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Have a safe and happy holiday season

By Nicole Klonaris, CNP

With Thanksgiving under our belts, the holiday season is in full swing. This can be one of the busiest times of the year. Most of us are juggling family gatherings, holiday shopping and work events, all while trying to manage our normal, daily routines. In a happy coincidence, this time of year also signals the beginning of cold and flu season, as well as the start of icy and snowy weather. Don't worry, though, there are some easy steps that everyone can take to stay healthy this holiday season.



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Keep cold and flu germs at bay

Cold and flu season is upon us. Fortunately, though, there are some steps that you can take to help protect yourself and your loved ones from cold and flu. Getting an annual flu shot is your best flu prevention strategy – it can help reduce the likelihood of catching the flu by 80 percent and can lessen the severity of your symptoms if you do happen to catch the flu.

Cold and flu viruses are spread by contact with droplets sneezed or coughed from an infected person. Inhaling the droplets is the most common route to getting the flu, but many people also become infected by touching objects on which droplets have landed. You can protect yourself against cold and flu germs by doing simple things like washing your hands before eating and not putting your hands near your face or in your mouth. You don't need special cleansers when washing your hands. Washing for at least 20 seconds with ordinary soap works fine. If someone in your family has the flu, you can keep surfaces clean of the virus by wiping them with a solution of one part bleach to 10 parts water. You can also enhance your immune system's ability to fight off a cold or flu by eating a diet rich in fruits and vegetables, exercising moderately, managing stress and avoiding drugs, alcohol and tobacco.

Watch your step

Walking in a winter wonderland may sound great in song, but in reality, winter falls are one of the most common causes of visits

to emergency departments. In fact, about one-third of adults over the age of 65 will experience a winter fall this year and 20-30 percent of those falls will cause moderate to severe injuries. While accidents happen, there are some steps you can take to prevent winter falls, including:

- Wear shoes or boots with rubber soles for more solid footing
- Always use hand rails when going up or down steps
- Keep your porch, deck, walkways and driveway clear of snow and ice
- Slow down and take shorter steps to maintain your center of balance and keep your hands free
- Be careful when getting in or out of the car
- Whenever possible, aim to walk on carpeted surfaces

Cook with care

Did you know that millions of people get sick from foodborne illnesses every year? The culprits are usually raw meat and eggs, but produce and canned foods can cause problems, too. With food often taking the center stage during holiday gatherings, it's important to follow these tips to keep everyone safe.



- When shopping, never let juices from raw meat touch other groceries. Also, you should avoid canned goods with dents, cracks, or bulging lids. When you get home, be sure to wash produce before slicing. If you divide up raw meat, be sure to wash your hands, and wipe down any surface.
- In order to cook meat safely, make sure it reaches the appropriate internal temperature – a kitchen thermometer is a great gift! Red meat should reach at least 145 degrees Fahrenheit; pork and ground beef should reach 160 degrees Fahrenheit; poultry, 165 degrees Fahrenheit. Cook eggs until the whites aren't runny and yolks begin to firm up.
- Finally, leftovers should be used within three to five days.

Don't drink and drive

One of the most dangerous times of the year on America's roadways occurs between Thanksgiving and New Year's Day. The increasing number of holiday parties and festivities unfortunately also coincides with an increased likelihood of drunk driving. According to the National Safety Council, approximately 40 percent of auto accident deaths involve drinking and nearly 30 percent of Americans will be involved in an alcohol-related traffic accident at some point in their lives. If you will be drinking, designate a nondrinker to drive or call a cab.

When in doubt, talk to your healthcare team

If injury or illness does strike this holiday season, know that a team of caring healthcare providers is just around the corner at Lodi Hospital. We'll help get you and your family back on their feet quickly so that everyone can continue to enjoy the holiday season with family and friends.



Winter vegetable soup recipe

After a morning of cross-country skiing or sledding with the kids, nothing's more warming than a bowl of hearty vegetable soup for lunch. We frequently make a double batch, freezing half for another meal. Team this soup with some crisp winter apples or pears and a serving of low-fat Cheddar cheese, and you're ready for company.



INGREDIENTS:

- 2 teaspoons extra virgin olive oil
- ½ pound leeks, trimmed, split in half lengthwise, and well rinsed
- 1 medium white onion, chopped
- ½ pound carrots, thinly sliced on the diagonal
- 2 large celery ribs, thinly sliced on the diagonal
- 2 tablespoons dried lentils, rinsed and picked over
- 2 tablespoons dried split peas, rinsed and picked over
- 2 tablespoons dried small white beans, rinsed and picked over
- 1 teaspoon dried thyme
- ½ teaspoon freshly ground pepper
- 2 quarts fat-free, reduced sodium chicken or for vegan option use vegetable broth
- One 14½-ounce can no-salt-added plum tomatoes, drained and coarsely chopped
- ¼ pound spinach, tough stems discarded

DIRECTIONS:

- 1) In a large soup pot, heat the oil over medium-low heat. Thinly slice the leeks and add them to the pot along with the onion. Cook, stirring, until the vegetables wilt, about 5 minutes.
- 2) Add the carrots, celery, lentils, peas, beans, thyme, pepper and broth. Bring to a boil. Reduce the heat and simmer, covered, for 45 minutes, stirring occasionally.
- 3) Stir in the tomatoes and continue to simmer, covered, for another 15 minutes, until the white beans are tender.
- 4) Stir in the spinach and simmer, uncovered, until wilted, about 3 minutes.
- 5) Ladle into soup bowls and serve.

