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HEALTHNET NEWS

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

Volume XXII Number 1

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UPDATE

UPCOMING HEALTHNET WORKSHOPS

**May 8 – PubMed, and Clinical Trials.gov and the NLM Gateway – Middletown Library Service Center
9:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.**

Morning session – PubMed.

Learn the basics of searching PubMed, the world's premier database of medical journal articles. Using a hands-on approach, attendees will be able to describe the contents of PubMed, formulate basic search strategies; display, print, and save results in various formats; revise and refine searches; and use special features such as Single Citation Matcher. The instructor will demonstrate online searches and students will be invited to follow along. Time for individual practice will be provided.

Afternoon session – Clinical Trials.gov and the NLM Gateway.

Clinical Trials.gov provides regularly updated information about federally and privately supported clinical research in human volunteers. It is here you can learn about a trial's purpose, who may participate, locations, and phone numbers for more details. This is an invaluable resource to locate experimental treatments for diseases.

The NLM Gateway is one-stop shopping for health information offered by the National Library of Medicine. You can use a single search strategy to multiple NLM databases including PubMed, MedlinePlus, the Hazardous Substances Data Bank, Genetics Home Reference and more.

The instructor is Donna Berryman, Outreach Coordinator, National Network of Libraries of Medicine, New England Region.

This all day program is free. Register by email at richetelle@nso.uhc.edu Include the following: Name of the workshop; your name; name & town of your library, address; work or home telephone number; email address. Registration confirmations will be sent by email. Registration deadline is Tuesday, May 1st.

June 13 - Navigating the Health Care System – Middletown Library Service Center – 9:00 a.m. – Noon.

This program will give attendees the opportunity to explore online resources that will help them navigate the maze of information related to health care. Topics will include evaluating doctors and hospitals, communicating effectively with health care providers, medical insurance plans and Medicare, long-term care, privacy rights, and end of life decisions. The instructors for the class are Judith Kronick and Alberta Richetelle of the Healthnet program at the University of Connecticut Health Center in Farmington.

Register by email at richetelle@nso.uhc.edu. Please include the following: Name of the workshop; your name; name & town of your library, address; work or home telephone number; email address. Registration confirmations will be sent by email.

Directions to the Middletown Library Service Center are at <http://www.cslib.org/facmlsc.htm>.

The above workshop information is slightly different than what was included in the Winter 2006 issue of Healthnet News. We've added the May 8th program and eliminated the June 19th program. Information about other upcoming workshops will be posted on Conntech or sent to you via email.



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PROFESSIONAL READING

AIDS – TWENTY-FIVE YEARS LATER

Much of the current media focus on the AIDS epidemic worldwide is centered on its rampant spread in Third World countries. AIDS seems to have taken a back seat to other news stories in the U.S., yet the war on this devastating disease still has a long way to go before its spread is contained and treatments are improved. Now, more than twenty-five years after the discovery of HIV, the virus that causes AIDS, the disease has reached epidemic proportions among African Americans.

In a Collection Development article in the January 2007 issue of **Library Journal**, Elizabeth Williams points out that “While [African Americans] make up only 13 percent of the U.S. population, blacks accounted for a shocking 50 percent of Americans diagnosed with HIV/AIDS in 2004.” She states that the disproportionate number of blacks affected by the disease is because this group is more likely to be poor and have limited access to medical care and prevention education.

Williams points out that school, public, academic, and health sciences libraries have a reputation for providing quality health information, but they fall short when it comes to providing resources about HIV/AIDS for African Americans. This is partly due to the lack of new consumer materials being published on the topic (the last *Library Journal* story on AIDS was published in 1993).

Williams has compiled a list of materials on HIV/AIDS and African Americans that includes books, dvds, and web sites. Admitting the list “... errs on the side of offering too much information rather than none at all”, she states up front that not every book is recommended for every library. She has included some technical titles that would not be suitable for small or medium sized libraries, but has also starred several titles that are highly recommended for communities with large African American populations.

This collection development article can be helpful to all libraries interested in providing quality information resources on HIV/AIDS written specifically for the African-American community.

Williams E. Sounding a silent epidemic: African Americans & AIDS. *Library Journal* 2007 January; 59-61.

NETNEWS



NEW FEATURES ON MEDLINEPLUS WEBSITE

MedlinePlus (<http://medlineplus.gov>), the National Library of Medicine’s consumer health website, has recently added new features.

