SUMMER FORECAST: SUNNY, SAFE AND HEALTHY

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Sunshine Safety, P6

Sleepless In The Summer Can Be Inflammatory, P5

Sunny With A Chance Of The Blues, P4

Triple Berry Popsicles, P9

Flu 2020 + Coronavirus, P3

Coronavirus Update, P7

Pharmacy Corner, P8

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FLU SEASON IS COMING

While skies are sunny and the air is warm, the thought of getting the flu is something we’d rather not think about. Besides, living with the threat of the Coronavirus for so many months might have made us think the flu isn’t so dangerous. But remember this, the flu also causes up to 60,000 deaths every year in the US, and the highest risk patients for death or serious illness are adults 65 and older, and people with asthma, heart disease, stroke, diabetes, weakened immune systems or cancer. So let’s get prepared.

It’s important not to confuse the flu with COVID-19.

Flu is an illness caused by a virus called influenza. Luckily, we have a vaccine to fight influenza that is well studied, safe and effective. The immunity from either having flu or getting a flu shot lessens over time, though, making it very important to get vaccinated every year. Your CareMore Care Team can make that easier than ever this year.

In this issue we’ll talk about the flu and how to protect yourself against it, as well as the difference between the flu and the Coronavirus. We’ll also share important information about medications, preventive screenings and self-care that can help you enjoy your healthiest summer!

Dr. Sumedh Mankar
In 2020-2021, we’ll likely be facing influenza and the Coronavirus at the same time. The Coronavirus is a completely different and novel strain of virus than influenza. However, it is spread the same way as the flu, through respiratory droplets. And while we don’t have a vaccine against the Coronavirus yet, we DO have a way to protect ourselves against influenza. The flu vaccine is available to all members at NO cost through CareMore or your primary care physician, or any network pharmacy.

You can get the flu shot even if you have certain allergies, so please speak with your physician or healthcare team before receiving vaccinations.

**GET YOUR FLU SHOT!**

The flu vaccine can help reduce your chance of getting sick with the flu. The vaccine has helped prevent millions of illnesses and flu-related doctor visits each year. The flu vaccination:

- Reduces the risk of flu-associated hospitalizations among older adults on average by about 40%
- Reduces the risk of adults being admitted to an intensive care unit (ICU) with flu by 82%
- Reduces severity of illness in people who get vaccinated but still get sick

Also, getting vaccinated yourself may protect people around you, including those who are more vulnerable to serious flu illness, like babies and young children, older people, and people with certain chronic health conditions.
Warm summer weather and enjoyable outdoor activities may not be enough to prevent feelings of being overwhelmed, especially in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic. During these times, it's especially important to take care of ourselves to reduce the likelihood of stress, anxiety or sadness that can lead to the development of serious physical and mental health disorders. Self-care is good healthcare. So here are a few ways to take care of yourself and your sense of joy:

- **Sleep.** Regular sleep is crucial to your mental health. It can lower the risk of health issues including heart disease and diabetes, reduce stress, and help manage your moods. Regular sleep is one of your best healthcare partners!

- **Unplug.** There's a lot going on and you want to stay informed, but staying connected can become overwhelming. So make a conscious effort to take time away from your phone, your computer and your TV.

- **Take ’Me’ Time.** You can’t be helpful to the people around you unless you feel well enough to engage. Quality time doing the things you really enjoy will help you relax and recharge. Try mindful meditation, listen to music, have tea (green tea, especially). Indulge in an audio book you've been wanting to listen to. You deserve it!
Having difficulty falling asleep happens to everyone. But when one bout of sleeplessness turns into a lot of restless nights, health issues can begin to arise. In addition to increased physical and emotional stress, a lack of sleep can cause inflammation that can weaken your immune system. Even the loss of a few hours sleep can have an effect. The good news is that good nutrition can help to reduce inflammation, as well as getting you get back on a healthier sleep routine. Be sure to include these foods in your diet. Your body, and your dreams, will thank you for it!

