

Health Awareness

A County Health Pool Publication



February 2005

February is Wise Health Consumer Month

February is Wise Health Consumer Month. Wise health care consumers are empowered to take control of their health care, allowing them to improve their health, prevent illnesses, and reduce their costs. The County Health Pool (CHP) offers the following tips to help county employees and their dependents to become better health care consumers.

Practice prevention

It's always better to prevent a disease than to treat it, so be sure to take advantage of your preventive benefits from CHP. As a member of CHP, a variety of preventive benefits are available to you including: well baby visits, routine physicals, and annual flu immunizations. CHP also reimburses participants up to \$40 for blood tests and screenings at health fairs. For a complete list of benefits, refer to the CHP plan document (pages 18-20) which can be found on our website at www.ctsi.org.

Request generic prescriptions

You can save yourself money by asking your doctor or pharmacist if a generic version of your prescription is available. Generic drugs use the same chemical formula as brand name drugs, but can cost a fraction of the price.

Go to the emergency room only for real emergencies

The emergency room is one of the most expensive units in the hospital.

For example, a procedure that costs \$60 in a doctor's office can cost over \$350 in the E.R. Consequently, your co-pay is much higher for an emergency room visit than for a doctor's office visit. For non-emergency situations on evenings or weekends, CHP offers after-hours medical clinics through Anthem which provide services similar to primary care physicians.

When should I go to the emergency room? Go to the emergency room or call 911 for real medical emergencies. An emergency medical condition is one of recent onset and severity that, without medical attention, could seriously jeopardize the health of the individual, lead to serious impairment to bodily function, or result in serious dysfunction of any body part.

Use antibiotics correctly

If your doctor prescribes antibiotics for you or your children, be sure to take the medicine exactly as it is prescribed. If you only take the medicine until you feel better, you may not kill all of the bacteria which caused the infection and the infection may return in a drug resistant form. Help yourself and your community by taking antibiotics exactly as prescribed.

Attend CTSI training seminars

Each year, CTSI staff present three different informational seminars at each member site. These seminars are designed to help employees and their dependents become wise health care



consumers. The first seminar this year will focus on *Consumerism and the County Health Pool*. Be sure to take

(continued on pg. 2)

February is Wise Health Consumers Month (continued from pg. 1)

advantage of these free seminars to get the most out of your health plans.

For chronic health problems, enroll in *BlueCares for You*

CHP offers a program through Anthem to help members with chronic health problems to take charge of their health and improve the quality of their lives. If you have diabetes, coronary artery disease, congestive heart failure, or end-stage kidney disease, we encourage you to sign up for the *BlueCares for You* program.

This free program closely monitors each participant's health and provides participants with information and self-monitoring diaries about their condition. For more information or to join *BlueCares for You*, call 877-236-7486.

Adopt a healthy lifestyle

Many common diseases, such as diabetes and heart disease, are related to lifestyle. You can reduce your risk of developing many lifestyle-related

diseases by eating a balanced diet with plenty of fruits and vegetables and by exercising moderately for at least 30 minutes most days of the week. Furthermore, if you drink alcohol, do so only in moderation. And, if you smoke, keep trying to quit.


CHP, through Anthem, offers information about many lifestyle issues including: how to control your weight, quit smoking or cut down on drinking, or where to get assistance for alcohol or substance abuse.

Take an active role in your care

You owe it to yourself and your family to become actively involved in your health care. If you have a health condition, you should:

- *Educate yourself.* Learn as much as you can about your health condition. Anthem's website, www.anthem.com, is an excellent source of information.



- *Ask questions.* Make a list of questions to ask your doctor on your next visit. Be sure to write down the answers.
- *Choose the appropriate doctors.* Ask your friends and family for recommendations for doctors. Look for doctors associated with teaching hospitals because they are often knowledgeable about the latest research. Also, make sure that your doctor is in the Anthem Blue Preferred PPO Network. 

Source: Anthem Blue Cross and Blue Shield

Blueberry cobbler is healthy and delicious

Blueberries have been called a superfood. Research studies suggest that blueberries may protect against cancer and heart disease, improve brain function and eyesight in seniors, and prevent certain types of infections. Some experts recommend eating 1/2 cup of blueberries each day. Here's a recipe to help you get your daily quota of blueberries.

Ingredients:

2 pints (32 oz.) fresh blueberries
1 teaspoon lemon juice
1 teaspoon lemon rind

cooking spray
1 cup all purpose flour
1/2 cup sugar
1 teaspoon baking powder
1/4 teaspoon ground nutmeg
pinch of salt
1 tablespoon canola oil
1/2 teaspoon vanilla extract
2 large egg whites, lightly beaten
3 teaspoons sugar
1/2 teaspoon cinnamon

Instructions: Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Spray an 8" round baking dish with cooking spray. Combine blueberries, lemon juice and lemon rind

in the baking dish. Mix flour, 1/2 cup sugar, baking powder, nutmeg and salt in a bowl. In a separate bowl, whisk together oil, vanilla, and egg whites. Add liquid mixture to flour mixture, stirring until moist. Drop spoonfuls of dough onto blueberry mixture to form 8 dumplings. Combine 3 teaspoons sugar and cinnamon and sprinkle over dumplings.

Bake for 30 minutes at 350 degrees, until filling is bubbling and dumplings are lightly browned. Serves 8.