A valuable source of links to recommended organizations, health resources, and disease information on more than 740 health topics, MedlinePlus includes a medical encyclopedia, an interactive medical dictionary, more than 165 interactive tutorials, daily health news articles, links to videos of actual surgical procedures, drug and supplement background information, and pre-formulated searches of the Medline database of medical journal articles. Many of the articles, written especially for health consumers, are in Spanish as well as English.

In addition to these information features, MedlinePlus has added an illustration or photograph for each topic, synonyms for each disease name, and a concise, easy-to-read summary of each health condition. The summaries have been prepared by medical writers and reviewed by staff at the National Library of Medicine. First-time users of the MedlinePlus website will be directed to an area for each health topic labeled “Start Here.” This section will guide users to links for a few basic, introductory overviews of the health topic. A newly added Table of Contents organizes each health topic’s information into six categories.

An illustrated guided tour of the newly redesigned Medlineplus page is online at <http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/faq/healthtopicredesign.html> .

MENU PLANNER

Have you resolved to faithfully record every morsel of food you eat throughout the day in your 2007 food diary? Dieters often have good intentions about reducing their calorie consumption but find themselves losing track of their calorie count as the day goes on. How can you keep an accurate online record of the foods you eat and their calories? How can you determine how many calories are in each item you ate for lunch?

Menu Planner, an interactive website published by the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute of the National Institutes of Health at <http://hp2010.nhlbi.nih.net/menuplanner/menu.cgi> provides a straightforward method of calculating calories consumed. Select a meal (or a snack) as well as each food consumed at that meal, specify number of portions, and the website quickly calculates the calories you've consumed and the number remaining for the day, based on the total daily calorie count you've chosen.

The food categories, derived from the American Dietetic Association exchange list, include fruits, vegetables, milk/dairy, grains and starches, meats and proteins, beverages, and fats. Portion amounts are also based on the American Dietetic Association exchange list.

Using the interactive Menu Planner is a quick way to plan meals or check up on calories you've consumed as the day progresses. However, there are limited choices of food in each category. And where is the category for cakes and cookies?

WHAT'S IN THE FOODS YOU EAT?

Calcium in your boneless chicken breast as well as your cup of yogurt? Does your favorite flavor of French vanilla yogurt also contain lycopene..... or folate? To determine the nutrients in more than thirteen thousand foods, and the quantity of those nutrients, you might consider using the "What's in the Foods You Eat Search Tool," published online by the Agricultural Research Service, a division of the United States Department of Agriculture, at <http://www.ars.usda.gov/foodsearch> .

The database can be searched by keyword or by food code. Retrieve specific food codes by selecting the "food code scheme" and browsing through specific descriptions of selected foods. Is your chicken coated, baked or fried, skinless or with skin? Each of these choices has a separate food code number. In addition to selecting a food type, the searcher needs to specify number of servings, and portion size, from three choices. The result is a table displaying sixty nutrient values for the selected portion of the food chosen.

The database is a helpful tool for consumers trying to omit specific nutrients from their diet or include others. This consumer-friendly database is based on the USDA Food and Nutrient Database for Dietary Studies, a technical database used by nutrition researchers.



FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION

The Desktop Guide to Complementary and Alternative Medicine. An evidence-based approach. Edzard Ernst, Max H. Pittler, Barbara Wider, editors. Elsevier, Limited, 2006. second edition. 556 p. (ISBN 0-723-43383-6 paperback) \$56.95.

Rather than relying on the recommendation of a best friend or a relative eager to give advice, many resourceful health consumers would prefer to know what scientific evidence exists for the effectiveness of ginkgo biloba, biofeedback, saw palmetto, aloe vera, or other alternative and complementary treatments they are considering. Although this comprehensive, succinct, British guide to complementary medicine therapies was written especially for physicians, nurses, and other clinicians, it is a valuable resource for health consumers as well.

The editors support a principle of a 2005 U.S. Institute of Medicine report that advises applying the same "standard of evidence" to both complementary and conventional medicine. The Guide's focus is on research studies that prove the value (or ineffectiveness) of specific therapies. It is organized into three main sections: Medical conditions, Therapies, and Herbal and Non-Herbal Medicine. The book includes a CD-ROM with searchable text.

For each condition there is a discussion of research evidence about specific complementary treatments, a summary of research on recommended therapies, and citations to research articles. Charts and tables enhance the specific treatment discussions.

Reflexology, acupuncture, hypnotherapy, homeopathy, autogenic training, and Alexander technique are among the specific therapies described. The individual therapy discussions address scientific rationale, conditions treated, practitioners, a typical session, clinical evidence, risks, and risk-benefit assessment. The section on herbal and non-herbal medicines discusses conditions treated, clinical evidence, dosage, risks (possible adverse effects, overdose consequences, interactions with other medications and substances), safety issues, and “risk-benefit assessment.”

