

Summer 2013

Healthnet News v.28:no.2 Summer 2013

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Recommended Citation

Kronick, Judith S. and Richetelle, Alberta, "Healthnet News v.28:no.2 Summer 2013" (2013). *Articles - Patient Care*. 49.
https://opencommons.uconn.edu/pcare_articles/49

HEALTHNET NEWS

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

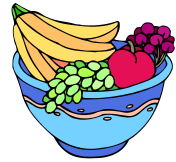
Volume XXVIII Number 2

Summer 2013

NETNEWS

FINDING SUMMER FOOD PROGRAMS FOR CHILDREN.....

During the school year, many Connecticut schoolchildren receive nutritious breakfasts and lunches that their families are unable to afford.



These meals are served at schools throughout the state with the support of the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program.

When the school year ends for the summer, many of these children face a “hunger gap.”

To help meet the need for nutritious meals during summer vacation, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) operates a Summer Food Service Program.

Although more than 2 million school children across the country receive free or reduced-cost meals each school day, many fewer children participate in food distribution programs during the summer.

Who is eligible for summer meals?

The summer meals are available to all children. The participants do not have to receive free or reduced-cost meals during the school year. There is no fee for the summer meals. No advance registration is needed. Children up to 18 years of age are eligible. Young people with disabilities may receive meals through age 21.

Where are summer meal locations in Connecticut?

The **Summer Food Location Finder** website at <http://www.ctsummerfood.org/location-finder> is searchable by town, by distance from a specific street address, and by zip code.

The search yields a list of locations and their addresses. Each location link highlights the dates of the summer food program, the meals available at that location, and the times the meals are served.

Instead of searching via the website, parents may call a national hunger hotline at 1-866-3-HUNGRY or 1-877-8-HAMBRE (for Spanish speakers) and speak with a live operator to learn where nearby summer meal sites are located.



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WATCH OUT.....IT'S LYME DISEASE SEASON....

What is my child's risk of contracting Lyme disease this summer?

What precautions should I take to lessen my chance of tick bites?

What are the symptoms of Lyme disease?

What should I do if I find a tick on my skin?



Good questions to ask this summer, especially if you live in Connecticut...

Connecticut is among thirteen states with the highest percentage of Lyme disease cases in the U.S.

Although a child's risk of contracting Lyme disease after a tick bite is only approximately one to three per cent, the risk is increased between April and October, and heightened in July and August when children...and adults...are more likely to be outdoors.

Kidhealth.org, an authoritative website, published by the Nemours Foundation's Center for Children's Health Media, offers details on evaluating your child's Lyme disease risk and safety tips for coping with Lyme disease at http://kidshealth.org/parent/general/body/lyme_risk.html It publishes a Tick Bites Fact Sheet with guidance about removing a tick from the skin at http://kidshealth.org/parent/firstaid_safe/sheets/tick_bites_sheet.html

The FamilyDoctor.org website, a publication of the American Academy of Family Physicians, provides an overview of Lyme disease at <http://familydoctor.org/familydoctor/en/diseases-conditions/lyme-disease.html> . It includes questions to ask your doctor if you have been bitten by a tick.

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration, on its website at <http://www.fda.gov/ForConsumers/ConsumerUpdates/ucm358486> provides details to help "Protect Yourself Against Tick-Borne Disease."

The **Centers for Disease Control and Prevention** has a comprehensive Lyme disease website at <http://www.cdc.gov/lyme/> with information about prevention, signs and symptoms, diagnosis and testing, transmission, and treatment. The CDC website also has an area of "Frequently Asked Questions and Hot Topics" about Lyme disease.

BEACH WEATHER...



Are you thinking of spending a sunny day at the beach in Connecticut?

How can you learn about the current quality of water at the twenty-three state of Connecticut "owned and managed swimming areas"?

To help you check the water quality of Connecticut's state swimming areas, the Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP) provides reports of water quality.

A State Swimming Area Water Quality Report is online at http://www.ct.gov/deep/cwp/view.asp?a=2222&q=320786&deepNav_GID=1654

Water samples are tested weekly from the week before Memorial Day weekend through Labor Day weekend.

The Swimming Area Information Line, a 24-hour recorded phone message, reports the status of Connecticut swimming areas. Information about state-owned swimming areas is available by dialing (866) CTPARKS or (866) 287-2757, option #5. The recording suggests other swimming areas if a swimming area is closed.

Information about beach access for individuals with disabilities at Connecticut swimming areas is available at http://www.ct.gov/deep/cwp/view.asp?a=2716&q=325078&deepNav_GID=1650

And if the vacation day turns out to be rainy, consider visiting a public library in Connecticut with your family. http://www.dir.ct.gov/kids/Schools_Libraries/ctlibraries.asp

Your public library has books to share, programs for children and families, and passes to museums and historical sites to borrow.