Nutritional analysis:

Calories: 130 calories

Total Fat: 3 g | Saturated Fat: 0.5 g

Protein: 9 g | Carbohydrates: 21 g

Dietary Fiber: 5 g | Cholesterol: 0 mg

Sodium: 130 mg | Potassium: 120 mg

Source: This heart-healthy recipe and more than 150 others are available from the nation's #1 heart center in the "Cleveland Clinic Healthy Heart Lifestyle Guide and Cookbook" (© 2007 Broadway Books).

For your good health

HEALTH SCREENINGS IN THE LODI AREA

Lodi Hospital offers monthly health screenings at locations throughout Medina and northern Wayne counties. Low-cost cholesterol screenings are available, as well as FREE blood pressure and glucose.

When: First Tuesday of the month
Time: 8 - 11 a.m.
Where: Lodi Hospital, Main Lobby
Cost: Complete lipid profile \$15
Call: 330.948.5544

QUIT SMOKING

Lodi Hospital is pleased to offer community residents a FREE six session smoking cessation class using the American Lung Association's Freedom from Smoking program. Taught by Tobacco Treatment Specialists. Additional classes will be offered at Lodi Hospital. Contact Paul Bailey at 330.344.7640 for details.

When: Tuesdays,
Jan. 16-Feb. 20,
additional
class on Feb. 8
Time: 5:30 - 7 p.m.
Where: Lodi Hospital, Lower Level
Boardroom
Cost: Free
Call: 330.948.5532

SUGAR SCHOOL

Want to know what to eat to help control your blood sugar and lose weight? Sugar School will teach you in just one night. Reservations are required.

When: Feb. 1, March 22
Time: 7 - 9 p.m.
Where: Lodi Hospital
Cost: \$20 per person
\$30 per couple
Call: 330.948.5546

GOOD HEALTH IN STORE: SUPERMARKET TOURS FOR DIABETES

A registered dietitian helps individuals with diabetes learn how to enjoy a variety of foods as part of a healthy diet. Provides a unique opportunity for hands-on experience reading food labels, determining portion sizes, deciding which foods are best, learning what to avoid and knowing when you can "bend the rules." The tour is open to everyone. Reservations are required.

When: Feb. 7
Time: 10:30 - 11:30 a.m.
Where: Miller's Market
711 Wooster St., Lodi
Cost: Free
Call: 330.948.5546

FAMILY AND FRIENDS CPR

Teaches the lifesaving skills of adult, child and infant CPR, as well as choking rescue. This is not a certification course.

When: March 1
Time: 5 - 7 p.m.
Where: Lodi Hospital, Lower level
Boardroom
Cost: Free
Call: 330.948.5544

FLU SHOT REMINDER



It's not too late to get your flu shot this year – protect yourself from flu! This is especially important for those who are older, young children, pregnant women and people with certain long-term health conditions who are more vulnerable to serious flu complications. To make an appointment to get a flu shot with Lodi Community Care Center, call 330.948.9972.



5 of the healthiest winter foods

The weather outside may be frightful, but you can keep your diet healthy and delightful. Boost your immune system and stay healthy by including these five superstar foods.

1. BERRIES

Fresh berry prices typically skyrocket in these winter months, so stock your freezer with frozen varieties. Berries are rich in antioxidants which help prevent damage to cells.

2. DARK LEAFY GREENS

Dark leafy greens, such as spinach, kale, chard and collards are abundant in the winter months. These greens are rich in vitamins A, C and K which help boost the immune system.

3. CITRUS

Citrus fruits such as grapefruit, oranges, lemons and limes are an excellent source of immune-boosting vitamin C. They also contain flavonoids, plant compounds that may promote heart health.

4. POTATOES

Potatoes sometimes get a bad rap for being a white starch, thrown into the same category as white rice or white bread. But potatoes are loaded with nutrients and immune boosting vitamins such as vitamin C and B6. Potatoes are also rich in potassium, a nutrient than many Americans do not get enough of, especially during the winter.

5. WINTER SQUASH

Winter squash comes in many varieties such as butternut, acorn, delicata and spaghetti squash. One cup of cooked winter squash contains 214 percent of the recommended daily value for vitamin A and 33 percent of vitamin C. Try some butternut squash soup or spaghetti squash in place of pasta this winter.