

# HEALTHNET NEWS

A newsletter for public librarians and others interested in consumer health information services

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## UPDATE

### *A TOLL-FREE WAY TO PHONE HEALTHNET*

Connecticut librarians are welcome to phone **Healthnet: Connecticut Consumer Health Information Network** at **860/679-4055** whenever they need assistance with a challenging consumer health question. Healthnet is ready to guide you to appropriate print or online resources or to do all the research for you, using the extensive resources of the University of Connecticut Health Center's medical library.

Librarians may also pass along Healthnet's phone number to Connecticut library users who have questions about their health or the health of family members. Healthnet provides customized research assistance to residents of Connecticut.

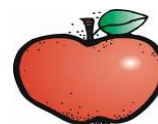
Details about Healthnet's free research service are available on Healthnet's website at

<http://library.uhc.edu/departm/hnet/research.html>

If you are in Connecticut, phoning from beyond the toll-free limits of Healthnet's location at the University of Connecticut Health Center in Farmington, you may contact Healthnet without incurring a phone charge by calling the UCONN Health Center's toll-free UConnLink patient information service at **800/535-6232** and asking to be connected to Healthnet's office at **extension 4055**.

Voice mail is always available on Healthnet's phone. Leave your name, phone number, and message if we're away from the desk when you call.

### *ONLINE CONSUMER HEALTH INFORMATION CLASS*



Which of your consumer health information skills need polishing? Do you need some additional training in collection development, conducting a reference interview, health literacy, or outreach and marketing?

Beginning in January 2009, the New England Region of the National Network of Libraries of Medicine will offer a free, online consumer health information course that you can access 24 hours a day all week at the pace you feel most comfortable with. In addition to self-paced online instruction and assignments, the class will incorporate two interactive online sessions.

**Beyond an Apple a Day: Providing Consumer Health Information at Your Library** is designed to help you improve your consumer health collection and reference skills, initiate community partnerships, and discover new online resources. Michelle Eberle, the New England Region's Consumer Health Information Coordinator, is the instructor. This class may be applied toward Medical Library Association Consumer Health Information Specialization certification.

To register for this class, please contact [martha.pearson@umassmed.edu](mailto:martha.pearson@umassmed.edu)



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## PROFESSIONAL READING

### *BREAST CANCER RESOURCES*

Breast cancer patients have a need for information about ways to manage their lives, find support from others, and benefit from the experiences of other breast cancer patients. "The Breast Cancer Life," a brief bibliography by Bette-Lee Fox, **Library Journal** managing editor, appears in **Library Journal**'s September 1, 2008 issue. Many of the fifteen titles described and evaluated in this bibliography are based on the experiences of breast cancer survivors who have found ways to cope with the after effects of breast cancer chemotherapy and other treatments, communicate effectively with health professionals, and focus their efforts on their futures. Some titles are paperback editions of previously reviewed books or revised editions of recommended books.

Fox, B. The Breast Cancer Life. **Library Journal** 2008 September 1;154-155.

## NETNEWS

### *CONFUSED ABOUT MEDICARE?*

For adult children caring for elderly parents, the days can be exhausting and confusing. The confusion may arise from uncertainty about coverage available to Medicare recipients when they are in need of medical treatment and nursing care. The federal government's Medicare health insurance plan for adults 65 and older, for some younger individuals who are disabled, and for individuals of all ages with end-stage renal disease, provides many health benefits. However, not all the services an individual may need are covered.

The Medicare program has launched a new website at <http://www.medicare.gov/caregivers/>, especially for caregivers, that may clarify some of the uncertainty Medicare recipients and their families have about medical coverage available to enrollees. Among the website's features are information about services covered and about billing (how to file a claim, how to make appeals and register grievances, how to read a Medicare Summary Notice) and guidance in navigating the Medicare system (eligibility, enrollment, comparison of Medicare and Medigap health plans, comparison of drug plans, availability of in-home services).

The Caregiver Information website also provides a database that compares home health agencies, hospitals, and nursing homes in specific geographical areas. It includes a directory of physicians, nurse practitioners, physical therapists, psychologists, and other health professionals who accept Medicare payments, information about alternatives to nursing home care, options for financing nursing home stays, guidance in locating local support services, and sources of government and private financial assistance. There are also links to national caregiving organization websites and newsletters, and opportunities to participate in caregiving discussion groups, blogs, and forums.

The Caregiving Resource Guide on Healthnet's website at <http://library.uchc.edu/departm/hnet/> provides links to additional caregiver resources and information.

