

HEALTHNET NEWS

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

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NETNEWS



FINDING INFORMATION ABOUT SWINE FLU..

The need for information about preventing the spread of H1N1 flu (swine flu) is especially urgent now that students have returned to school, and club and organization gatherings have become more frequent after a summer hiatus. The spread of the disease is a recurrent concern among many people. The Centers for Disease Control has “determined that 2009 H1N1 virus is contagious and is spreading from human to human” in the United States. (<http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/qa.htm>)

The Medlineplus website, published by the National Library of Medicine, a part of the National Institutes of Health, offers a variety of resources about the H1N1 flu at <http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/h1n1fluswineflu.html>

In addition to overviews of the H1N1 flu, an article about precautions for children, and a YouTube video from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control, the Medlineplus website includes recent news articles about swine flu and about the development of a vaccine to protect individuals. The Medlineplus entries are gathered from such authoritative sources as the American Academy of Pediatrics, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and the Massachusetts Medical Society.

Flu.gov at <http://www.flu.gov> a federal government website, “managed by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services,” is a “one-stop” website for information about the H1N1 flu and the seasonal flu.

The American Academy of Pediatrics has updated its H1N1 Flu (Swine Flu) Information website for parents at <http://www.aap.org/advocacy/releases/swineflu.htm> Its website incorporates frequently asked questions about symptoms and treatment, vaccine guidelines, and prevention recommendations. There are links to a number of “additional online resources,” many from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention provides a toll-free phone number **1-800-CDC-INFO (1-800-232-4636)** for questions about swine flu. This information service (answered by a live person!) is available around the clock, 7 days a week. You can ask the information specialist questions such as “Do swine flu symptoms differ in children and adults?” “What products can I use to disinfect my home?”

The challenge of “Talking with Children about H1N1 (Swine Flu)” is addressed on the website of the Children’s National Medical Center in Washington, D.C. at <https://www.childrensnational.org/Pressroom/cnmc04300901.aspx#>



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The Connecticut Department of Public Health has launched a “Connecticut Flu Watch” website at <http://www.ct.gov/ctfluwatch/site/default.asp> It has an informational flyer entitled “Novel H1N1 Influenza: What Connecticut Residents Need to Know,” available in Brazilian Portuguese, traditional Chinese, Haitian Creole, Polish, Spanish, Russian, and Vietnamese, as well as English. In addition, there is a flyer about “When to Keep Your Child Home” in English, Chinese, Polish, Russian, Spanish, and Vietnamese.

Also on this website, there is a total number of confirmed cases, updated weekly, as well as statistics on cases within Connecticut, by county and by town. Select “About the ‘Swine Flu’” for these statistics.

The Connecticut state health department has opened a public H1N1 hot line. Callers may access the hot line Monday through Friday, 7 a.m. to 7 p.m., at **800-830-9426**.

The Harvard Health Publications Flu Resource Center at <https://www.health.harvard.edu/topic/flu-resource-center> offers an online video of Swine Flu Q and A presented by Dr. Anthony Kamaroff, editor-in-chief of Harvard Health Publications. He clearly and succinctly answers questions such as “Are there treatments?” “Who gets swine flu?” “How long are people contagious?”

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration has initiated a “FDA 2009 H1N1 (Swine) Flu Page” at <http://www.fda.gov/NewsEvents/PublicHealthFocus/ucm150305.htm#faq> The webpage includes news updates, warnings of flu-related health frauds, information on FDA regulated products, and discussions especially for health consumers. A brief webpage article describes personal protective equipment, such as facemasks and N95 respirators. The U.S. Centers for Disease Control, on its “2009 H1N1 Flu (Swine Flu) and You” website at <http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/qa.htm> , assures Americans that “2009 H1N1 viruses are not spread by food.” No! “You cannot get infected with novel H1N1 virus from eating pork or pork products.”

DAILY HEALTH NEWS VIDEOS.....

For those who prefer their health news in brief, video segments, there is a new, multimedia online resource. Each weekday, the National Library of Medicine’s MedlinePlus website will post a news video focusing on one health news development at <http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/newsbydate.html>.