Research about complementary medicine in the U.S. is currently being conducted by the National Center for Complementary and Alternative Medicine, a component of the National Institutes of Health. Readers may also want to consult the Center’s website at <http://nccam.nih.gov/>.

Does My Child Have Autism? A Parent’s Guide to Early Detection and Intervention in Autism Spectrum

Disorders. Wendy L. Stone and Teresa Foy DiGeronimo. Jossey-Bass, 2006. 206 p. (ISBN 0-7879-8450-7) paperback, \$16.95.

One in every one hundred fifty eight-year-old American children is diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder, according to a newly released U.S. Centers for Disease Control survey. This statistic reflects a distinct increase from estimates of ten years ago. There is a wide variation in impairments among autistic children, encompassing many areas of growth, including social, verbal, and behavioral development. The cause of autism and related pervasive developmental disorders remains unknown. For parents with serious concerns about the development of their young children, the possibility that their child may be diagnosed with autism is a source of great anxiety.

Author Wendy L. Stone, Ph.D., a professor of pediatrics and psychology and human development at Vanderbilt University, founder and director of the Vanderbilt Treatment and Research Institute for Autism Spectrum Disorders, provides guidance to parents who are trying to determine if their child might have an Autism Spectrum Disorder.

She speaks from the viewpoint of a health professional who has evaluated hundreds of children showing symptoms of repetitive behavior, delayed language development, and difficulties with social interactions. Her recommendations are incorporated within guidelines for parents beginning to evaluate their child. They include details about the process of a clinical assessment and discussions of recommended educational methods. Emphasizing the importance of early detection, Dr. Stone explains symptoms of autism in children younger than three. She reminds parents that, “No two children are alike, whether they have autism or not,” and that “... parents do not cause their child’s autism.”

The clearly written text is interspersed with first hand experience comments from members.

Additional books about autism and Asperger’s syndrome are part of Healthnet’s online resource guide on Mental Health Resources under the “Pervasive Developmental Disorders” section.

<http://library.uchc.edu/departm/hnet/mentresource.html>

Mayo Clinic Book of Alternative Medicine. Brent Bauer, medical editor. Time, Inc. 2007. 192 p. (ISBN 1-933405-92-9) \$24.95.

Considering alternative medicine? Acupuncture, meditation, massage, prayer, and deep-breathing exercises are among the many therapies Americans have tried.



For readers seeking an introduction to alternative medicine therapies and their uses, the Mayo Clinic’s “stoplight” symbols in this alternative medicine overview may be especially helpful. Readers are guided to avoid using the goldenseal plant (“red light”), try ginseng on a short-term basis (“green light”), and use melatonin with caution (“yellow light”). Though not written in technical terms and lacking citations to research conclusions, this colorful, attractive, introductory guide to the “best of natural and conventional medicine” provides a helpful summary of medical treatments.

The first half describes alternative therapies such as guided imagery, Pilates, biofeedback, and acupuncture, as well as a number of herbs and dietary supplements. In brief, two-page articles, the book's second half focuses on conventional and alternative therapies for "20 common conditions" including headache, hay fever, fibromyalgia, and depression. Its medical editor is director of the Complementary and Integrative Medicine Program and a physician in the Department of Internal Medicine at Mayo Clinic in Rochester, Minnesota.

Take Charge of Your Child's Eating Disorder. Pamela Carlton and Deborah Ashin. Marlowe and Company, 2007. 226 p. (ISBN 1-56924-263-1), \$15.95.

Media images of super thin models, discussions about dieting and weight loss, and advertisements about weight loss products seem to be constants in our society. An increasing number of adolescents and children have become extremely focused on their weight and body image. Convinced of an unrealistic view of their bodies, many of these young people have been diagnosed with eating disorders - potentially life-threatening psychiatric conditions that are detected on the basis of specific criteria established by the American Psychiatric Association.

In this valuable, comprehensive book, author Dr. Pamela Carlton, physician in the Division of Adolescent Medicine at Stanford University School of Medicine, and specialist in adolescent eating disorders, addresses her recommendations to the concerned, often bewildered, parents who are trying very hard to understand and help their affected children.

Dr. Carlton emphasizes the importance of having the child receive coordinated care from a team of health professionals that will likely include a psychiatrist or psychologist, dietitian, nurse, occupational therapist, and physical therapist in addition to the child's attending physician. She adds that, realistically, parents bear a great deal of responsibility for monitoring their child's care, often acting as a case manager and the child's advocate even while the child is hospitalized.