### *HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO MEDLINEPLUS!*

Ten years have passed since the National Library of Medicine, an agency of the National Institutes of Health, launched a comprehensive, carefully organized website especially for health consumers who are seeking information on diseases, medications, medical news, surgical procedures, and disease prevention. The Medlineplus website is available in both Spanish and English at <http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/>



Originally displaying information on twenty-two health subjects, Medlineplus now includes information on over 770 health-related topics. Almost 500 million people throughout the world have searched for health information on Medlineplus since the fall of 1998.

In addition to information on drugs and herbal supplements, Medlineplus includes a Merriam-Webster medical Dictionary, a medical encyclopedia, videos of actual surgical procedures, interactive tutorials, links to hospital and physician directories, clinical research trials, and health information directed to older adults.

This year, health information in over 40 languages, including Russian, Navajo, Hindi, and Haitian Creole, encompassing almost 250 health topics, was added to Medlineplus. (Additional details about the Medlineplus Multiple Languages feature appears on page 3 of the Spring 2008 issue of the Healthnet newsletter at <http://library.uchc.edu/departm/hnet/Spring08.pdf> )

Much of the information that Medlineplus links to, and organizes by topic, is derived from government agencies, national health associations, and the National Institutes of Health. Specific criteria, evaluating the quality of each of the websites Medlineplus includes, is described at <http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/criteria.html> .

Expect new health information features as Medlineplus enters its second decade!

### *NEW WEBSITES IN SPANISH*

According to the federal Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ), almost one in eight Hispanic Americans receives a prescription medication for diabetes treatment. In order to assist Spanish speaking patients, AHRQ has published a Spanish language guide to Type 2 diabetes oral medications, “Pastillas para la diabetes tipo 2,” at <http://effectivehealthcare.ahrq.gov/spanishInfo.cfm>

The publication compares thirteen brand name and ten generic diabetes medications. In consumer-friendly terms, the guide describes the medications’ therapeutic actions, dosage, side effects, costs, and potential problems. The guide is a consumer version of a review of research reports on oral diabetes medications written by the Johns Hopkins Evidence-based Practice Center. An English language version, *Pills for Type 2 Diabetes: A Guide for Adults*, appears online at <http://effectivehealthcare.ahrq.gov/healthInfo.cfm?infotype=sg&DocID=28&ProcessID=6>

The National Institute on Aging, a component of the National Institutes of Health, has added publications in Spanish to its consumer health guides. These informational guides, directed to Hispanic seniors, appear online at [www.nia.nih.gov/Espanol](http://www.nia.nih.gov/Espanol) . They describe cancer, Alzheimer’s disease, healthy lifestyles, arthritis, stroke, surgery, long-term care, communicating with a doctor, foot and tooth care, and other health topics.

ToxMystery, a National Library of Medicine website about chemical hazards in the home, has a new Spanish language version at <http://toxymystery.nlm.nih.gov/espanol.html> . This website is directed to children ages seven to eleven. Young mystery game players can switch back and forth from English to Spanish, without losing their place in the game, as they determine what chemical hazards are present in the rooms depicted online. Parent and teacher resources are included on the website.

### *RHEUMATOID ARTHRITIS AND OSTEOPOROSIS: WHICH TREATMENTS ARE BEST?*

As the American population ages, obtaining authoritative information on the treatment of diseases and disorders prevalent among older adults becomes increasingly important. Many older adults are seeking reliable, comparative information about treatments for arthritis, a disease that affects nearly half of all adults 65 and older, and osteoporosis, which is more likely to develop as one grows older.



The Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ), a research and information component of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, has recently published new consumer publications about medications for rheumatoid arthritis and osteoporosis at <http://effectivehealthcare.ahrq.gov/healthInfo.cfm?infotype=sg#subListconsumer> . The brief summary guides are based on research compiled by the AHRQ’s Effective Health Care Program. The Program, based at the Oregon Health and Science University, focuses on gathering, reviewing, and combining published and unpublished research results in order to help patients and health professionals make informed treatment decisions.

“Osteoporosis Treatments That Help Prevent Broken Bones: A Guide for Women After Menopause” uses brief, clearly written language to discuss types of osteoporosis medications, their effectiveness, side effects, recommended dosage, and cost. It is based on the results of nearly six hundred research reports.

Using the findings of more than one hundred fifty research reports, “Choosing Medications for Adults With Rheumatoid Arthritis” “compares the effectiveness and safety of disease-modifying antirheumatic drugs (DMARDs) and corticosteroids used for rheumatoid arthritis (RA).” It includes recommended questions to ask a doctor, doses and prices of medications, medication risks, and ways to reduce risks.

