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Got Diabetes? Be Sure to Protect Your Feet

Amputation and diabetes might seem like an odd pair. After all, what does amputation have to do with diabetes? Plenty!

High blood sugar can damage the nerves in your feet. Eventually, you may lose feeling in your feet. You could have a cut, blister, or other minor foot injury and not know it. If the injury heals on its own, there's no cause for concern. But diabetes can also damage your blood vessels, leading to poor circulation in your feet.

If you smoke, the damage may be even worse. This lack of blood flow may hinder your body's ability to heal foot sores or other injuries. Left untreated, a minor foot injury could become a serious infection — even leading to tissue death (gangrene). Severe damage might require toe, foot, or even leg amputation.

If you have diabetes, talk with your doctor about foot care. It's an important part of your overall diabetes healthcare plan.

— Source: *The Mayo Clinic*

Visit www.HealthMart.com to learn more about living with diabetes.



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HEALTH UPDATE

Holiday Stress Hitting Already? Take a Breather

Thanksgiving is right around the corner, followed by “The Holidays.” Feeling stressed just thinking about your to-do list? Make some time for yourself. Spending just 15 minutes alone, without distractions, may refresh you enough to handle everything you need to do. Steal away to a quiet place, even if it’s to the bathroom for a few moments of solitude! Take a walk at night and stargaze. Listen to soothing music. Find something that reduces stress by clearing your mind, slowing your breathing, and restoring inner calm. You’ll come back to the holiday hustle and bustle feeling a bit more refreshed.

Is It GERD?

Many People Experience “Heartburn” Symptoms

More than 60 million Americans experience heartburn, also known as gastroesophageal reflux disease (GERD), at least once a month.

Here’s a simple self-test from the American College of Gastroenterology (ACG):

1. Do you frequently have one or more of the following?

- a) An uncomfortable feeling behind the breastbone that seems to be moving upward from the stomach
- b) A burning sensation in the back of your throat
- c) A bitter acid taste in your mouth

2. Do you often experience these prob-

lems after meals?

3. Do you experience heartburn or acid indigestion two or more times per week?

4. Do you find that antacids provide temporary relief from your symptoms?

5. Are you taking prescription or over-the-counter medication to treat heartburn, but still having symptoms?

If you said yes to two or more of the above questions, you may be suffering from GERD, says the ACG. To know for sure, see your doctor.

Want more information on GERD? Visit www.HealthMart.com.

LOST YOUR HEALTH INSURANCE? You Still Have Healthcare Options

Lost your job or your insurance? Call your primary-care doctor and explain your situation. Most physicians will work with you to ensure that you still have access to care while you work out a way to pay your medical bills. They may have a sliding-scale policy to allow those with fewer financial resources to pay less at each visit.

Check to see if you qualify to continue your current health insurance under COBRA. COBRA is a federal law that gives workers and their families who lose their health benefits the right to choose to continue group

health benefits for limited periods of time after job loss.

Other options might include buying an affordable individual plan with your current health insurer or working with an insurance agent to find an individual plan.

— Source: Adam Goldstein, M.D., a professor of family medicine at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill School of Medicine



STOP SMOKING

It's the Great American Smokeout!

Ready to Quit Smoking? Don't Go It Alone

Are you a smoker? Want to kick the habit? Circle Nov. 19 on your calendar for the Great American Smokeout. Call the American Cancer Society Quitline at 800.227.2345 to speak with a trained counselor and to receive free, confidential counseling.

Studies have found that using Quitline can more than double a person's chances of successfully quitting tobacco. Callers can be connected with local smoking-cessation resources, social-support groups, Web resources, and medication-assistance referrals. Since its inception in 2000, Quitline has provided counseling support to more than 380,000 smokers.

Popular online social networks such as Facebook and MySpace are also becoming support channels for people who want to quit, and American Cancer Society Smokeout-related downloadable desktop applications are available on these networks to help people quit.

