

Health Ministry News

...Read, Learn and Enjoy



A special edition newsletter of Agnus Dei Lutheran Church
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INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

Health Ministry Team	1
Immunizations	1
Falls Prevention	2
Marijuana and Adolescents	3
Nutrition and Weight loss	4

WE ARE HERE TO SERVE YOU Gwen Daus, RN

We would like to take this opportunity to once again let you the congregation members and preschool families know that the Faith Community Nurses (formerly known as Parish Nurses) and the Health Ministry Team members are available to help you or steer you in the correct direction for your health care needs. Our goal has always been to provide you with health education and answer questions you may have about staying healthy. Check out our brochure on the welcome table. A reminder that we do blood pressures once a month after services and maintain a bulletin board with important health news. One of our focuses has always been to make sure every one has advanced directives in place. If not please let us help you get that going. We have all the materials and information you need to accomplish that. We are trying out office hours on Mondays afternoons and Wednesday mornings, so stop in and say hi, get information you need or get an extra blood pressure check. Call before coming to make sure we are there.

Agnus Dei Health Ministry Team:

Marlene Bridgforth, ARNP
 Dianna Carlson-Visitation
 Gwen Daus, RN, Parish Nurse
 Zoe Holmes, RN, Parish Nurse
 Holly Hogeberg, MT (ASCP)
 Ghita Lorenz-Visitation
 Teresa McDonald, ARNP
 Jill Moore, PhD
 Kristin Page, Educator
 Sherry Stava, RN
 Neal Van Der Voorn, Medical Librarian

CHILDREN AND IMMUNIZATIONS Kristin Page

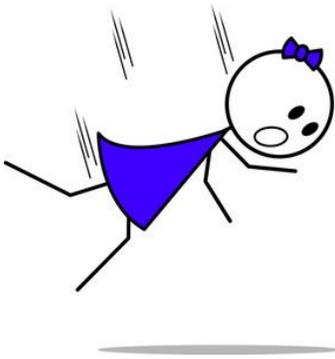
My neighbor is afraid to pick up her husband at the airport. She won't take her older daughter to Disneyland either. She's hesitant to do these normal everyday things because she has a younger daughter that is nine months old. She isn't old enough to have her scheduled immunizations. She may be exposed to the measles just by walking through the halls in the airport. This is scary business!

Some parents are worried about the risks in vaccinating their children. An article from WebMD, Frank DeStefano, MD, director of CDC's immunization safety office, indicates the risks are rare and few. The main risk is anaphylaxis, a severe allergic reaction. It occurs in one per several hundred thousand to one per million vaccinations. Seizures are also a known adverse reaction after an MMR (measles, mumps, rubella) in about 1 out of 2,500 vaccinations. Often times, parents hear about one case and don't see the proper perspective.

In 1998, Andrew Wakefield, MD, wrote an article linking MMR to autism. In recent years, that article has been retracted and his medical license has been revoked. Children often display their first signs of autism when they are toddler age, which is when immunizations are given. Only 12 children were in a study in London which Wakefield's colleagues reported intestinal abnormalities beginning after MMR vaccines. There was no link proven in this study. There was a widespread fear that developed over these vaccines because people didn't have enough information.

Immunizations are between 85% to 89% effective. They prevent many serious childhood infections. When a parent has the chance to vaccinate their child and avoid a disease that can lead to other serious illnesses, why wouldn't you? It's every parent's responsibility to protect their own children as well as their entire community. Allow my neighbor to go to the airport or Disneyland without fear!





FALLS PREVENTION Gwen Daug, RN

The five most important things you can do to prevent falls are:

- **Begin or continue your regular exercise program**
As we get older, doing regular strength, balance, and flexibility excises protects our health and independence, and helps prevent falls. Choose the right exercise plan for you. Exercise should not be painful.

- **Make your home safer.**
Make sure you have good lighting in your house. Arrange furniture so that you have plenty of room to walk without obstacles. Remove throw rugs or secure them with double stick tape. Take immediate care of spills and dropped objects. All stairs and steps should have secure hand-rails. Never climb on chairs – only use stepstools with a handlebar on the back. Install grab bars by the toilet and in the shower or tub. Non slip mats in shower or tub.
- **Have your health care provider review your medications.**
Make sure you are taking your medications correctly. Often your pharmacist is a great person to assist you with this. Keep a current dated list of all medications. Do not forget to include over the counter medications.
- **Have your vision checked.**
- **Keep your feet healthy.**
Our feet change with age. We lose the fat padding that protects the toes, the ball of the foot, and the heels. Make sure you have appropriate shoes that fit.

