

Deadly Skin Cancer on the increase

By the year 2024 Cancer Research UK statisticians predict that malignant melanoma will be the fourth most common cancer for men and women of all ages - rising from around 9,000 cases diagnosed each year now to more than 15,500.

Experts believe that binge tanning, usually on foreign holidays and increasing use of sunbeds are prime reasons for the alarming rise in this life-threatening disease.

Remember the Sunsmart messages:

- Spend time in the shade between 11 and 3.
- Make sure you never burn.
- Aim to cover up with a t-shirt, hat and sunglasses.
- Remember to take extra care with children.
- Then use factor 15+ sunscreen.

Also report mole changes or unusual skin growths promptly to your doctor.

To find out more, visit: www.cancerresearchuk.org/

Source: Cancer Research UK

BLOOD PRESSURE – KNOW YOUR NUMBERS

High blood pressure is one of the most common health conditions in the UK with about half of adults over 65 and one in four middle aged adults diagnosed with hypertension. There are often no symptoms associated with high blood pressure and it is thought that many cases remain undiagnosed.

What is Blood Pressure? The heart acts as a pump that contracts to push blood into the vessels. The resulting pressure within the vessels is known as the systolic pressure. As the heart relaxes in order to refill with blood, the pressure lowers and is called the diastolic pressure. Blood pressure measurements are recorded in millimeters of mercury (mmHg) as the systolic pressure over the diastolic pressure, for example 120/80 mmHg (this is commonly described as 120 over 80).

Why is it important to know my numbers? Uncontrolled high blood pressure is a significant risk factor for cardiovascular disease, such as heart attacks or stroke. It can also affect kidney function and is associated with some eye conditions. You can help to control your blood pressure and lower your risks by adopting a healthy lifestyle.

What do the numbers mean? The British Hypertension Society have defined normal blood pressure to be 120/80 or below. Blood pressure that ranges between 130/85 and 139/89 requires yearly monitoring by a family Doctor. A blood pressure of 140/90 or above is diagnostic of hypertension. Medication is offered to most people with a blood pressure of 160/100 or above, although those who have kidney disease, diabetes or a history of cardiovascular disease are likely to be offered medication at an earlier stage.

It is estimated that reducing a diastolic blood pressure by 6mmHg can reduce the risk of future stroke by 35-40% and reduces risk of heart disease by 20-25%.

What causes high blood pressure? There is no known cause for high blood pressure in the majority of cases. This is known as 'essential hypertension'. Around 5 – 10% of cases are associated with other health conditions, such as kidney or hormone disease. This is known as 'secondary hypertension'.

What are the risk factors for High Blood Pressure? Risk factors can be divided into 3 categories, Preventable, Treatable and Fixed.

Preventable risk factors include smoking, lack of physical exercise, obesity, a poor diet with high salt content and excess alcohol.

Treatable risk factors include high cholesterol, diabetes, kidney disease, certain autoimmune diseases, excess alcohol and some medications including the contraceptive pill and illicit drugs.

Fixed risk factors include a family history of hypertension in a parent or sibling, being male, being female and having an early menopause, ethnicity (people with South Asian, Afro Caribbean or Sri-Lankan ancestry have a higher risk of developing high blood pressure) and age as the older you become, the more likely you are to develop high blood pressure.

Stay healthy, Know your numbers, control your risks!

To find out more, visit:

The British Hypertension Society <http://www.bhsoc.org/>

Clinical Knowledge Summaries <http://www.cks.library.nhs.uk/hypertension#-360496>

The Food Standards Agency <http://www.eatwell.gov.uk/healthissues/healthheart/bloodpressure/>

Fruit & Veg is still key, says British Heart Foundation (BHF)



BHF are urging caution over claims by scientists that a natural supplement made from tomatoes, taken daily, can stave off heart disease and strokes.

The scientists say that a 'tomato pill' containing an active ingredient from the Mediterranean diet - lycopene (an antioxidant contained in the skin of tomatoes which gives them their red colour) can block "bad" LDL cholesterol that can clog the arteries.

Ateronon, made by a biotechnology spin-out company of Cambridge University, is being launched as a dietary supplement and will be sold on the high street.

Professor Peter Weissberg, Medical Director at the British Heart Foundation said:

"As always, we caution people to wait for any new drug or modified 'natural' product to be clinically proven to offer benefits before taking it. It will take some time, and several clinical trials, to provide such evidence for Ateronon".

In the meantime, BHF's advice to heart disease patients or those at high risk is to rely on proven medications prescribed by their doctor, and aim to get the benefits of a Mediterranean diet by **eating plenty of fresh fruit and veg**.

Source: www.bhf.org.uk

HEALTH AWARENESS DATES FOR THE DIARY

July 1-31	Sickle Cell Awareness Month www.sicklecellsociety.org/	Sept 7-13	Fibromyalgia Awareness Week www.fibromyalgia-associationuk.org/
5-15	National Transplant Week www.thetransplanttrust.org.uk/	7-13	Know Your Numbers www.bpassoc.org.uk/kyn/
5-11	Dementia Awareness Week www.alzheimers.org.uk/	12-19	National Eczema Week www.eczema.org/
24	24/7 Samaritans Awareness Day www.samaritans.org/	14-20	Lymphatic Cancer Awareness Week www.lymphomas.org.uk/
August 1-7	World Breastfeeding Week http://worldbreastfeedingweek.org/	20-26	Pituitary Awareness Week www.pituitary.org.uk
24-30	Gut Week www.theguttrust.org/	21	World Alzheimer's Day www.alz.co.uk
September 1-30	Pregnancy Health Month www.tommys.org	21-25	Continence Awareness Week www.bladderandbowelfoundation.org/
6-12	Migraine Awareness Week www.migraine.org.uk/	27	World Heart Day www.world-heart-federation.org
		28	World Rabies Day www.worldrabiesday.org/

KNEE CARTILAGE LOSS PROGRESS CAN BE 'SLOWED BY VITAMIN D'

Vitamin D and sunlight decrease cartilage loss in knees affected by osteoarthritis (OA), according to a new study published in the journal Arthritis and Rheumatism.

OA is the most common form of arthritis and occurs when the cartilage at the ends of bones which lubricate the joints wears away. Risk factors for developing the condition are ageing, obesity and a previous injury.

The conclusion was reached by Dr Changhai Ding of the Menzies Research Institute in Australia and his team after studying 880 people whose average age was 61 years and then analysing the medical records of 353 of them three years later. Levels of vitamin D were calculated and the study participants were questioned about how much sunlight they were exposed to.

Knee cartilage strength and the progression of weakening were calculated using magnetic resonance imaging (MRI). Knee OA and associated pain were also assessed.

The Arthritis Research Campaign is currently funding a multi-centre clinical trial to establish whether taking vitamin D can stop the deterioration of osteoarthritis of the knee by preventing the destruction of cartilage.

To find out more visit: www.arc.org.uk (source)

PTH NEWS

The first half of 2009 has been a busy time for PTH, we have increased our Occupational Nursing and Clinical Administration teams by welcoming five new members:

OH Advisers
Noushin Rostami
Su Chantry

Clinical Administration
Joanne Keay
Irene Price
Joanne Wilson

We've also opened new offices in Northampton:

PTH NORTHAMPTON
Evans Business Centre
Room 20
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