



Raising the physical, mental, social, and spiritual health of American Indians and Alaska Natives to the highest level



Indian Health Service/California Area Office Patient Newsletter

Fall 2015

Volume 7, Issue 4

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Director's Message

Breast Cancer Awareness

The World Cancer Research Fund International reports that there are more than 6 million breast cancer survivors worldwide. Despite so many medical advances in the detection and treatment of breast cancer though, it still remains the second leading cause of deaths among women in the United States. About 1 in 8 U.S. women (about 12%) will develop invasive breast cancer over the course of her lifetime.

It's important to understand that although there is a familial link, less than 15% of women diagnosed with breast cancer have a family member diagnosed with it. So even if no one else in the family has been diagnosed, regular screening is still important.

Although American Indian and Alaska Native (AI/AN) women have a lower breast cancer incidence rate compared to other groups, those who develop breast cancer are more often diagnosed at a later stage, when it is harder to treat. This is likely due to the fact that AI/AN women have the lowest rates of mammography screening starting at age 40. Regular mammography screening allows doctors to identify and diagnose breast cancer at an early stage, when treatment is far more effective. "Mammography screening is not perfect, but has been shown to markedly reduce the number of women each year who die from breast cancer," said Elizabeth Morris, MD, FACR, president of the Society of Breast Imaging. "The decision whether or not to get a mammogram remains with women. We

want them to know that mammography can detect cancer early—when it's most treatable and can be treated less invasively—which not only save lives, but helps preserve quality of life."

According to the Food and Drug Administration, more than 39 million mammograms are performed annually in the United States. Due to these early detection and screening efforts, the breast cancer death rate is down 34% since 1990. Breast cancer incidence rates in the U.S. also began decreasing in the year 2000, after increasing for the previous two decades. They dropped by 7% from 2002 to 2003 alone. One theory is that this decrease was partially due to the reduced use of hormone replacement therapy (HRT) by women after the results of a large study called the Women's Health Initiative was published in 2002. These results suggested a connection between HRT and increased breast cancer risk.

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Can Stress Cause Hair Loss? By Wendy Blocker, MSN

Yes, stress and hair loss can be related.

Three types of hair loss that can be associated with high stress levels include:

- **Telogen effluvium.** In telogen effluvium (TEL-o-jun uh -FLOO-vee-um), significant stress pushes large numbers of hair follicles into a resting phase. Within a few months, affected hairs might fall out suddenly when simply combing or washing your hair.
- **Trichotillomania.** Trichotillomania (trik-o-til-o-MAY-nee-uh) is an irresistible urge to pull out hair from your scalp, eyebrows, or other areas of your body. Hair pulling can be a way of dealing with negative or uncomfortable feelings, such as stress, tension, loneliness, boredom, or frustration.
- **Alopecia areata.** A variety of factors are thought to cause alopecia areata (al-o-PEE-she-uh ar-e-A-tuh),

possibly including severe stress. With alopecia areata, the body's immune system attacks the hair follicles—causing hair loss.



Stress and hair loss don't have to be permanent. If you get your stress under control, your hair might grow back.

If you notice sudden or patchy hair loss or more than usual hair loss when combing or washing your hair, talk to your doctor. Sudden hair loss can signal an underlying medical condition that requires treatment. If needed, your doctor might also suggest treatment options for your hair loss.

Staying Healthy as the Seasons Change By Amy Patterson, PhD

We are starting to see the first signs of fall in California and people are starting to spend more time indoors. This means closer contact and more opportunities to catch a cold or the flu. Here are some basic things you can do to improve your immune system and keep yourself healthy to enjoy everything this season has to offer:

- Dress for the weather. Wearing sandals, shorts, and tank tops when the weather is getting colder means your body has to work harder to keep you warm. Dress for the weather and consider using a scarf to cover your neck on colder, windier days.
- Get some exercise every day. It's important to keep your body moving as the weather grows cooler. A daily walk will improve circulation and keep your immune system strong.
- Go outside. Exposure to sunlight helps keep your mood up, which is particularly important as the days grow shorter. Everyone can benefit from consistent, regular exposure to sunlight, especially in the morning, as it helps to regulate your sleep/wake cycle.
- Wash your hands. Germs can lurk on surfaces that get touched a lot, including door handles, school lunch tables, grocery carts, gas pump nozzles, and money. Remember to practice good hygiene and wash your hands frequently, especially before eating. Remind your children to do so as well.
- Get a flu shot. The flu shot is recommended for everyone over the age of 6 months. If you have a compromised immune system (due to cancer, HIV, diabetes, or any other chronic disease), if you are over the age of 65 (or a caretaker for someone who is), or if you are around children under the age of 6 months, a flu shot is particularly important. Even if you got the flu shot last year, you will still need another one this year.
- Get enough sleep. When the temperature is colder and there are more illnesses going around, the body needs more sleep to keep healthy, so those who haven't been getting enough sleep are often the first to get sick. Multiple forms of entertainment (TV, computers, video games) compete for our attention well into the late evening and this can result in chronic sleep deficiency. Try to turn off all electronics at least one hour before bedtime, and preferably even earlier. If you need some form of distraction, read or listen to some quiet music. Adults should aim for 7 or more hours of sleep a night, but teenagers and children need even longer.
- Enjoy the foods of the season. Autumn brings fresh squash, pumpkin, and other harvest vegetables. These vegetables are high in vitamins (especially vitamin A, which helps your eyes stay healthy) and can help boost your immune system. Soups and stews made with season foods are a great way to keep the body healthy and warm.
- Drink enough fluids. We tend to be better about drinking fluids in the summer when it's hot and we sweat a lot, but our bodies still need fluid when the weather grows colder. In the fall and winter, the air can be very dry, especially in higher altitudes. Warm drinks such as decaffeinated teas are particularly good choices at this time of year. Ginger tea is a great option in the morning, as it warms your body and improves digestion. You can get prepared tea bags or just add a slice of fresh ginger to hot water, and drink it before or with breakfast and lunch. A cup of tea after dinner will help relax you and prepare your body for sleep. Chamomile, Lavender, or Valerian Root teas are particularly good choices for the evening.

Breast Cancer Awareness cont'd.

Early Signs and Symptoms of Breast Cancer in Women:

- Changes in the shape of the nipple
- Breast pain that doesn't go away after your next period
- A new lump that doesn't go away after your next period
- Nipple discharge from one breast that is clear, red, brown, or yellow
- Unexplained redness, swelling, skin irritation, itchiness, or rash on the breast
- Swelling or a lump around the collarbone or under the arm

According to the American Cancer Society, "Breast cancer is about 100 times less common among men than among women. For men, the lifetime risk of getting breast cancer is about 1 in 1,000. The number of breast cancer cases in men relative to the population has been fairly stable over the last 30 years."

Please see your doctor for a complete evaluation if you experience any of these signs and symptoms.

For more information, visit:

National Cancer Institute
<http://www.cancer.gov/>

American Indian and Alaska Native Women's Health
<http://womenshealth.gov/minority-health/american-indians/breast-cancer.html>

Native American Cancer Research Corporation
<http://natamcancer.org/>

American Cancer Society: Breast Cancer
<http://www.cancer.org/cancer/breastcancer/>

Influenza

By Susan Ducore, BSN, MSN, RN, PHN

Influenza is a serious disease that causes significant morbidity and mortality, especially in the American Indian/Alaska Native (AI/AN) population. Influenza and resulting complications such as pneumonia are among the top 10 leading causes of death for AI/ANs.

Influenza (also known as the flu) is a contagious respiratory illness caused by flu viruses. It can cause mild to severe illness, and at times can lead to death. The flu is different from a cold. The flu usually comes on suddenly. People who have the flu often feel some or all of these symptoms:

- Fever* or feeling feverish/chills
- Cough
- Sore throat
- Runny or stuffy nose
- Muscle or body aches
- Headaches
- Fatigue (tiredness)
- Some people may have vomiting and diarrhea, though this is more common in children than adults

*It's important to note that not everyone with flu will have a fever.

Influenza vaccination remains the best strategy for reducing influenza-related illness. The Centers for Disease Control's Advisory Committee on Immunization Practice recommends that everyone 6 months and older receive an influenza vaccination each year. It is best to get your "flu" vaccination as soon as the influenza vaccine becomes available.