Questions to help evaluate yourself

Actions

Have you fallen in the last six months? Do you feel dizzy or have trouble getting out of a chair? Do you feel unsteady when you walk?	No No No	Yes Yes Yes	Ask your health provider to check your: Medication, Blood Pressure, Balance and walking.
Do you take four or more medications? Prescriptions? Non Prescriptions? Herbal Supplements?	No	Yes	Bring all medications to your health care provider to see if any medications can be reduced or stopped
Do you have vision or hearing problems?	No	Yes	See your eye doctor if you haven't in the last year. Get a hearing test done.
Do you worry about falling most of the time?	No	Yes	Talk to your health care provider about your concerns.

If you answered yes to any of these questions a follow up visit with your provider may be necessary.

Stop by the Health Ministry Office and pick up a booklet "Stay Active and Independent for Life" a guide for adults 65 and older.

HOW DOES MARIJUANA USE AFFECT ADOLESCENT HEALTH

Zoe Holmes, RN

Last year, the Pierce County Health Department distributed a parental guide to help prevent adolescent marijuana use. The guide, written by Dr. Leslie Walker, Chief of Adolescent Medicine at University of Washington and Dr. Kevin Haggerty, Associate Director of Social Development Research Group, also from the UW, is most informative. I would like to share some excerpts from the parent guide:

Good News/Bad News: According to a 2012 Washington State Healthy Youth Survey, most high school seniors (73%) in this state DON'T use marijuana. However, after alcohol, marijuana is the drug most commonly used by high school students who use drugs. Marijuana is also the most common drug used by children 12-17 years old who visit hospital emergency rooms for drug misuse. While there are not records of death directly from marijuana overdose, serious health problems can occur.

Some teens make the mistake of believing that marijuana can help reduce issues with ADHD or anxiety and that it will improve their focus in school. In truth, adolescents who use marijuana have increased difficulty memorizing information, have exaggerated or irrational thoughts, hallucinations, paranoia, anxiety, and depression; and they show from testing a permanent decrease in their IQs with prolonged use. Teens who use marijuana are more likely to experience failure in school failure which often leads to school dropouts.

Marijuana addiction is more common among teens because of the composition of their brains as they are still developing; therefore, they are more vulnerable. According to research, prolonged experimentation with marijuana by teens can lead to addiction. Most teens who enter substance abuse treatment programs in Washington State report that marijuana is the main or only drug they use. Adolescents who start using marijuana before the age of 14 are *four times* more likely to become addicted than any other age group.

What Can You Do? Believe it or not, children do care what parents say to them, even as teens. One of the key reasons teens choose not to use drugs is because they know their parents don't approve. It is important to express a *no use* attitude. Research shows that children whose parents have a positive attitude toward marijuana use are *five times* more likely to use by the eighth grade.

Start your discussions with children about drug abuse early.

Since teenagers who use marijuana often start by the age of 14, parents should begin an ongoing conversation about drugs by the child's 4th or 5th grade. What do you say to a 4th or 5th grader? Here are some suggested conversation starters:

What do you know about marijuana? Do you know that using marijuana can hurt your health? Are you aware that marijuana use is against the law for anyone under 21 years old? Do you want to know why we have a family rule against using drugs, including marijuana? We would like to share some ideas with you about how you can refuse drugs if they are offered to you. What do you think you will say?

Your early conversations about drug use can help your child to learn ways to say *no* to marijuana, other drugs and to peer pressure. Help your child to find the right words to say. Help your child to understand that it is a better choice to walk away from someone offering drugs, including a friend. Set clear guidelines for them. Communicate the importance of healthy behaviors and establish clear and specific rules about drug use. Let them know you are always available for a ride home if they ever sense danger.

Keep track of your child, especially as a young teen. Stay actively involved in your child's life. Get to know their friends. Monitor your child's behavior to ensure that family rules are being followed. Do not hesitate to network with other parents so that you may support one another to keep your children safe.

Finally, keep the lines of communication open by sharing meals together, especially dinner. Find fun family activities to share in. And if you don't already, learn to communicate the way your child does, using texts, Twitter, Facebook and other social media.

The bottom line is this: marijuana, no matter its form or how it is used, is harmful to teen health.



ADVANCE DIRECTIVES



The Health Ministry Team encourages everyone to have Advance Directives in place. The above photo was taken at the class led by Sherry Stava, RN on April 18. Even if you missed the class it is not too late to prepare your own Advance Directives, please talk to one of our Faith Community Nurses to get a copy of the materials. Assistance is available if needed.



The mission of the Health Ministry team led by our Faith Community Nurses, Gwen Daugs, Zoe Holmes, and Teresa McDonald is the intentional integration of the practice of faith with the practice of nursing so that people can achieve wholeness in, with, and through the community of faith of Agnus Dei Lutheran Church. The team cares for self and others as an expression of God's Love and to exhibit that love by mutual care and service.