

HEALTHNET NEWS

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

Volume XVII Number 4

Winter 2002

UPDATE

PLAN TO ATTEND...

...the second annual New England consumer health information conference to be held on April 22, 2003. This year's conference will focus on Environmental Health - an appropriate topic for us to learn about on Earth Day. It will be held in the newly renovated Quality Inn and Conference Center in Sturbridge, MA. Program information and a registration form are now available on the Healthnet website at <http://library.uchc.edu/departm/hnet/>.



Our communities have more and more questions about environmental health issues. Come and learn what experts in our area are saying and where we can find authoritative answers. Hear about current environmental issues as they relate to breast cancer. Listen to a medical toxicologist discuss responses to public exposures to toxins such as arsenic and mercury. Learn about an important new database for teaching the public about toxic substances. Find out about communicating poison information sources to the English and Spanish speaking public.

Public health officials, health educators, public librarians, health sciences librarians, and representatives from local chapters of health organizations are invited to attend. This conference is open to all of these groups in the six New England States.

This program is sponsored by the Lyman Maynard Stowe Library, University of Connecticut Health Center, Farmington CT. Questions and comments may be directed to Alberta L. Richetelle, 860/679-4055; email - richetelle@nso.uchc.edu; telephone: 860/679-4055.

HEALTHNET NEWSLETTER DISTRIBUTION

After much consideration, we will cease printing a paper copy of **Healthnet News** and will convert the newsletter to an online version only beginning with the Spring 2003 issue which will be published in April.

This is how it will work: you will be sent an email notification each time an issue of Healthnet News becomes available online. The newsletter will not be sent to you as an attachment to an email. The newsletter will be a PDF file on the Healthnet web site (which it is currently), and you will be able to print as many copies as you wish for distribution to your staff. Connecticut hospital libraries, in-state individual subscribers, and out-of-state individuals, libraries, and organizations who currently pay for their subscription, will no longer be billed unless they still want to continue to receive a paper copy. Public libraries in Connecticut that still want to receive a paper copy will not be billed.

Our plan is to also use this email notification system for announcements of Healthnet workshops and programs and new resources available on Healthnet's homepage. We will keep these announcements to a minimum to avoid cluttering up your email inbox.

Please fill out the attached pink sheet and indicate whether you want to be on our email notification list and return it to Healthnet, Health Center Library, University of Connecticut, PO Box 4003, Farmington CT 06034-4003. You may also fax the completed form to Healthnet at 860/679-1230. In addition, you may fill out the form on Healthnet's web site at <http://library.uchc.edu/departm/hnet/forms/subform.html> or go to the Healthnet web site at <http://library.uchc.edu/departm/hnet> and under "Healthnet News" select the link "Subscribe here for email notification of the newsletter's current issue".



Healthnet: Connecticut Consumer Health Information Network
Lyman Maynard Stowe Library ♦ University of Connecticut Health Center
PO Box 4003 ♦ Farmington CT 06034-4003
Telephone: 860/679-4055 ♦ email : richetelle@nso.uchc.edu
<http://library.uchc.edu/departm/hnet>

DENTAL HEALTH RESOURCE GUIDE



A new resource guide “**Your Dental Health : a guide for patients and families**” is available on Healthnet’s web site at <http://library.uchc.edu/departm/hnet/dentalhealth.html>. The resource guide lists recommended books, organizations, and web sites on several different dental health topics including introductory information on dental health, children’s dental health, finding a dentist, dental implants, dental surgery, cosmetic dentistry, insurance, dental research news, medications, and nutrition for good dental health. The resource guide was developed by Judith Kronick, Healthnet Reference Librarian

PROFESSIONAL READING

RESOURCES ON PARKINSON’S DISEASE

In spite of an insensitive title, “Shaking up life: Parkinson’s disease” is a helpful guide to books and web sites that have to do with Parkinson’s disease. The guide lists twenty-four book titles and eleven organizations and web sites. The book titles cover topics including general medical guides, treatment and therapy, coping issues, research, and personal narratives. Each title includes a brief summary. Highly recommended titles are indicated with a star.

Organizations and web sites listed include the **American Parkinson Disease Association** (<http://apdaparkinson.org/>), the **Michael J. Fox Foundation for Parkinson Research** (<http://www.michaeljfox.org/>), and **Parkinson’s Disease Caregivers Information** (<http://www.parkinsonscare.org/>).

Schneider JM. Shaking up life: Parkinson’s disease. *Library Journal* 2003 January; 128(1): 61-4.

NETNEWS

IMPORTANT INFORMATION ON SMALLPOX



Smallpox is one of several hot health topics in the news. Controversy exists about the safety and effectiveness of the smallpox vaccine and the recent program to recruit volunteers from the medical community to be inoculated was a failure despite a huge media blitz.