Everyone six months and older should get a flu vaccine each year. Keep from getting sick with the flu and spreading it to your loved ones by getting vaccinated today!

For more information, visit:

IHS Seasonal Influenza Information
<https://www.ihs.gov/Flu/>

Flu.gov: Know What to Do About the Flu
<http://www.flu.gov/index.html>

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Flu Information
<http://www.cdc.gov/features/flu/>



www.cdc.gov/flu



Fall and Festive By Helen Maldonado, PA-C, CDE

Fall is finally starting to take place. It is my favorite time of year, as the doorway to cooler weather, hopefully some rain, and lots of family gatherings and celebrations. Living with diabetes is sometimes a challenge around this time with all of the feasts surrounding Thanksgiving and Christmas. When I get together with my family, all of my self-control with food flies out the door as soon as I open it for my first guests.

However, I have been practicing eating healthy substitutes for the foods that may not do well in my body, such as mashed potatoes. I love mashed potatoes, especially at family gatherings. It is my number one comfort food as it reminds me of my Grandmother's tiny house, wherein several relatives would crowd into the kitchen. My firstborn daughter introduced me to this recipe and I want to share it with you. Try it; it is actually very tasty. What do you have to lose except a few hundred calories and blood sugar points?

Ingredients (4 servings)

- 1 medium cauliflower
- 1 ounce margarine
- 1 ounce nonfat sour cream or 1 ounce fat-free half-and-half
- Salt
- Pepper

Directions

1. Cook cauliflower until fork tender.
2. Drain and mash cauliflower by hand or in food processor until desired consistency.
3. Mix in margarine and sour cream, to taste.
4. Add salt and pepper, to taste.

<u>Total Time</u>	20 minutes
Prep	05 minutes
Cook	15 minutes



Tobacco Misuse & Quitting Smoking By Beverly Calderon, RD, CDE

Tobacco related disease and early death are reduce by quitting smoking at any age, with even greater benefits by quitting at an early age. This isn't new information for many people and attitudes in general have shifted with most people recognizing the dangers of tobacco misuse, smoking, second hand smoke, and nicotine addiction. Nevertheless, nicotine addiction continues, and about 1 in 5 deaths are from smoking and another 8.6 million people live with serious smoking related illnesses in the U.S. Smoking causes immediate damage to the body and increases the risk of cancer, heart attack, lung disease, and early death. To protect your own health and the health of others you care about, quitting is the single most important step.

Since the mid-1970s, the third Thursday of November is the Great American Smokeout. It began here in California in 1976. Now, this national event is a day to challenge people to stop misusing tobacco and to inform people about the many tools available to help in quitting smoking and staying tobacco free.

To help, here are five smart moves from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC):

1. **Set a quit date.** Choose the American Cancer Society's Great American Smokeout on November 20 or another date.
2. **Tell others.** Share your quit date with those you care about and ask for support. Getting a daily e-mail, text, or phone call from someone can be moral support and help you stay on track. Plan a smoke-free lunch date or game

night to distract yourself. Maybe family cooking together in the kitchen to cook a special meal might be of support.

3. **Anticipate and plan for challenges.** The urge to smoke is short and usually only lasts 3 to 5 minutes, but can be an intense 3 to 5 minutes. It is helpful to write down healthy ways to cope before the quit day. Recognize that even one puff can feed a craving, making it strong and sabotaging efforts to quit. Healthy distractions include, drinking water, taking a walk or climbing the stairs, listening to a favorite song or playing a game, or calling or texting a friend.
4. **Remove cigarettes and other tobacco products from your home, care, and workplace.** Toss out the cigarettes, matches, lighters, and ashtrays. Since old cigarette odors can cause cravings, clean your house, car and workspace, and add an air freshener.
5. **Talk to your primary provider, pharmacist, or a quitline coach** about options such as nicotine patches, gum, or other approved medicines to help with the cravings.

To learn more or get help, visit:

<http://www.nobutts.org/> or 1-800-No-Butts

1-800-Quit-Now

<http://www.cancer.org> or 1-800-227-2345

