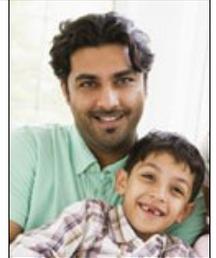




# Wellness Newsletter

## June is Men's Health Month.

among men and boys. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (2001), women are 100% more likely to visit the doctor for annual exams and preventive services than men. That may be one reason why, on average, American men live sicker and die younger than American women. The fact is that healthier men live happier, longer lives. Be sure that you are one of them - see your healthcare provider this year.



The purpose of Men's Health Month is to heighten the awareness of preventable health problems and encourage early detection and treatment of disease

## A Penicillin Allergy. Maybe?

Many people who think they're allergic to penicillin aren't. Why? They may have had a reaction when they were young, or they may have a family member with the allergy who believes it "runs in the family." Some people may have been erroneously prescribed penicillin for a virus like a cold (which antibiotics won't cure or treat), then if they broke out in a rash, they blamed the penicillin.

A real allergic reaction to penicillin can cause these symptoms: hives, nausea, diarrhea, vomiting, swelling of the lips, tongue and throat, asthma-like symptoms, a drop in blood pressure, dizziness or loss of consciousness. These symptoms will occur quickly – 10 to 15 minutes or within 2 hours of taking the drug.

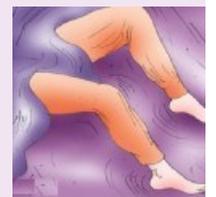


People who are allergic to penicillin often have to take more expensive antibiotics that can have serious side-effects. So if you think you might be allergic, ask your doctor for a skin test to be sure.

## OTCs and RLS

If you take Over-the-Counter (OTC) allergy medication that contains a sedating antihistamine – like Benadryl - and you find that your restless legs syndrome (RLS) symptoms get worse, you're not alone. RLS causes uncomfortable sensations, pain, and strong urges to move the legs, usually at night. These symptoms disrupt sleep, and it complicates the solution when a sedative, which should enhance sleep, makes the problem worse.

The cause of this mystery isn't known, but you may want to try changing your dose, try non-sedating antihistamines, or a nasal spray and decongestant. Other medications may also worsen RLS, so pay attention to your symptoms to see if there's a pattern. As always, contact your healthcare provider if you can't find relief.



## Karen's Wellness Corner

I have a saying (one of many) about food: "Sometimes you feed your body, and sometimes you feed your soul." What this means to me is that if the occasional rich dessert, deep fried whatever or junk food indulgence is so deeply satisfying to you that it "feeds your soul," then it's probably not a bad thing. I just recently read another "take" on this concept that I like even better. It's a Persian proverb: "If you have but two coins, use one for bread to feed the body and the other for hyacinths to feed the soul." It's a reminder that we don't need food to feed our souls; there are other forms of "nourishment." Think spending time with family and friends, getting absorbed in a hobby, the exhilaration of physical activity that you enjoy, meditation, and enjoying nature. The take-away from both of these sayings is that we need to be good to ourselves, whatever form it takes. Now that spring is upon us, there are abundant opportunities to feed our souls and revel in the great outdoors. Share it with a friend and you may not even miss the Twinkie.



Karen DeBonis  
R&K Wellness Director

## Swimming

Children (and adults) should learn how to swim. But what's the right age to get started? Here's what the American Academy of Pediatrics recommends:

The decision to enroll a child *over age one* in swimming lessons should be made by the parent based on the child's developmental readiness and exposure to water.

Children over age 1 may be at a lower risk of drowning if they have had some formal swimming instruction, *but swim programs should never be seen as "drown proofing" a child of any age.*

There is no evidence that swimming lessons or water survival skills courses can prevent drowning *in babies younger than 1 year of age.*

There's a lot more to consider in keeping children safe around water. For more information, go to [www.aap.org](http://www.aap.org) and search "Sun and water safety tips."



## A Sixth Sense: Don't Text and Drive

A study at the University of Houston showed one reason why texting while driving is so dangerous. Your brain has a "sixth-



sense" that helps you drive straight even when you are absent-minded or in emotional distress. It works by sending signals to your arms that counteract any jitteriness in your steering. But when your hand-eye coordination is broken, like when you are texting, this sixth sense doesn't kick in. The result is that drivers tend to steer off course.

The simple solution? When driving, put down your phone, and while you're at it, put down your coffee, your cheeseburger, and anything else you're holding other than the steering wheel!

Source: University of Houston, [www.uh.edu](http://www.uh.edu).

*"A diet plateau is a wonderful opportunity to practice maintenance."* -Karen DeBonis

## Be Comfortable in Your Own Skin

Summertime is a great time for a reminder about protecting your skin from the damaging effects of the sun. In addition to wearing sunscreen with an SPF of 30 or higher when you're outdoors, you should also check your skin monthly for any suspicious changes in moles. Follow the **ABCDE** method; if you see any of the changes below, ask your doctor to take a closer look.

**A**symmetry -- where one side of a mole is different from the other.

**B**orders that are irregular, scalloped or poorly defined.

**C**olor that varies from one area to another, with shades of tan and brown, black and sometimes white, red or blue.

**D**iameters that are the size of a pencil eraser (6 millimeters) or larger. (Although some melanomas may be smaller.)

**E**volving, which means a mole or other skin feature looks different from the rest or is changing in size, shape and color.



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