She offers "specific strategies" for communicating with a child who is resistant to acknowledging his eating disorder problem. Illustrating the guide with brief case histories, she discusses detailed recommendations for treatment and recovery support. Her scenarios of hospital stays and homecoming prepare parents for the difficulties of guiding children to a healthy outcome and a positive view of themselves.

The appendix provides Internet resources, referral sources for eating disorder specialists, a recommended book list, and sample insurance coverage letters. Additional information is available at the author's website at <http://www.takechargeofyourchildseatingdisorder.com> .

Understanding and Managing Your Child's Food Allergies. Scott H. Sicherer. Johns Hopkins University Press, 2006. 376 p. (ISBN 0-8018-8491-8 hardcover) \$45. (ISBN 0-8018-8492-6 paperback) \$18.95.



Parenting a child with a potentially life-threatening food allergy requires constant vigilance. As a child grows older and more independent, it becomes even more difficult to track the child's possible contact with dangerous foods.

In a thorough, compassionate food allergy guide, Dr. Scott Sicherer, associate professor of pediatrics at the Mount Sinai School of Medicine and a researcher at the Jaffee Food Allergy Institute at Mount Sinai, directs his explanations and recommendations to parents facing the challenges of coping with their child's food allergies at home, school, and restaurants.

He demonstrates great concern for the seriousness of a child's allergy, emphasizing that the importance of vigilance cannot be overestimated, since even a "small bite of food can cause sudden, severe reactions that threaten a child's life." He is also quick to recommend coping techniques that will allow children to enjoy an unrestricted childhood (e.g. training a friend's parent in emergency measures before a play date, planning ahead for foreign vacation travel, designating an adult to care for the child in case of emergency on a school trip).

He incorporates recommendations intended to help parents avoid overreacting to their child's allergy. He details the extensive detective work he employs to determine the actual cause of an allergic reaction, and points out that sometimes symptoms may not indicate an allergic reaction at all. Dr. Sicherer also explains that a food allergy test may be positive even though a food caused no allergic reactions when it was ingested, that there is no proven connection between consumption of specific foods and autism or aggressive behavior, and that "allergic reactions can vary from time to time."

He clarifies the mandates of the Food Allergen Labeling and Consumer Protection Act, effective in January 2006, which requires that eight specific major food allergens be listed in plain English on most packaged food labels.

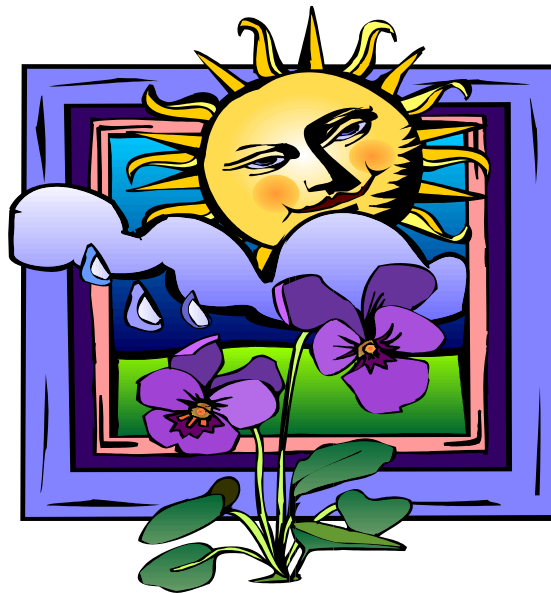
The Wonder Years. Tanya Remer Altmann, editor-in-chief. American Academy of Pediatrics, 2006. 224 p. (ISBN 0-553-80476-6) \$24.00.

The remarkable changes that occur in a child's first five years encompass physical, cognitive, behavioral, and emotional growth. The American Academy of Pediatrics, national professional association of pediatricians, has gathered information on all of these aspects of child development in an informative, attractive guide, especially useful for first-time parents.

The book discusses movement, fine motor development, sensory development, social, emotional, and mental development, toilet training, as well as developmental delays, and family factors that affect childhood development. It includes discussions of sensory impairment, disruptive behavior, ADHD, autism spectrum disorders, and needs of gifted children.

Each chapter includes a description of the "approximate timing" of events in that area of development. Centers for Disease Control growth charts are reproduced in the book. There are specific recommendations for parental participation and positive parenting. There are brief discussions of parenting styles, birth order, spoiling, divorce and separation, stress, and resilience.

A worthwhile complement to the American Academy of Pediatrics' **Caring for Your Baby and Young Child: Birth to Age 5** (ISBN 0-553-38290-X).



*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.uhc.edu*

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