Several Internet resources are available to educate the public and the medical community about issues surrounding smallpox and the controversy about the vaccine. The **Centers for Disease Control and Prevention** has a comprehensive smallpox web site at <http://www.bt.cdc.gov/agent/smallpox/index.asp>. The site has several different sections. The announcement and featured content section tells what new information has been added to the site and also gives information about upcoming webcasts for health professionals. The public section has basic information about smallpox and includes English and Spanish. This section answers many questions individuals may have about the causes of the disease and how it is spread, possible side effects of the vaccine, and who should and should not be vaccinated. A news section offers updates on standards for vaccination and other related topics especially important to health professionals.

The **United States Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS)** has information about smallpox on a section of its web site at <http://www.smallpox.gov/>. Much of the information from the CDC site mentioned above is repeated here although there are some unique features of this site. The DHHS site has a section with information specifically geared to young children, teens, parents, the media, military personnel, primary health care providers, and public health professionals. There is also clinical trial information on the DHHS site. Many of the topics in the public section are available in Spanish.

DRUGS, VITAMINS, HERBS, AND MORE

Drug Digest - <http://www.drugdigest.org/DD/Home> is a noncommercial, evidence-based, consumer health and drug information site dedicated to "...empowering consumers to make informed choices about drugs and treatment options." DrugDigest is the consumer health information website of Express Scripts, Inc. (ESI), the nation's largest independent pharmacy benefit manager (PBM). J.D. Power and Associates and the Arthritis Foundation are partners with Express Scripts in sponsoring the web site.

The site has several sections. Over 100 overviews of drugs and vitamins are offered along with descriptions of approximately 275 herbs and supplements. A separate section has profiles of 40 medical conditions and includes summaries of how each condition is treated.

The section "Check Interactions" allows the user to enter two or more drugs, herbs, or supplements to see if there are adverse interactions, including interactions with food and alcohol. If there are interactions between two or more of the items searched, there is a description of the interactions and a statement indicating the severity of the interaction and how well this is documented. The interactions section includes over 5,000 drugs, herbs, and supplements and over 11,000 possible interactions. There is also an option that allows the user to compare drugs within the same class, including how the side effects compare.

A news and reviews section has summaries of current medical and health issues and daily news stories. News stories are archived for one year and the user has the option to receive daily updates via email.

SUPERSIZED MEALS = SUPERSIZED BODIES



No doubt about it, Americans are getting bigger (o.k, fatter; I was trying to be kind). Obesity rates in children have doubled in the past twenty years and obesity rates for adults have increased by 60% from 1991 to 2000. Many factors to blame for this trend include lack of exercise and over consumption of fatty snacks. The health consequences of this increase in obesity are already evident. The rates of diabetes, which are largely due to obesity, poor diet, and lack of physical activity, rose 50% between 1990 and 2000.

The **National Alliance for Nutrition and Activity (NANA)** - <http://www.cspinet.org/nutritionpolicy/nana.html> - believes that the fast-food industry's marketing tactics of offering "value" meals are playing an important role in contributing to the rise in obesity. The Alliance is a coalition of 225 national, state, and local organizations working together to increase understanding of the importance of nutrition and physical activity to health, well-being, and health-care costs. The coalition also advocates for policies and environmental changes that promote healthy eating and physical activity.

The Alliance recently published a fourteen page report "**Wallet to Waistline: the Hidden Costs of Supersizing**" (http://www.cspinet.org/new/pdf/final_price_study.pdf), which documents the health risks that result from these marketing policies that offer more food to the consumer when single serve foods are purchased as a meal (combining a large drink, super-sandwich, and large French fries). Consumers may be saving money, but at the same time there are hidden health costs in eating larger meals. "Value marketing" (providing more food for less money) is a technique that is very profitable for food companies, but that results in larger portion sizes and contributes to overeating and obesity. Larger portions not only carry more calories, but studies show that when people are served more food, they eat more food.

The study methodology used involved identifying popular single-serve food items widely available at national fast-food chains, convenience stores, ice cream shops, coffee shops, and movie theaters. Nutrition information for these items was gathered from company web sites and independent testing by the Center for Science in the Public Interest. Members of the Alliance gathered pricing data in five metropolitan areas and, when possible, from two store locations in the same area.

The results of the study show that consumers, in an attempt to save money, purchase these super "value" meals and at the same time significantly increase their caloric intake, mostly in the form of fat. For example, a Minibon, those delicious cinnamon rolls, costs about \$2.01 and provides 300 calories and 8 grams of fat. For just 48 cents more you can purchase the much larger Cinnabon, which has 370 more calories and three times the amount of fat. At McDonald's, the difference between a quarter pounder with cheese and a quarter pounder with cheese Extra Value meal (with medium fries and a medium drink) is \$1.41, 660 calories, and 4 grams of fat.

