

Ask A Nurse Newsletter

Volume 1, Issue 6

March 2005

What is the "Ask a Nurse" Program?

The ASK A NURSE program is staffed by University of Delaware nursing faculty and graduate and undergraduate nursing students.

Our mission is to provide health and wellness education and programs to children and families.

Reach us at askanurse@udel.edu



March is National Nutrition Month

Good nutrition is a key component of good health, along with physical activity

Be adventurous and expand your horizons.

Treat your taste buds.

Maintain a healthy weight.

Balance food choices with your lifestyle.

Be active.



Heart Alert Heart Attack

Heart disease is the number one killer of both men and women in the U.S.

What is a heart attack?

A heart attack happens when the blood supply to part of the heart muscle is drastically reduced or stopped. This occurs when one or more of the coronary arteries that supply oxygenated blood to the heart muscle is clogged or blocked. The build up of a fat like substances called plaque usually causes a blocked coronary artery. This build up of plaque is called atherosclerosis. The plaque can erupt or tear from the coronary artery's wall creating a block in the artery where a blood clot forms. This leads to a heart attack. If the blood supply is cut off for more than a few minutes, muscle cells in the heart die. Damage to the heart muscle can disable or kill someone depending on the severity.

Heart attacks may be sudden with intense pain or slow with mild pain or discomfort. Warning signs that can mean a heart attack may be happening include chest discomfort feelings of pressure, squeezing, fullness, burning, or pain, discomfort in the jaw, neck, arms, back, teeth, or stomach, shortness of breath may or may not occur, nausea, lightheadness, and cold sweat.

Some modifiable risk factors associated with an increased risk of having a heart attack include smoking, high cholesterol, high blood pressure, physical inactivity, and obesity. Age, heredity, and male gender are risk factors that can't be changed.

If you or someone you are with is experiencing chest discomfort especially with one or more of the other symptoms mentioned **call 911** and get help as fast as you can. It is important to know your risk factors, be aware of the warning signs, and respond quickly if warning signs occur. With this knowledge you could save a life!

March 20-26 is National Poison Prevention Week

Here are some good tips to remember to prevent poisonings

1. Use child-resistant packaging properly by closing the container securely after use.
2. Keep all chemicals and medicines locked up and out of sight.
3. Call the poison center 1-800-222-1222 immediately in case of poisoning.
4. When products are in use, never let young children out of your sight, even if you must take the child or product along when answering the phone or doorbell.
5. Keep items in original containers.
6. Leave the original labels on all products, and read the label before using.
7. Do not put decorative lamps and candles that contain lamp oil where children can reach them because lamp oil is very toxic.
8. Always leave the light on when giving or taking medicine. Check the dosage every time.
9. Avoid taking medicine in front of children. Refer to medicine as "medicine," not "candy."
10. Clean out the medicine cabinet periodically, and safely dispose of unneeded medicines when the illness for which they were prescribed is over. Pour contents down drain or toilet, and rinse the container before discarding.

Monthly Q&A

My 2 1

1/2-year-old daughter sucks her thumb constantly. Should I be worried? How can I get her to stop?

Childhood habits like thumb sucking aren't usually something to worry about. In fact, you may be surprised to know that 45% of 2-year-olds suck their thumbs, probably as a way to cope with stress or anxiety. Most childhood habits go away on their own - especially if a parent ignores them. If your daughter doesn't seem to be outgrowing her thumb sucking, try some positive reinforcement. Reward her with an extra bedtime story or another favorite treat when she doesn't suck her thumb. Be generous with the praise too. And remember, most habits at this age are just passing phases.

Fun and Flavor without Salt

Salt is the most familiar source of sodium, and most people consume far more sodium than they need. The required daily intake of sodium is approximately 500mg of sodium. A one-cup serving of a typical canned soup provides more than 500mg of sodium. Sodium is also hidden in foods that may not necessarily taste salty, such as cheddar cheese and processed foods. There has long been a public health concern about the widespread habit of consuming much more sodium than required, and the relationship of this practice to health problems such as high blood pressure, heart disease, stroke, and kidney disease.

Cooking with herbs can be a creative way to add zest to your meal without picking up the saltshaker. If you want to learn how to use the culinary herbs, grow them as a fun family project with your children. A bushy, fragrant herb plant just outside the kitchen door is the best inspiration for culinary success. Planting herb seeds and watching them sprout and grow may fascinate your children and stimulate interest in how these plants taste in various foods. Children, however, should also be cautioned that wild plants could be poisonous and should not be eaten.

You can substitute fresh for dried herbs in most recipes. Since fresh herbs contain more water than dried ones, use two to three times more fresh herbs than the dried measurement to get the same amount of essential oil. When using fresh herbs in recipes, save the leaves, flowers, or seeds and discard the stems. Fresh herbs are also great salad additions. Add chopped or whole sprigs of basil, chervil, chives, dill, oregano, thyme, tarragon, or whatever flavors or blends you enjoy. Dried herbs and spices also make great salt substitutes. Grind the dry ingredients together and fill the saltshaker

