



October 2006

National Depression Screening Day

Depression Screening Day is observed each October along with Mental Illness Awareness Week in order to raise public awareness about the symptoms and treatments available for depression. According to the Institute of Mental Health at the National Institutes of Health (NIH), depression is the leading worldwide cause of disability that, if left untreated, can lead to suicide. Fortunately, depression can be effectively treated with therapy and/or medication.

How can you recognize the symptoms of depression in another person or yourself? First, be on the lookout for certain kinds of changes. Noticeable changes include changes in appetite and weight (weight gain or loss); loss of interest in activities that were previously found enjoyable; changes in mood such as a generalized sadness. Some changes are not as easy to detect in others because they are personal in nature. They include problems sleeping or sleeping too much;

reduced energy; feelings of guilt or worthlessness; difficulty thinking and concentrating; feeling hopeless; and possibly thoughts of death and suicide.

Everyone feels blue occasionally and it's appropriate to have many of the symptoms mentioned here if you're dealing with overwhelming life experiences. However, when symptoms persist and begin to interfere with daily living, it may be best to seek help. Contact your Employee Assistance Program (EAP) if you're concerned that you or someone you care about may be depressed.

For more information about National Depression Screening Day, visit <http://www.mentalhealthscreening.org/events/ndsd/index.aspx>

Hippy! Hippy! Hurrah!

Few people consider the hips individually in their workout routine. But strong and flexible hips can go a long way in preventing both back and knee pain. Hips contribute to pelvic stability, which protects your back. Health hips also keep knees in proper alignment.

If you include a basic leg strengthening exercise in your workout, your hips often get worked, but it is always a good idea include some isolated hip strength training exercises to target the hips about once a week.

Strengthen your hips by concentrating on movements that emphasize:

- **Flexion:** Bending the hip joint bringing leg toward body
- **Extension:** Straightening hip joint to straighten body
- **Abduction:** Moving thigh inward toward body
- **Adduction:** Moving leg away and outward from the body with hip straight

Hip strength training exercises include hip abductions and varying types of leg raises.

Here are some hip exercises that you can do anywhere:

- **Standing Hip Flexion:** Stand with abdominals tight and spine straight. Lift one leg up in front of you until level with hip. Hold for 2 seconds. Repeat.
- **Standing Leg Lift:** Stand with abdominals tight and spine straight. Lift one leg straight out to the side a few inches off the floor. Hold for 2 seconds, Repeat.
- **Inner Thigh Squeeze:** Place a full water bottle between knees and, keeping abdominals tight, squeeze bottle gently. Repeat.

Check with your Wellness/Fitness professional for more tips on hips! And always check with your health care professional before beginning a program of exercise.

Take a Shot at Staying Healthy Get Immunized!

It's cold and flu season and unless you never leave your home, there's a good chance you'll be exposed to the flu virus. Here's how:

- An infected person sneezes or coughs and you inhale airborne droplets from their nose and mouth.
- You touch a surface or item that has been contaminated with droplets from the nose and mouth of an infected person (money, a doorknob, an office memo).

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), up to 20% of the US population will have the flu this season, which can have a serious impact on school attendance, workplace productivity, and family.

Catching the flu is more than just inconvenient. For some it can be dangerous; even life threatening. Each year, approximately 36,000 people die from flu-related complications.

Here are some practical tips to help you stay healthy throughout the flu season.

- Get a flu vaccine preferably during October and November. This allows your body plenty of time to develop antibodies to protect you. But it's never too late. Getting your vaccination during winter months can still provide protection.
- If you get sick, stay home and rest. Don't try to maintain your normal schedule or you'll prolong your illness and risk infecting others.
- We unconsciously touch our face, nose, and mouth all day long. Prevent contamination by observing diligent hand washing techniques. See the box at right for tips!

- If you develop flu symptoms, practice good infection control practices. Use a tissue to cover your mouth and nose when you cough, sneeze, or blow your nose. Then dispose of the tissue and wash hands immediately.

People with certain medical conditions should not get a flu shot. Conversely, some people may get a flu vaccination because their particular condition places them at higher risk from potential flu-related complications. Always consult your health care provider if you are not sure whether you should get a flu vaccine.

If your agency has access to an FOH Health Center and would like to know if you are eligible to receive a flu shot from FOH, please contact your Health Center nurse.

Hand Washing for Illness Prevention

- Wash hands frequently (before eating, after sneezing, coughing and touching surfaces);
- Lather hands thoroughly for 20 seconds or the length of time it takes to sing the "Happy Birthday" song twice through;
- Rinse under warm running water;
- If soap and running water is not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.

Visit the CDC website for more information:
<http://www.cdc.gov/flu/protect/keyfacts.htm>

" What you have to do and the way you have to do it is incredibly simple.
Whether you are *willing* to do it, that's another matter.

- Peter F. Drucker

Late Breaking Fishy Findings!

Can eating certain fish prevent some cancers? Maybe! According to new research published in the September issue of the *Journal of the American Medical Association (JAMA)*, it's possible that eating just a few forkfuls of specific fish a couple of times a week could prevent kidney cancer.

A Swedish study that followed more than 60,000 women for an average of 15 years found that those who ate one or more servings of fatty fish every week had a 44 to 74 percent lower risk of getting RCC (renal cell carcinoma) than those who didn't eat that type of fish. These are important findings because between 10,000 and 13,000 Americans die of kidney cancer every year. We're not sure why, but this number has been steadily increasing by 2 percent per year over the past 60 years.

It appears that the type of fatty fish **you eat** is important **too**. The high-fat fish that most women in the Swedish study ate were salmon, herring, sardines, and mackerel. The researchers found that **eating leaner** fish like cod, tuna, fresh water fish, and shellfish made no difference.

Why fatty fish seems to have this benefit is not yet clear. It's possible that the high levels of omega-3 fatty acids and vitamin D in fish oil help protect against cancer. These substances may work by slowing down cancer cells and blocking their ability to reproduce. But more research is needed to truly understand how it works. Also, scientists are not yet sure whether supplementing with fish oil or vitamin D would have the same effect.

More research might answer that question. But for now, don't pass up that fish sandwich!

You can read about this study, *Long-term Fatty Fish Consumption and Renal Cell Carcinoma Incidence in Women*, in the [Journal of the American Medical Association](#) (2006; 296:1371-1376). Authors: Alicja Wolk, DMSc; Susanna C. Larsson, MSc; Jan-Erik Johansson, MD, PhD; Peter Ekman, MD, PhD

Deskercise Corner: Strengthen and Stabilize Hips

Rolling Chair Squat (do not perform if you have back or knee pain)

Stand with feet shoulder distance apart and hands resting on the back of a rolling office chair. Shift hips back and lower your body into a squat position as if you are going to sit in a chair – use your arms to roll chair out in front of you as a counterbalance. Then, push up to a standing position by pushing through the buttocks and heels while pulling to roll chair back toward you.