Pass the carrot sticks!!

A GROWING HEALTH RISK

The **Centers for Disease Control (CDC)** recently added to its web site information on the growing health risk of antimicrobial resistance. - (<http://www.cdc.gov/drugresistance/>). The information comes from the **National Center for Infectious Diseases**. Antimicrobial resistance can develop in any type of microbe (germ). Drug resistance happens when microbes develop ways to survive the use of medicines meant to kill or weaken them. When a microbe is resistant to many drugs, treating the infections it causes can become difficult or even impossible. Someone with an infection that is resistant to a certain drug can pass that resistant infection to another person. In this way, a hard-to-treat illness can be spread from person to person, oftentimes leading to serious disability or even death.

The CDC site offers basic information for the public about antibiotic resistance and prevention tips, and technical information for health professionals. There is a glossary and links to other Web sites, most of which are for the professional, although several are consumer-friendly and have important information for the public. Several international sites are included.

EATING DISORDERS – A NATIONAL EPIDEMIC

The **Harvard Eating Disorders Center (HEDC)** is a dynamic, interdisciplinary community of scholars dedicated to cutting-edge research, education, and public education in the field of eating disorders. A leading academic research center for eating disorders, HEDC was established to expand knowledge about eating disorders, their detection, treatment, and prevention and to share that knowledge with the community at large.

The HEDC web site at <http://www.hedc.org/> offers information for the public about eating disorders. There are four main types of eating disorders – anorexia nervosa, binge-eating disorder, bulimia nervosa, and eating disorder not otherwise specified. The site answers common questions people may have about eating disorders, describes the medical complications of these disorders, and who is at risk.

There is a series of questions users can answer to help determine if they may have an eating problem. There is specific information for parents of children who may have an eating disorder, for someone who has a friend with an eating disorder, and for teachers who may have a student with a disorder. There is also information for the person who has an eating disorder with advice on what steps to take to help themselves.

A listing of national and international organizations, with links to their web sites, focusing on eating disorders is included. A special feature offers reviews of children's books for different age groups that touch upon some of the cultural and sociological stresses young people face that may lead to eating disorders.

FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION



The following books are recommended for public libraries and health sciences libraries with consumer health collections. They are not part of the UCHC library collection.

American Cancer Society's Complementary and Alternative Cancer Methods Handbook. Anneke Smith, editor. American Cancer Society, 2002. 278 p. (ISBN 0-9442-3540-9), \$14.95.

In addition to providing two page summaries of the description, use, and effects of more than two hundred complementary and alternative methods of cancer treatment, this concise, helpful American Cancer Society background guide advises patients and families how to evaluate alternative therapies. There are guidelines for safe use of dietary supplements and questions to ask about each alternative therapy to determine if it is safe and effective. The book also includes specific warnings about possible dangers from unproven treatments.

The alternative treatments are divided into five treatment method categories: Mind, Body, and Spirit; Manual Healing and Physical Touch; Herb, Vitamin, and Mineral; Diet and Nutrition; and Pharmacological and Biological. They are all alphabetically arranged within each category. In many cases, a number of terms are used to describe a particular therapy. The index guides the reader to the main therapy entry from each term used to describe it.

The text is straightforward and non-technical. It provides a balanced overview for each therapy, e. g. “There is no scientific evidence that reflexology cures cancer or any other disease. ...” “There are no known harmful effects of reflexology.” The entries provide summaries of research and studies on each treatment. Unfortunately, there are no footnotes or bibliography that cite specific studies.

There is a brief Resource Guide that includes the Health on the Net Foundation (HON) Code of Conduct for health websites and a descriptive list of government and organizational cancer websites. (JK)

American Medical Association Complete Guide to Men’s Health. Angela Perry and Mark Schacht, editors. John Wiley & Sons, 2001. 502 p. (ISBN 0-471-41411-5), \$34.95. Also available for online downloading for \$34.95.

Harvard Medical School Guide to Men’s Health. Harvey B. Simon. Free Press, 2002. 485 p. (ISBN 0-684-87181-5), \$27.00.

Two similar books on men’s health have been recently published. Both are written under the auspices of authoritative institutions, the American Medical Association, professional association and representative of America’s physicians, and Harvard Medical School. Both are publishers of reliable, up-to-date medical information oriented to health consumers, as well as to health professionals. Each of these well-written, consumer health books provides a readable background guide to diseases common to men and to maintaining good health. Both are enhanced by clear drawings, charts, and tables.