Each video explains a current medical research finding in consumer-friendly terms, accompanied by video footage illustrating the research topic. A video about the value of exercise is accompanied by film shots of women exercising at a gym and jogging outdoors. The text is narrated by a young physician experienced in media appearances.

Each HealthDay TV news video extends for less than two minutes. A Saturday video summarizes the research findings explained during the previous week. The videos are currently available only in English.

GETTING AND KEEPING HEALTH INSURANCE IN CONNECTICUT.....

No one needs to be reminded of the ongoing challenge of securing and maintaining health insurance in Connecticut or in other U.S. states.

Although Connecticut is among the states with the lowest percentage of uninsured residents, under ten per cent, compared to a national uninsured average of 15.1 per cent, many Connecticut residents are seeking health insurance coverage. (http://www.census.gov/hhes/www/hlthins/acs08paper/2008ACS_healthins.pdf)

For individuals who have lost their jobs or are self-employed, the challenge is even greater. While debate over health care reform continues, what resources offer information to Connecticut residents seeking health insurance now?

Recently updated, the online publication “Consumer Guide to Getting and Keeping Health Insurance in Connecticut” at <http://healthinsuranceinfo.net/getinsured/connecticut/> provides a summary of health insurance protections in Connecticut as well as specifics on group plans, individual health insurance plans, coverage for small companies and self-employed individuals, and financial assistance for individuals unable to obtain health insurance.

The Guide is a publication of the Georgetown University Health Policy Institute. The Healthinsuranceinfo.net website at <http://www.healthinsuranceinfo.net/> provides periodically updated health insurance guides to all U.S. states and the District of Columbia.

The Connecticut guide answers questions such as “Is my newborn or newly adopted child automatically covered under my health insurance?” “Can my new employer require me to wait for a specified time before including me and my family in the company’s insurance coverage?” “Is an insurance company required to sell health insurance to my small company for our employees?” “Can our company’s health insurance be cancelled if one of our employees becomes ill?” “Can my disabled child remain on my plan after the usual age limit of coverage for dependents?”

A glossary of helpful insurance terms and their definitions concludes the Connecticut guide.

FINDING HUSKY PLAN DENTISTS.....



For families without health insurance, the Husky Plan (“Healthcare for Uninsured Kids and Youth”) is an opportunity for their children to obtain health insurance coverage at low cost or at no charge, depending on family income. The children of working parents are eligible. The Husky Plan “offers a full health insurance package for children and teenagers up to age 19, regardless of family income. “ The Husky Plan “pays for doctor visits, prescriptions, vision and dental care, “ as well as additional medical services.

Information about the Husky Plan is available on the Plan’s website at <http://www.huskyhealth.com/hh/site/default.asp> or by phoning the Plan’s toll-free number **1-877-CT-HUSKY (1-877-284-8759)**.

Locating dentists who participate in the Husky Plan can be a challenge for parents after they have obtained Husky Plan insurance for their children. Parents need to locate a dentist who accepts Medicaid. To find participating dentists, parents may call a Connecticut Dental Health Partnership Customer Service Representative toll free at **1-866-420-2924**, Monday through Friday from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

In a new development helpful to parents, the federal government is now required to post an online list of dentists participating in the Children's Health Insurance Program (the “Husky Plan” in Connecticut) and Medicaid. The list is available online at http://www.insurekidsnow.gov/oral_state_list.asp Scroll down to see the list of states and select “Connecticut.” Then select “CTDHP.” Dentists are arranged within an alphabetical list of Connecticut towns. The dental provider list indicates the dentist’s specialties, whether or not the dentist is accepting new patients, and whether or not the dentist’s office can accommodate patients with special needs. The dentist’s address and phone number are provided. The list will be updated quarterly.

Also on this webpage is a link to a description of dental insurance benefits available under Medicaid and the Children's Health Insurance Program (the “Husky Plan” in Connecticut).

NEW LOOK FOR PUBMED WEBSITE.....

If you use the National Library of Medicine’s PubMed database at <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/sites/entrez> to search for medical research articles (in addition to relying on the National Library of Medicine’s MedlinePlus website for consumers at <http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/>), you may see a new look when you access it next.

The PubMed homepage is being redesigned. It will soon have a “streamlined” appearance.