NEW SUNSCREEN LABELING LAWS

What do sunscreen labels have to tell you?



New U.S. Food and Drug Administration laws require that sunscreen labels indicate whether the sunscreen will protect against skin cancer as well as help prevent sunburn. The label must also state whether the sunscreen is water-resistant and when you need to reapply the sunscreen to wet skin.

According to the American Academy of Dermatology, national professional association of skin doctors, “sun block” and “waterproof” are misleading descriptions of sunscreen products. The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) no longer allows these descriptive terms on sunscreen labels.

The FDA requires that sunscreens have a sun protection factor (SPF) of 15 but the American Academy of Dermatology recommends a SPF of 30 or higher.

The American Academy of Dermatology at <http://www.aad.org/dermatology-a-to-z/health-and-beauty> recommends that people planning to be outdoors use sunscreen that is a “broad spectrum” type, that protects skin against both harmful UVA and UVB rays.

Sun-safety tips....

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration has other “sun-safety tips” for beachgoers.

The FDA’s website recommends (<http://www.fda.gov/ForConsumers/ConsumerUpdates/ucm352255.htm>) applying sunscreen at least 15 minutes before venturing out into the sun and reapplying sunscreen every two hours while outdoors.

University of Connecticut Health Center Dermatologist Dr. Meagan McCusker explains that sunscreens may be either chemical blockers or physical blockers. Chemical blockers change radiation into heat. She recommends chemical blockers with a combination of avobenzone/octocrylene. Physical sunscreen blockers scatter light rays. She recommends zinc oxide and titanium dioxide as broad spectrum ingredients in physical sunscreen blockers.

Dr. McCusker advises seeking shade, under a tree or beach umbrella, during the middle of the day, from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m., when the sun’s rays are most intense.

The UV Index....

The UV index is a determination of ultraviolet radiation level. This type of radiation is responsible for sunburn and other health dangers.

You can check the next day's predicted UV index by indicating your zip code or your town and state on the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's website at <http://www.epa.gov/sunwise/uvindex.html>

What dangers do specific UV index levels predict?

The EPA provides a UV index scale for consumers at <http://www.epa.gov/sunwise/uviscale.html> to help you determine the dangers at specific UV index levels. The website includes explanations that help you "learn how to read the UV index Scale to help you avoid harmful exposure to UV radiation."

NEW GUIDE TO MENTAL HEALTH DIAGNOSIS

A new revision of the psychiatric profession's guide to mental health diagnoses has been published.

The *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-5)*, fifth edition, was published this spring by the American Psychiatric Association, national professional association of psychiatrists.

The Manual designates the signs and symptoms of hundreds of mental illnesses. The new classification Manual incorporates changes to the DSM-IV-TR, the previous edition, which was published in 2000.

The DSM-5 is the "standard classification of mental disorders used by mental health professionals in the United States." These include a variety of health professionals, such as primary care physicians, social workers, psychologists, and nurses, as well as psychiatrists. <http://www.psychiatry.org/practice/dsm>

Each diagnosis in the Manual is assigned a specific code, assigned diagnostic criteria that must be present for that diagnosis to be made, and described.

Healthnet's website offers information about mental health especially for health consumers, including a Resource Guide focused on mental health at <http://library.uhc.edu/departm/hnet/>

The Resource Guide includes information about diagnosing mental illness, therapy guidelines, children's mental health, selecting a therapist, organizations that provide support, legal resources, and news about mental health research.



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.

Nutrition. What Every Parent Needs to Know. 2nd edition. William H. Dietz and Loraine Stern, editors. American Academy of Pediatrics Publishing, 2012. 384 p. (ISBN 978-1-58110-321-2).

What food is healthful for your children? How can your child's diet reduce dental cavities? What are some healthy foods your teenager can consume at fast-food restaurants? How can you feed your child a healthy vegetarian diet? Is your child's illness related to food allergies?

If you want authoritative answers to these and other childhood nutrition questions, the American Academy of Pediatrics, national organization of physicians who specialize in treating children, is a reliable source.

This guide for parents is an updated edition of the organization's 1999 book: **The Official, Complete Home Reference Guide to Your Child's Nutrition...**

The updated edition incorporates new growth charts. It includes information about food-medication interactions, guidance on incorporating the new United States Department of Agriculture nutrition tool, MyPlate, into children's diets as well as details about food additives, food safety, and peer-related nutrition challenges for teenagers.



A helpful supplement to this book is **Food Fights: Winning the Nutritional Challenges of Parenthood Armed with Insight, Humor, and a Bottle of Ketchup**, written by Laura A. Jana and Jennifer Shu, experienced pediatricians (and mothers). (American Academy of Pediatrics, 2012. 250 p. (ISBN 1-58110-5851))

Food Fights offers suggestions for solving food choice conflicts between parent and child.