The **Harvard Medical School Guide to Men’s Health** is written by Harvey B. Simon, a physician who is editor of the monthly newsletter, Harvard Men’s Health Watch.

Organized by body system, the **American Medical Association Complete Guide to Men’s Health** is a comprehensive but much more staid introduction to diseases, diet, exercise and healthy lifestyles. It includes a glossary and index.

Based on the results of three extensive, ongoing research studies of more than 96,000 American men, the **Harvard Medical School Guide to Men’s Health** uses these study results to emphasize the importance of specific, healthy lifestyle choices. It provide more detailed, up-to-date information on treatment and diagnostic techniques for topics such as prostate cancer and sexual dysfunction. It concludes with a brief introduction to the health care system and the role of the patient. This chapter also includes a chart detailing types and frequency of diagnostic tests recommended for healthy men. The Harvard Guide has a section on sources for additional information as well as an index. Its bibliography is available online. (JK)

Everyone’s guide to cancer therapy. How cancer is diagnosed, treated, and managed day to day. Malin Dollinger, Ernest H. Rosenbaum, Margaret Tempero, and Sean J. Mulvihill. Andrews McMeel Publishing, 2002. 4th edition. 925 p. (ISBN 0-7407-1856-8) \$29.95.

This is a welcome, updated edition of a comprehensive, valuable resource written especially for patients and families facing cancer. It was written by physicians from the University of California and the University of Utah who specialize in oncology, and many additional contributing writers who are physicians and scientists.

A longstanding part of Healthnet’s core list of “Recommended Books for a Consumer Health Collection,” **Everyone’s Guide to Cancer Therapy** is categorized as a double star recommendation (“essential for a basic collection in any size library”).

The new edition is supplemented by a 2002 Cancer Update section that includes new developments from the time of this edition’s submission to the printers in late 2001 until July 2002.

The book follows the format of the 1997 (3rd) edition in its arrangement of content, focusing on Diagnosis and Treatment, Supportive Care, Quality of Life, New Advances in Research, Risk Assessment, Diagnosis, and Treatment. The second half of the book discusses treatment of specific cancers, by cancer stage, including investigational treatment, survival rates, and questions to ask the physician specific to the patient’s type of cancer.

It includes new chapters on antiangiogenesis, obtaining a second opinion, new therapies including sentinel node dissection, and new methods of detection including tumor marker blood tests, and PET scanning. There is a brief chapter on Alternative and Complementary Cancer Therapies, written by Dr. Barrie R. Cassileth, chief of Integrative Medicine at Memorial-Sloan Kettering Cancer Center.

The **Guide** is enhanced by a glossary of medical terms, an index, a categorized list of books for additional reading, a list of Web addresses, and a basic tutorial on using the Web. (JK)

NORD Guide to Rare Disorders. National Organization for Rare Disorders, Inc. 2003. 895 p. (ISBN 0-7817-3063-5), \$89.95.

The second edition of the National Organization for Rare Disorders' **Physicians' Guide to Rare Diseases** (1995) has been an invaluable source of brief, authoritative information about "orphan" diseases that affect 200,000 or fewer patients; their symptoms, diagnosis, and treatment. This important new publication cannot technically be referred to as a third edition since it bears a different title. Also published under the sponsorship of the National Organization for Rare Disorders, Inc., it is similar in focus and content. The 2003 title is a heftier, easier-to-read, well-designed guide to more than 800 rare diseases. Like the earlier edition, it is organized by broad type of disorder (e.g. Cardiovascular Disorders, Inborn Errors of Metabolism, etc.) and each disease is searchable in the alphabetical index. Disease-related organizations are listed in the book's appendix.

The new edition incorporates helpful features present in the previous edition, such as references to medical texts and medical journal articles at the conclusion of each disease-focused article, and a listing of synonyms for the disease name, an important search tool for obscure diseases. In the new edition, each article is signed by an author who is a physician or researcher. The author's hospital or university affiliation is identified in the list of contributors.

There is a listing of U.S. FDA approved medications, their generic names, trade names, and dates of market approval.

Unfortunately, the newest publication omits a historical article on alternative medicine, and the introductory essays at the beginning of each broad disorder section. These informative features appeared in the 1995 edition.

Although the Guide is written in technical terms, expressly for primary care physicians, it is a helpful, highly recommended source for public libraries, and public libraries should purchase it to replace the second edition of **Physicians' Guide to Rare Diseases**. (JK)



Ahhh - soon!

*Healthnet News is written by Alberta L. Richetelle and Judith Kronick.
If you have questions about anything in the newsletter or about Healthnet services for Connecticut public libraries,
please call 860/679-4055; e-mail address :richetelle@nso.uchc.edu*

© 2002 University of Connecticut Health Center. All rights reserved.

ISSN: 1526-8624