- **Edamame** (young soybean) can be added to all kinds of dishes from noodles and soups to salads, and is a great side dish for just about any meat, poultry or fish. Edamame has a nutrient similar to vitamin B called choline that contributes to healthy sleep, muscle movement, learning, and memory. Add 1/2 a cup of edamame to your diet every day.

- **Salmon** The Omega-3 fatty acids found in salmon are essential anti-inflammatory nutrients that can protect heart health and lower the risk of cancer and a variety of autoimmune conditions. The nutrients found in salmon also make the process of falling asleep easier and can help improve daytime performance. Two servings of salmon every week are recommended.

- **Almonds** are a nutritional powerhouse providing plenty of fiber and vitamin E. They’re also especially good at helping reduce inflammation of blood vessels, which, in the heart can cause atherosclerosis and a risk of cardiovascular disease. So be sure to add nuts to your next salad, dessert, or just to snack on by the handful.

- **Green tea** has a powerful antioxidant called catechin. It also helps reduce stress and anxiety while promoting sleep because of its calming effect on neurons and its ability to reduce stress-related chemicals in the brain. Have a cup of decaffeinated green tea next time you’re headed to bed.
SUNSHINE SAFETY

While it's great to be getting back outdoors again as the country slowly begins to reopen during this COVID-19 crisis, it's important to remember that the sun's harmful UV rays can pose a variety of health risks. Prolonged sun exposure can cause wrinkles, blisters, and itchy and dry skin. It can also put you at risk for heat stroke, dehydration and even skin cancer. It's really important to maintain proper skin care during the summer months, so here are a few important ways to help you enjoy the warm weather while you combat the summer sun:

- **Hydrate, hydrate, hydrate.** Remember that water is essential for life. But when we're outdoors, we lose water through perspiration. Be sure to hydrate throughout the day so your body has the right amount of fluids to keep it functioning normally.

- **Apply sunscreen.** Prevent your skin from sunburn, blisters, and more by applying sunscreen with an SPF rating of at least 15 to 30. Be sure to apply your sunscreen thoroughly over the areas that are most exposed to the sun. And remember to reapply every few hours.

- **Limit your exposure.** The sun feels so great! You're soaking in all that Vitamin D and it's just warming you up! But with too much sun time, the intensity of the UV rays can be harsh on the skin, especially during the peak hours of 10AM through 4PM. Limit your exposure during these hours and build your sun time gradually.
YOUR CARE CENTERS ARE RETURNING
As our country moves to re-open, CareMore is planning a slow re-opening of our Care Centers. We’ll also be increasing our mobile visits. This gradual return began on May 26th. Our plans are based on the latest safety guidelines provided by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to ensure that you and our staff are protected.

Because not all Care Centers will re-open right now, please call your local Care Center or Care Team first if you would like an appointment. We may schedule a virtual, telephone, or in-person visit for you depending on your location and how best to provide you with the care you need.

If you have any health-related questions or concerns you’d like to discuss, we’re always here for you, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week with our CareMore Anytime help line at 1-800-589-3148. You can also visit our website https://www.caremore.com/Patients/coronavirus

STAY CAREFUL. STAY SAFE.
While businesses and other areas may be re-opening, the risks and science of COVID-19 have not changed so please continue to take these important health precautions – The cloth face cover protects you and those around you. You will be asked to wear a mask when visiting our Care Centers or when one of our clinicians sees you at home. You will also see our clinical staff in the appropriate personal protective equipment.

Continue to keep about 6 feet between yourself and others – Avoid crowded places and large gatherings. We will be asking all caregivers and non-patients to wait outside our Care Centers so that we have enough room inside the Care Center to maintain safe distances between patients in our waiting rooms. Caregivers may join the visit by phone from outside the Care Center.

Report any symptoms or possible COVID-exposure to your doctor – so that, if appropriate, you can be tested for the Coronavirus. Prompt testing can help you to get the treatment you may need as soon as possible, and reduce the spread of the virus to keep you and your loved ones safe.