Another source of healthy nutrition ideas is the Nutrition and Fitness section of the Kidshealth.org website at http://kidshealth.org/parent/centers/fitness_nutrition_center.html This website offers guidelines for feeding children with food allergies, healthy recipes, and information on children's weight and eating problems.

The website of the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics, national professional organization of dietitians, at <http://www.eatright.org/> includes brief articles about nutrition for children and teens.

The Child Nutrition Health Topic page at <http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/childnutrition.html> has links to information about feeding a child athlete, healthy snacks for children, energy drinks and food bars, nutritional needs of teenagers, and caffeine consumption by children. The Health Topic page is part of the Medlineplus website for health consumers, published by the National Library of Medicine, part of the National Institutes of Health.



Dad to Dad: Parenting Like a Pro. Expert Advice, Guidance, and Insight from a Pediatrician-Dad. David L. Hill. Elk Grove Village, American Academy of Pediatrics, 2012. 120 p. (ISBN 978-1-58110-650-3).

These days, both fathers and mothers provide a great deal of hands-on care for their new babies and young children.

But what if you are a new Dad who never had any babysitting jobs and had no younger siblings to care for? How are you going to help take good care of your newborn without any on-the-job experience?

This book is a publication of the American Academy of Pediatrics, national organization of pediatricians. Written by an experienced pediatrician and father of three, this practical guide to fatherhood helps to bridge the gap between the reality of being a new father and lack of training and background information about babies and young children.

In an often humorous tone, Dr. David L. Hill, relates his own parenting experiences to his medical training.

He starts with an understanding discussion of the postpartum depression that a new father can experience when lack of sleep and overwhelming demands on his time and finances can have a negative emotional effect.

Near the beginning of the book, emphasizing its importance, Dr. Hill talks about differing parenting styles in a couple, and communicating with the baby's mother on a more emotionally open level than a father's usual style. He reminds the new father of the importance of reserving time for the couple's relationship in the midst of a busy parenting schedule.

Dr. Hill describes a child's physical, emotional, and intellectual development during infancy, month-by-month, and then annually, through age four.

The book focuses on many practical health issues: ear infections, eating problems, formulas and breast-feeding, vaccinations, skin rashes, excessive crying, sleep difficulties and routines, eye infections, colds and fevers, headaches, digestive problems, toilet training, and coughing.

In each discussion about an illness or a symptom of concern, the author includes a box with advice about "when to call the doctor."

Dr. Hill also discusses discipline, children's use of electronics, sexual development, attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), and "nontraditional parenting relationships."

He acknowledges that people often look skeptically at fathers who take an active, nontraditional role in caring for their young children. He reminds fathers who are divorced or living separately from the baby's mother that their parental role is equally important.

Throughout the book, he encourages even inexperienced fathers to appreciate the important, unique role they play in the lives of their children.

Family Guide to Mental Health Care. Lloyd I. Sederer. New York. W.W. Norton & Company, 2013. 312 p. (ISBN 978-0-393-70794-6).

When a family member is in need of mental health care, the route to medical treatment and recovery may not be a direct path. Many obstacles may stand in the way.

Although a family member's need for help seems clear and alarming to others in the family, the family member who is in need of help may not have insight into her illness. Family members may not understand the illness the person experiences. The mental health system may be a "bewildering and frustrating maze" to those unfamiliar with it. Legal barriers may prevent the patient from receiving treatment.

These obstacles may be especially distressing to the family when the patient's need for help is urgent.

For some families, like the family of actress and mental health advocate Glenn Close, the family attitude was that "mental illness was frightening, uncomfortable, and deeply stigmatized.."

Dr. Lloyd I. Sederer, an experienced psychiatrist, the medical director of the New York Office of Mental Health and a professor at the Columbia/Mailman School of Public Health, offers a very informative and realistic overview of mental illnesses, their treatments, and how to navigate the U.S. mental health system.

Dr. Sederer explains that mental illness is, in reality, a common health condition. One in four people in the U.S. "experience a mental illness" each year. Of these affected people, 1 in 10 will encounter great difficulty working, maintaining family relationships and friendships, pursuing their education, and developing socially.

Eighty per cent of individuals, "with treatable conditions," will not be diagnosed correctly or treated effectively.

Although there have been improvements in treatments and public understanding of mental health, Dr. Sederer's concern remains with the country's "broken mental health system" which, despite "dedicated [mental health] professionals," fails to provide appropriate care for the majority of mentally ill individuals.

Because of this situation, Dr. Sederer warns that "patients [and their families] have to be advocates for their [own] needs."

