



Wellness Newsletter

January is Thyroid Awareness Month. Most people know that their thyroid is located somewhere in their neck, but other than that, they don't know much about it. It's only when the thyroid stops working properly that people become aware of this organ's vital functions. An estimated 15-30 million Americans have a thyroid condition, half of whom either don't know it or have been misdiagnosed. For a simple self-exam to see if you have any visible thyroid enlargement in your neck, go to www.thyroidawareness.com. If you are over 60, have a family member with thyroid disease or have symptoms related to thyroid disease, also ask your healthcare provider if a simple TSH blood test is right for you.



When a little heartburn could be a bigger problem



You're not alone if your holiday experiences included some heartburn after a big meal or too many new foods. However, if you experience heartburn or other symptoms of GERD (Gastroesophageal reflux disease) two or more times per week, other than during or after mealtime, you should see your healthcare provider. GERD symptoms include heartburn, regurgitation, difficulty swallowing, sore throat and morning hoarseness. There may be other causes of these common ailments, but if it is GERD, and it's left untreated, you may be at risk for complications or other health problems.

Karen's Wellness Corner

Whether you've made a New Year's resolution or not, don't stick your head in the sand about a problem behavior that needs to be changed. If you know deep down that you need to make improvements such as losing weight, getting fitter, being nicer, driving more safely, quitting smoking - keep that issue on your radar as much as possible. Read about the topic, search for it on YouTube, TV and other media sources, talk with friends, write down your thoughts and intentions, read some more, watch some more. And get emotional. Look for success stories, and failures, about people who struggled with the same issue. Keeping yourself exposed to and emotionally engaged in the issue as much as possible will move you in the direction of actually being ready to make the change. Good luck and have a healthy 2016!



Karen DeBonis
R&K Wellness Director

S-T-R-E-T-C-H

Even the most disciplined exercisers often overlook stretching. And that's a shame since flexibility exercises help to reduce back and joint pain, increase circulation, improve joint motion, reduce the risk of injury and improve muscle health. According to the American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgeons, some joints lose up to 50 percent of their motion as we age. However, as with cardio and strength training, flexibility will improve with regular training. Whether you have a formal fitness routine or not, if you don't currently include stretching in your weekly activities, here are some tips to get started:



- If you don't have time to sufficiently warm up before stretching, try doing a few stretches immediately after a shower or while soaking in a hot tub. The hot water elevates body and muscle temperature enough to make them more receptive to stretching.
- Try a few simple stretches before getting out of bed in the morning. Wake yourself up with a few full-body stretches by gently pointing the toes and reaching your arms above your head. This can clear your mind and help jump-start your morning.
- Take a yoga or tai chi class. Scheduling a class will help you to stick with a regular stretching program.



Here are new reasons to quit smoking: both smoking and exposure to second-hand smoke are linked to infertility and early menopause.

The bottom line: if you're a woman, or if you have women in your life, avoid tobacco smoke. Period.

People often say that motivation doesn't last. Well, neither does bathing – that's why we recommend it daily.

Zig Ziglar

Be a Public Health Crusader: Use Antibiotics Only When Necessary

Overuse of antibiotics has created a public health emergency: **antibiotic resistance**. This happens when a bacteria becomes stronger than the drug that was made to kill it. Do your part to avoid antibiotic resistance:

1. Don't request or demand that your doctor prescribe an antibiotic for a cold or the flu; it's just a waste of your money anyway because antibiotics are ineffective against viral infections.
2. If your doctor does prescribe an antibiotic, take every dose as prescribed. Don't share antibiotics or "save" them for another time.

If you have a bacterial infection and you don't kill it completely with antibiotics, it can come back stronger than ever – and become resistant to medication. That's not an enemy or a battle you want your body to have to confront.



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