PubMed “tools” such as “Clinical Queries” and “Topic-specific Queries” will appear in the center of the home page. The blue header at the top of the page will include a pull-down menu (“Resources”) for selecting one of the other databases published by the federal government’s National Center for Biotechnology Information, such as “Proteins,” “Genomes,” and “Genetics and Medicine.”

The search box, used for typing your search terms, will still appear near the top of the page. There will still be links to the “Advanced Search” and “Help” options near the search box. Some citation display options will be consolidated. The “Send to Printer” option will be omitted. In order to print, you will need to use your browser’s print options.

Despite the new look, the search process will not change. You can try the redesigned PubMed by selecting the “New!PubMed” graphic on PubMed’s homepage at <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/sites/entrez>

Confused by the PubMed searching process? In need of help during a consumer health question search?

Call the Healthnet program at **860/679-4055** or toll-free by calling **800/535-6232** and asking to be connected to Healthnet’s office at **extension 4055**. Medical librarians at the University of Connecticut Health Center Library will be happy to offer suggestions or do the research for you.



FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION

The following titles are recommended to public libraries and other libraries providing consumer health information services. They are not part of the UConn Health Center Library collection.

Essential Hospital Handbook: How to Be an Effective Partner in a Loved One's Care. Patrick Conlon. Yale University Press, 2009. (ISBN 978-0-300-14575-5 hardcover, ISBN 978-0-300-14576-2) paperback, \$18.

The stress of a family member’s hospital stay can be intensified by doctors’ explanations laden with unfamiliar hospital jargon and by the mystery of the hospital’s routine and chain of command.

Inspired by his crucial patient advocacy role during a family member's lengthy emergency hospitalization, Patrick Conlon, a Canadian journalist and author, offers basic, detailed recommendations for parents and other relatives serving as in-hospital advocates for their family members. Family members often “feel” that they are “outsiders in the [healthcare] system.” According to Mr. Conlan, “every hospital is a foreign country, with its own language and rituals and shrines.” Although family members may not be experts on medical care, they are, however, the “expert[s] on the patient[.]”

His partner’s unexpected, extended hospital stay was a learning experience for Mr. Conlon. In order to be of help, Mr. Conlon was forced to learn about the hospital’s culture, its personnel and their roles, and medical terms he heard daily. He experienced a family member’s hospital stay from the viewpoints of emergency room care, surgery, intensive care, and recovery room stay.

In his consumer-directed book, Mr. Conlon explains the behind-the-scenes culture of hospital life and care. Among the book's features are questions to ask hospital staff members, a glossary of medical terms, brief descriptions of laboratory tests, and a dictionary of hospital staff slang.

Additional resources about patient advocacy are available on Healthnet’s Patient Advocacy Resource Guide at <http://uchc.libguides.com/content.php?pid=63398>

The Military Father. A Hands-on Guide for Deployed Dads. Armin A. Brott. Abbeville Press Publishers, 2009. (ISBN 978-0-7892-1031-9 paperback) \$12. 95.

Spending months away from spouse and children while engaged in hazardous military tasks or active combat is extremely stressful for men and women in the military service. Their spouses and children face challenges and emotional stress at home as well. How can service men and women and their families cope with these demanding circumstances on a daily and long-term basis?

Armin A. Brott , a former Marine and author of the “New Father” series of guides to parenting for expectant and inexperienced fathers, has written a practical handbook about the difficult, unique situation of families separated by military service. He also discusses the special challenges that arise when a mother or both parents are deployed.

He begins with the encouraging message that “it is possible to stay connected to everyone in your family” while serving in the military. Mr. Brott emphasizes the serviceman’s important role in his family, even when deployed overseas, with the reassuring statement that “you are irreplaceable.”

Mr. Brott clearly outlines the challenges of pre-deployment (often a frantic effort to complete legal documents, make house repairs, spend time with children... on very short notice), deployment (enduring separation from family and friends and keeping in communication with them), and post-deployment (readjustment to civilian life and to children who have grown while you were away) ..and the emotional stages of each. His approach is practical (including worksheets with “to do” lists), specific, and compassionate.

The author’s friendly, realistic tone is enhanced by cartoons by illustrators who have served in the military or experienced a parent’s military service.