He also explains that a patient needs to establish a "therapeutic alliance" with his doctor so that he feels a sense of trust in his therapist.

Family Guide to Mental Health Care includes many lists of practical questions to ask of a therapist to determine if the therapist can meet the needs of a particular patient. There are questions to determine how the therapist will treat the patient: his plan of action and philosophy. There are also questions to ask a therapist about why a specific medication is recommended.

The author states that families need to engage the family member in helping to attain “recovery from mental illness,”...“a process” that is realistically possible.”

Dr. Sederer says that “A person in recovery remains in recovery”...He “does not become cured.”

Mental illness, he says, affects the family and friends of the patient too. Family members should seek support for themselves as they help a family member in need of treatment.

This comprehensive **Guide** includes case histories that illustrate illnesses, symptoms and treatments of depression, anxiety disorders, eating disorders, personality disorders, schizophrenia, acute psychotic disorder, and bipolar disorder and specifics about medications as well as insurance and other financial aspects of paying for care.

There are descriptions of mental health measurement scales used by health professionals to aid in diagnosis and in assessing treatment progress.

Dr. Sederer explains types of therapy and rehabilitation and the responsibilities of therapists and patients.

His book provides a valuable, comprehensive, and compassionate guide for families.

Healthnet’s website at <http://library.uchc.edu/departm/hnet/> includes a Mental Health Resource Guide to books, organizations, and websites. There are resources about finding a therapist, organizations and agencies for support and assistance, children’s mental health, diagnosis of mental illness, and legal resources.

The Medlineplus Health Topic page about Mental Health at <http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/mentalhealth.html> offers links to current news about mental health, medical journal articles, clinical trials testing treatments, alternative therapies, and mental health organizations.

Thrifty Patient. Vital Insider Tips for Saving Money and Staying Healthy. Davis Liu. New York. Stetho Publishing, 2012. 120 p. (ISBN 0-979-35122-7).

A business school graduate who is also a physician offers us advice about health care.....and about using our resources wisely.



Author Dr. Davis Liu is a board-certified, practicing family physician in California. In addition to graduating from the University of Connecticut School of Medicine, Dr. Liu earned a degree from the Wharton School of Business at the University of Pennsylvania.

His focus, in this brief, practical guide for patients, is not only on saving us money, but also about helping us obtain quality health care.

His advice encompasses “short but important phrases” such as “Newer isn’t necessarily better”....”More isn’t necessarily better....”

Dr. Liu says that.... perhaps free samples of medications don’t save you money...more testing doesn’t mean you are receiving better health care...perhaps an annual checkup does not actually save lives...possibly a cardiac stress test is not necessary if you have no symptoms of heart disease..

Dr. Liu acknowledges that staying healthy is both “simple and hard.” You need to follow familiar, healthful advice such as “exercise...eat a healthy diet...don’t smoke...maintain a healthy weight...” and, as a patient, you need to assert yourself in order to receive the best medical care.

He stresses the importance of recommended screening tests and outlines them by age category.

He advises readers to consult the list of recommended screening tests on the federal government website, Healthfinder: http://www.healthfinder.gov/HealthTopics/Category/doctor-visits/screening-tests/get-screened#the-basics_2

Being a well-prepared patient...

Dr. Liu warns us that we, the patients, “need to be informed and educated to get the best care” because our healthcare system expects “people to fend for themselves.”

So, how should you talk with your physician to be sure she understands your problem?

Dr. Liu urges patients to prepare a plan before visiting a doctor... Present your most urgent problem first and “prioritize” your questions so that you can use your brief time with your physician effectively. You will need to be an “engaging storyteller.”

He says, “It’s not just what you say, but also if your doctor truly understands what you say.”

Dr. Liu emphasizes that assertive, questioning patients are not the only key to better health care.

The role of your doctor...

Physicians need to be skilled in questioning patients about their symptoms and taking an informative medical history. Lab tests are “simply tools” to help your doctor determine your diagnosis.

Your doctor needs to understand your story because... “what [the patient] says matters more than anything else we can do in medicine.” Your story provides your doctor with clues she needs to determine the correct diagnosis.

In addition to these recommendations for communicating effectively with your doctor, the author includes suggestions for selecting your own physician, and descriptions of medical and surgical specialties.

More resources...

Medlineplus, the National Library of Medicine’s consumer health website, includes a Health Topic web page about Talking With Your Doctor at <http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/talkingwithyourdoctor.html>

Healthnet’s website at <http://library.uchc.edu/departm/hnet/> offers Resource Guides about Navigating the Health Care System and about Patient Advocacy. These Guides include recommendations for effective ways to communicate with your doctor and determine your rights as a patient.



*Healthnet News is written by Judith Kronick and Alberta Richetelle
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ISSN: 1526-8624