

N♥W♥rries News

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November 17, 2008

• Personal Care

• Complex CNA Care

• Non-Medical Care

• Foot Care

SAVE THIS: Cold or Flu

Source: The Oregonian November 5, 2008 by Andy Dworkin

You feel like your skull is made of depleted uranium and you're coughing so much you fear the lump in your throat is a chunk of lung. But is it the flu? Or just a bad cold that's going around?



Although respiratory infections often are called "flu" in everyday jargon, chances are your ailment is just a cold. Teens and adults average about three colds a year, while one-fifth or fewer of teens and adults get the flu each year.

If you're still wondering if you might have the flu, there are two ways to check without paying a doctor: You can wait a week. If you still feel really lousy, it may be flu (or strep, or something else—consider calling a doctor). Or you can check the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's flu website, www.cdc.gov/flu/weekly/fluactivity.htm, which tracks reports of flu cases every week in every state.

As of last week, no flu cases had been reported in Oregon or Washington, though California had "sporadic" flu reports. And if you're interested, there's still time to get a flu shot—Oregon's flu season usually peaks in January.

Did You Know?

- * Take your bananas apart when you get home from the store. If you leave them connected at the stem, they ripen faster.
- * When you buy a container of cake frosting from the store, whip it with your mixer for a few minutes. You can double it in size. You get to frost more cake/cupcakes with the same amount. You also eat less sugar and calories per serving.
- * To warm biscuits, pancakes, or muffins that were refrigerated, place them in a microwave with a cup of water. The increased moisture will keep the food moist and help it reheat faster.
- * Hate foggy windshields? Buy a chalkboard eraser and keep it in the glove box of your car. When the windows fog, rub with the eraser! Works better than a cloth!

Hello. This week we finished the last session of the Family Caregiver Training with terrific presentations by Dr. Glen Patrizio, Medical Director of Providence Hospice and Mike Kimoto from Family Memorial Services. It was very helpful to have Dr. Patrizio take the time to come and share a Doctor's perspective and insight. No Worries will be offering the Washington County Family Caregiver Training again in the beginning of next year so let us know if you are interested in attending. **About the newsletter:** A good friend, who is a physician, told me years ago that at some point he believed most everyone will be on a statin drug. I thought that was an unusual statement and then sure enough we have heard all the publicity recently and his prediction will probably come true! The back of the newsletter has the highlights on this news as printed in the *Oregonian*. We have just recently recognized the sacrifices made by our Veterans and I thought another way to show appreciation would be to honor those service men and women who are currently serving in our Armed Forces. I have never done this before and I am really excited about it. The information is on the back of the newsletter in case anyone else would like to do the same. Take Care. Melinda

JOKE: Idiots

Idiots in the Neighborhood: I live in a semi-rural area. We recently had a new neighbor call the local township administrative office to request the removal of the Deer Crossing sign on our road. The reason: Many deer were being hit by cars and he no longer wanted them to cross there.



Idiots & Computers: My neighbor works in the operations department in the central office of a large bank. Employees in the field call him when they have problems with their computers. One night he got a call from a woman in one of the branch banks who had this question: "I've got smoke coming from the back of my terminal. Do you guys have a fire downtown?"

Idiots in Food Service: My daughter went to a local Taco Bell and ordered a taco. She asked the individual behind the counter for "minimal lettuce." He said he was sorry, but they only had iceberg.

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New heart attack, stroke test excites

Source: The Oregonian November 10, 2008 by Rob Stein

A highly anticipated study has produced powerful evidence that a simple blood test can spot an increased risk for a heart attack or stroke in seemingly healthy people and that a widely used drug offers potent protection against the nation's leading killers. In findings that could transform efforts to prevent cardiovascular disease, the study of nearly 18,000 volunteers in 26 countries found that a cholesterol-lowering statin slashed the risk of those flagged by the test by about half—even if their cholesterol was normal.

"The potential public health benefits are huge," said Paul Ridker of the Brigham and Women's Health Hospital in Boston, who presented the findings at a meeting of the American Heart Association in New Orleans. "It really changes the way we have to think about prevention of heart attack and stroke."

The test measures a bodily reaction known as inflammation, reinforcing an increasingly accepted theory about the underlying biology of heart disease, which kills about 450,000 Americans each year.