Each publication links to an audio version as well as a print format. Free print copies are available by contacting the AHRQ Publications Clearinghouse at (800) 358-9295.

### *IS CELIAC DISEASE THE PROBLEM?*

A digestive disease that may have no gastrointestinal symptoms? A widely prevalent medical disorder that cannot be cured with any medication? Because individuals with celiac disease/ceciac sprue may not have any digestive symptoms, physicians are often baffled by the challenge of diagnosing this disease.

Typically, adults and children with celiac disease show symptoms of weight loss, abdominal cramps, and bloating. But celiac disease, a genetic autoimmune digestive disorder affecting around 3 million Americans, may result in fatigue, depression, osteoporosis, anemia, skin rash (dermatitis herpetiformis), infertility in women, and joint pain... or no symptoms at all.

Among celiac patients, a reaction to gluten in food causes damage to villi in the small intestine, and prevents effective absorption of nutrients. Its treatment requires constant dedication to a gluten-free diet. Patients must consume no foods containing wheat, rye, or barley. A strict gluten-free diet controls symptoms and may reverse injury to the small intestine that is caused by the immune system’s reaction to the ingestion of gluten. The U.S. Food and Drug Administration is currently in the process of creating a standard food label definition of “gluten-free.”

Here are some sources of information about celiac disease for patients and their families...

#### **National Institutes of Health**

<http://digestive.niddk.nih.gov/ddiseases/pubs/ceciac/>

Published by the National Digestive Diseases Information Clearinghouse of the National Institutes of Health, this webpage provides an introductory overview of celiac disease, its symptoms, diagnostic tests, related health problems, treatments, and details on a gluten-free diet for celiac patients, including examples of foods allowed and foods to avoid.

<http://www.celiac.nih.gov/Organizations.aspx>

The National Digestive Diseases Information Clearinghouse website also offers a brief directory of national celiac disease organizations that provide information and support to patients and families. The organizations are categorized by the types of resource offered: support groups, resources for children with celiac disease, meetings for patients with celiac disease, summer camps for children with celiac disease, sample diets, patient education materials, and recipes.

#### **UpToDate Website**

<http://www.uptodate.com/patients/content/topic.do?topicKey=~YqYcT4UaKCmU5n>

A comprehensive article about celiac disease is included in the “Digestive Diseases” category of the UpToDate website’s Patient Information section. Dr. Ciaran P. Kelly, an associate professor at Harvard Medical School, is the author of the May 2008 version of the celiac disease article. The article incorporates details about diagnostic tests, risk factors, causes, prevention, complications, and treatments.

Written on a twelfth grade level, the article is “evidence-based” and accompanied by references to research articles on the topic and resources for further information.

### **ClinicalTrials.gov Website**

<http://www.clinicaltrials.gov/ct2/results?term=celiac+disease>

A listing of current clinical research trials, utilizing human volunteers, from the National Institutes of Health's ClinicalTrials.gov database. Included are details on eligibility requirements for participation, descriptions of celiac disease treatments being tested, and locations of trials. For each ongoing trial, there is also a name and phone number of a contact person to call for additional details and to volunteer to participate as a research subject.

### **Celiac Sprue Association**

<http://www.csaceliacs.org/IntheKitchen.php>

Information on diet from the "In the Kitchen" section of the website of the national Celiac Sprue Association, whose motto is "Celiacs Helping Celiacs." This area of the website includes recipes, gluten-free flour formulas, and a glossary of gluten-free grains and flours.

### **Gluten Intolerance Group of North America**

<http://www.glutenfreerestaurants.org/find.php>

The Gluten Intolerance Group of North America sponsors a Gluten-free Restaurant Awareness Program that identifies restaurants that offer gluten-free meals. The restaurant database is searchable by zip code. Restaurants which choose to participate and pay a "nominal fee" to support the Program are listed on the website. The organization provides participating restaurants with information about gluten-free diets, "guidelines for managing an allergen-controlled kitchen environment and staff training information."

The organization's Gluten Free Certification Organization certifies food products as gluten-free by inspecting the product and its production at the manufacturer's factory. Details on the certification process are online at

<http://www.gfco.org/faq.php>

**100 Questions and Answers about Celiac Disease and Sprue.** David L. Burns. Jones and Bartlett Publishers, 2008. 225 p. (ISBN 0-7637-4502-2) paperback, \$15.00.