"A recent study in the *New England Journal of Medicine* found that social networks are helpful in quitting smoking," says Otis W. Brawley, M.D., chief medical officer at the American Cancer Society. "Friends and family can help the most by being aware and supportive of the struggle to quit, and the American Cancer Society has resources to help them show support for their loved one who is trying to quit."



DID YOU KNOW?

- Protect your knees by treating your feet well. Wear properly fitted shoes that are appropriate to the surface they are worn on. And use arch supports, both in and out of the gym. Be sure to replace worn shoes. Wearing old shoes that no longer support your feet can be dangerous.

— Source: Kevin Plancher, M.D., an associate clinical professor in orthopaedics at Albert Einstein College of Medicine in Bronx, New York



- To help avoid jet lag on family trips this holiday season, adjust your child's sleep schedule two to three days before departure. After arrival, children should be encouraged to be active outside or in brightly lit areas during daylight hours to promote adjustment.

— Source: American Academy of Pediatrics

SPECIAL UPDATE! H1N1 Influenza

What You Need to Know to Protect Your Family

Seasonal flu occurs every year. The viruses change somewhat from year to year, but many people have some immunity to seasonal flu. The flu vaccine also helps reduce the number of cases. But H1N1 is a new virus and one to which most people have little or no immunity. This virus could cause more infections than are seen with seasonal flu.

The H1N1 virus appears to be as contagious as seasonal flu, and it can spread quickly, according to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). People age 60 and older seem to have stronger immunity to the H1N1 virus than do younger people. (Researchers suspect that older people have been exposed to past flu strains in which viruses were more similar to the present H1N1 flu strain.) However, health officials aren't sure about the exact amount of protection afforded older people.

The CDC's Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices has recommended the H1N1 vaccination for five key groups:

- Pregnant women
- People who live with or care for children younger than 6 months
- Healthcare and emergency-medical-services personnel
- Persons between the ages of 6 months and 24 years
- People ages 25 through 64 who are at higher risk because of chronic health disorders or compromised immune systems

Assuming a sufficient supply of vaccine, others will be encouraged to be vaccinated after these groups have received the vaccine.

Of course, common-sense prevention rules still apply. Wash your hands frequently to help avoid spreading the virus. And don't forget that seasonal flu shot, as well.

Want more information on influenza? Visit www.HealthMart.com.



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OH, THE WEATHER OUTSIDE IS FRIGHTFUL...

But Your Winter Skin Can Be Delightful — With These Tips

In winter, not all flakes are snow flakes. "Most of us experience dry, itchy skin from time to time, but you should seek medical attention if discomfort becomes severe," says Anjali Dahiya, M.D., a dermatologist at the Iris Cantor Women's Health Center at New York-Presbyterian Hospital/Weill Cornell Medical Center. "The best thing you can do to relieve the itch is to moisturize your skin." Dahiya suggests the following tips:

- **Moisturize daily.** Cream moisturizers are better than lotions for normal-to-dry skin. If you have sensitive skin, choose a moisturizer without fragrance or lanolin.
- **Cleanse, but don't overdo it.** Too much cleansing removes skin's natural moistur-

izers. It's enough to wash your face, hands, feet, and between the folds of your skin once a day. While you can rinse your trunk, arms, and legs daily, it's not necessary to use soap or cleanser on these areas every day.

- **Limit the use of hot water and soap.** Take short, lukewarm showers or baths with a non-irritating, non-detergent-based cleanser. Immediately afterward, apply a mineral-oil or petroleum-jelly-type moisturizer. Gently pat skin dry.

Want more information on healthy skin? Visit www.HealthMart.com.

HEALTH TIP



Traveling with Kids — Safely

Always use a car-safety seat for infants and young children. A rear-facing car-safety seat should be used until your child has reached the highest weight and/or height allowed by his car-safety seat. At a minimum, you should use it until your child is at least one year old AND weighs at least 20 pounds. Check your state's regulations for use of booster seats for older children.

— Source: American Academy of Pediatrics

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