After reading this book, a serviceman or servicewoman will still face difficult challenges but, at least, will be prepared with realistic, down-to-earth information.

Additional resources for military families are described in the Winter 2008-2009 issue of Healthnet News at <http://library.uchc.edu/departm/hnet/winter0809.pdf>

Cleveland Clinic Guide to Arthritis. John D. Clough. Kaplan Publishing, 2009. 245 p. (ISBN 978-1-4277-9956-2 paperback), \$14.95.

A physician who has been a rheumatologist at the Cleveland Clinic for more than thirty years, Dr. Clough provides a consumer-friendly overview of nine types of arthritis and of two painful diseases, polymyalgia rheumatica and fibromyalgia, often incorrectly considered arthritic conditions. A widespread condition, arthritis affects more than twenty-one per cent of the U.S. population, both children and adults. Each chapter, focusing on one type of arthritis, is introduced by an actual, anonymous case history of a patient whom Dr. Clough has treated. The author discusses symptoms, diagnosis, treatment, prevention, diet, exercise, and outcome for each arthritis variant.

Cleveland Clinic Guide to Heart Attacks. Curtis Mark Rimmerman. Kaplan Publishing, 2009. 226 p. (ISBN 978-1-4277-9968-5 paperback), \$14.95.

A potentially fatal disease that may exhibit no initial symptoms, may strike individuals of normal weight and normal cholesterol levels, and whose early signs may appear in adolescence, heart disease causes more than one million heart attacks in the U.S. annually. Staff cardiologist Curtis Rimmerman provides a clear explanation of the heart’s anatomy and function, a medical description of how a heart attack occurs, and risk factors that place an individual in danger of experiencing a heart attack. He makes encouraging, practical recommendations for reducing these risks in daily life through diet, exercise, and preventive medical care.

Cleveland Clinic Guide to Menopause. Holly L. Thacker. Kaplan Publishing, 2009. 286 p. (ISBN 978-1-4277-9970-8 paperback), \$14.95.

Cleveland Clinic women's health specialist Dr. Holly L. Thacker provides an easy-to-read introduction to the health needs and challenges of women at midlife. She discusses hormone therapy, sleep difficulties, and bone health. She warns readers that, despite what they may read or hear in the news media or from friends, there is no one solution or treatment for symptoms encountered during menopause. She encourages a customized approach for each patient who is experiencing this "natural part of aging." She encourages women to keep a personal medical record of medical tests, health conditions, and treatments.

Cleveland Clinic Guide to Sleep Disorders. Nancy Foldvary-Schaefer. Kaplan Publishing, 2009. 206 p. (ISBN 978-1-4277-9957-9 paperback), \$14.95.

Director of the Sleep Disorders Center at Cleveland Clinic, Dr. Foldvary-Schaefer clarifies the importance of sufficient sleep for effective daily functioning and good health. She provides an explanation of the sleep cycle and the experience of undergoing a sleep study. In laymen's terms, she explains how to determine if you have a sleep disorder, describes specific sleep disorders such as obstructive sleep apnea, narcolepsy, and psychophysiological insomnia, and their treatments, and offers suggestions for guiding children to healthy sleep patterns.

Cleveland Clinic Guide to Thyroid Disorders. Mario Skugor. Kaplan Publishing, 2009. 206 p. (ISBN 978-1-4277-9969-2 paperback), \$14.95.

When an individual's thyroid is overactive or underactive, its abnormal condition affects many functions of the body. In this introduction to hypothyroidism, hyperthyroidism, thyroid nodules, goiters, and thyroid cancers, Dr. Skugor, a specialist in thyroid disorders at Cleveland Clinic, discusses diagnosis and treatment of thyroid disorders and controversies among physicians about their management. He describes tests for thyroid diseases and the normal ranges for results. Case histories of Dr. Skugor's patients enhance the explanations.

In addition, the **Cleveland Clinic Guide to Infertility** by Tommaso Falcone (ISBN 1-607-1407-56), was published in 2009.



*Healthnet News is written by Judy Kronick and Alberta Richetelle
If you have questions about anything in the newsletter or about Healthnet services for Connecticut public libraries,
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