**100 Questions and Answers about Celiac Disease and Sprue** is one of a series of Lahey Clinic Guides written by physicians who specialize in treating the specific disease being described. Celiac disease specialist David L. Burns is a gastroenterologist at the Lahey Clinic in Burlington, Massachusetts and an assistant professor of medicine at the Tufts University School of Medicine. He has written this book for newly diagnosed patients in question-and-answer format to address some of their common concerns: Does celiac disease run in families? What are the complications of celiac disease in children? How is celiac disease diagnosed? Do I need to stay on a gluten-free diet for life? etc. The questions are brief but the comprehensive, consumer-friendly explanations in response extend from a few paragraphs to a few pages each. Photos, illustrations, charts, a glossary of terms, and comments by one of his patients, enhance the text.



## **FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION**

**The Bipolar Teen. What You Can Do to Help Your Child and Your Family.** David Miklowitz and Elizabeth George. Guilford Press, 2008. 356 p. (ISBN 1-59385-596-6 hardcover, ISBN 1-59385-318-1 paperback), \$17.95.

The behavior of adolescents can be unpredictable and may vary from day to day. Parents expect behavioral changes in their teenage children as they navigate an often volatile stage from childhood to adulthood.

But the difficult, dangerous, troubling behavior of teens with bipolar disorder extends far beyond the sometimes sullen and risky behavior of many emotionally healthy adolescents. This behavior may vacillate between depression and mania. Teens with bipolar disorder have great difficulty functioning at school, in the community, and with family members. The extremely stressful daily life of parenting a teen with bipolar disorder presents many challenges.

Colorado psychologists Dr. David Miklowitz and Dr. Elizabeth George focus a great deal of their practices and their research on youngsters with bipolar disorder and “family-focused treatment.” This book, directed to parents, provides specific, understanding recommendations for dealing with bipolar teens and seeking help for them. A comprehensive guide, it includes tactics for parents to use to help prevent “mood episodes,” questionnaires and behavior inventories for parents, recommendations for communicating effectively with teachers and school administration, and suggestions for encouraging compliance with medication treatment. Parents will identify with the numerous case histories that illustrate the symptoms, diagnosis, and treatment of bipolar disorder in teens.

**Choices in Deafness. A Parents’ Guide to Communication Options.** Sue Schwartz, editor. Woodbine House, 2007. 212 p. (ISBN 978-1-890627-73-7), \$24.95.

An updated, third edition of a parent guide to the diagnosis and management of hearing loss in children. In the introduction, the editor acknowledges the impact of a child’s hearing loss on her parents and the grief parents experience. The guide discusses five current communication options: Audiory-Verbal, ASL-English Bilingual, Cued Speech, Auditory-Oral and Total Communication, and includes an audio CD that replicates the hearing experiences of children with different types of hearing loss. The chapter authors are experienced educators of the deaf, audiologists, physicians, and professors of deaf education. The book is enhanced by the experiences of parents and grandparents whose children were diagnosed with hearing loss and were educated with each of the five communication options explained.

Since the 1996 second edition, the age of eligibility for cochlear implants has been lowered to twelve months and thousands of children have received these implants. The book is intended to help parents determine the communication options most appropriate for their child.

**Getting the Best for Your Child with Autism. An Expert’s Guide to Treatment.** Bryna Siegel. Guilford Press, 2008. 280 p. (ISBN 1-59385-601-6 hardcover, 1-59385-317-3 paperback), \$16.95.

Parents who are concerned, based on their young child's atypical behavior, that their child may have a diagnosis of autism, will find a great deal of guidance in this book.

Written by the Director of the Autism Clinic at the University of California, San Francisco, this book guides parents through the diagnostic process, helps them in caring not only for the child with autism and the child's siblings but also for themselves, and assists them in comparing therapies and therapists. Written in a practical, conversational style, it is directed to parents in the beginning stages of exploring a possible autism diagnosis in their child. The book includes specifics about effective and considerate ways to visit a potential school program, how the scientific process (not hype) compares educational programs, describes “core” treatments for autism, explains the specific learning disabilities a child with autism may experience, and illustrates teaching strategies parents can use with their child. An entire chapter, written by an attorney, is devoted to the legal ramifications of seeking help for a child.

Additional resources about autism in children appear in the “Pervasive Development Disorders” section of the Mental Health Resources Guide on Healthnet’s website at <http://library.uhc.edu/departm/hnet/>



*Healthnet News is written by Alberta L. Richetelle and Judith Kronick.  
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