"It's a breakthrough study," said Steven E. Nissen of the Cleveland Clinic, who was not involved in the research. "It's a blockbuster. It's absolutely paradigm-shifting." Several leading authorities predicted the findings would prompt many doctors to start routinely screening middle-aged patients for inflammation with the \$20 test and begin prescribing the statin, Crestor, used in the study, or one of the less expensive generic versions, to those who get worrisome results. All such drugs reduce inflammation.

"This takes prevention to a whole new level," said W. Douglas Weaver, president of the American College of Cardiology. "Yesterday you would not have used a statin for a patient whose cholesterol was normal. Today you will."

Some experts, however, worried about rushing millions of healthy people onto powerful drugs.

"This would be a huge expansion of the boundaries of drug therapy," said Mark Hlatky of Stanford University, who wrote an editorial that will accompany a paper describing the findings in the *New England Journal of Medicine*. "I think we need to be careful before we radically change what we do. Nothing is risk-free."

The traditional model for how heart attacks and strokes occur is that high cholesterol causes fatty buildups to slowly accumulate inside arteries supplying blood to the heart and brain, but about half of all heart attacks and strokes occur in people whose cholesterol is normal. That has raised questions about what other factors may be involved and how more deaths could be prevented.

"This has been the puzzle," Ridker said. "How do we identify these people and prevent disease in these folks?"

Compared with those getting a placebo, those taking Crestor were 54 percent less likely to have a heart attack, 48 percent less likely to have a stroke, 46 percent less likely to need angioplasty or bypass surgery to open a clogged artery.

The data are the first to offer clear evidence of a benefit for women and minorities as well as men.

A Time to Remember the Troops

Source: Creators News Service November 2008 by Chandra Orr

Nothing boosts troop morale quite like a package from home. Even if you don't know a soldier stationed overseas, the holidays are the perfect time to show you care.

"The holidays are a very difficult time for soldiers to be away from their loved ones," says Janet Kelley, director of development and donor services for Solders' Angels. "They miss their family, their friends, and especially their spouses and children." Solders' Angels sends letters, care packages and comfort items to troops deployed overseas.

Seven years ago, the U.S. Defense Department suspended mail addressed to "Any Service Member" due to heightened security and transportation constraints. However, there are plenty of organizations that can help get your gifts into the right hands.

To connect the public with more than 300 organizations, that support military personnel, the Defense Department created America Supports You (americasupportsyoudotmil). Organizations listed on the site are broken down into categories based on the type of assistance they provide.

Some of this year's holiday programs include:

Wrapped in Holiday Spirit

This season, the nonprofit, volunteer-run Solders' Angels aims to boost morale with its "Wrapped in Holiday Spirit" campaign. The goal is to ensure that each of the estimated 180,000 soldiers deployed to Iraq and Afghanistan receive a holiday care package, complete with a homemade blanket.

Solders' Angels accepts a variety of donations, including airline miles and used technology. For its holiday campaign, the group seeks donations of handmade blankets and care package items, such as travel coffee mugs, hot chocolate, boot socks, protein bars and international phone cards.

Those who wish to show their support also can contribute financially. Each \$25 donation covers the cost of one care package. For details, visit soldiersangels.org.

Operation USO Care Package

The USO is perhaps best known for entertaining troops overseas, but the group also works directly with the Defense Department to distribute care packages. Since 2003, the USO has shipped more than 1 million packages to troops deployed in Afghanistan, Iraq and other overseas locations.

For every \$25 donation, the USO will send a care package valued at \$75 to a deployed service member with a personalized message of support from the donor. Each care package includes a prepaid international phone card, snacks, playing cards, reading material, sunscreen and personal care products.

To donate, visit uso.org or call 877-USO-GIVE. Contributions are 100% tax deductible.

Operation Homefront

Every troop member deployed overseas leaves behind a family that often struggles to make it through the holidays and make ends meet. With 30 chapters nationwide, Operation Homefront has helped more than 45,000 military families with emergency aid and financial assistance.

Operation Homefront accepts monetary contributions and donations of household items, vehicles and real estate. Volunteers are also appreciated. To learn more or to locate a local chapter, visit operationhomefront.net.