YOUR QUESTIONS FROM OUR COVID TOWN HALL
Q: What’s a good resource for the latest COVID information?
A: The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Or ask your physician or CareMore clinician.

Q: I used to go to my local gym, but it’s now closed. Are there free resources online?
A: YouTube is a great source for easy-to-follow exercise videos.

Q: Do I need to disinfect groceries, packages, mail, etc.? If so, what’s the best way to do it?
A: If you can, bring the items first into the garage, then clean them with a Clorox wipe if you have it or some form of disinfectant.

Q: I understand we have to stay isolated, but I need to get outside. I get depressed staying inside.
A: When we say physical distancing, that doesn’t mean you can’t go outside, you just need to keep six feet of distance from folks.
If you’ve been taking more than one medication for a while, some of them may not be helpful anymore or may be causing unwanted side effects. An annual medication review with a CareMore pharmacist will help make sure you’re only taking the medications you need.

- **Make fewer trips to the pharmacy.** You may be eligible to receive a three-month supply of your medication sent to your home. Depending on your health plan, you may also get an additional benefit of reduced co-pay costs.

- **Financial assistance may be available if you can’t afford your medication(s).** There are programs and discount cards that can reduce the cost of your medications. If you don’t qualify, there may be lower-cost generic options.

- **If you have questions about your medications, talk to your CareMore pharmacist.** DO NOT stop taking any medications on your own. Call your local Care Center for an appointment to speak about an annual medication review or any of the options mentioned above.

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**YIKES, HIKES!**

Walking is one of the best activities for overall health. An easy outdoor hike or extended walk can help keep you in shape, lower stress levels and improve your mood. That doesn’t mean over-doing it, though. Here are some helpful tips for your next (or first) hike:

- **Start small.** Choose a short walk or easy hiking trail that matches with your fitness level

- **Check the weather.** Plan accordingly and remember to bring sunscreen, a hat or a light jacket

- **Wear the right shoes and clothes that wick away body moisture in the sun**

- **Bring water!** It is your most essential item during a hike
TRIPLE BERRY POPSICLES
A fun way to stay healthy and hydrated this summer is with these berry, berry, berry ice-cold treats. Naturally sweet and refreshing, they’re super-easy summer nutrition.

Ingredients
2 cups fresh or frozen blueberries, strawberries and raspberries, thawed
1/2 cup apple juice
2 tablespoons honey
1/2 lemon, juiced
1 pinch salt

Special equipment:
One 10-count 3-ounce Frozen Ice Pop Mold
Popsicle sticks

Directions
Combine the ingredients in a blender and blend until smooth. Pour into the pop molds. Place a stick in each mold. Place in the freezer for at least 5 hours or overnight.

Yields: 10

ANNUAL HEALTH SCREENINGS KEEP YOUR HEALTH SHINING
Even if you’re feeling fine, it’s important to stay up to date with your preventive care screenings. These important health tests check for illness or disease even before you have symptoms or feel sick. Early detection can make treatment easier and more effective. Talk to your clinician about what screenings are right for you. Your Care Team is here for you!
HEALTHY SOLUTIONS

Across
2. An effective way to beat the **blues**
3. Edamame and salmon help reduce
6. Can help prevent the flu and infection of others
8. Six feet apart
9. The harmful rays of a summer sun
10. Apply every few hours when you’re outside in the summer

Down
1. Yearly prescription inventory with your pharmacist
4. The flu is caused by a
5. A light, healthy bite for warm weather
7. The best resource for COVID information

Answers: Across: 2) sleep 3) inflammation 6) vaccination 8) social distancing (one word) 9) UV 10) sunscreen
Down: 1) medication review (one word) 4) virus 5) popsicle 7) CDC
CareMore Care Centers
Welcome to the National Healthcare Neighborhood
From preventive screenings and wellness classes to pharmacy-medication management, plus many other services, our Care Centers ensure you get the excellent care you deserve.

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If you’re not having fun, you’re not doing it right!

Activity may make you sore. Inactivity is guaranteed to hurt you more.

Send some WOW (words of wisdom) of your own to wow@caremore.com