

PMWARS GAZETTE

(Preventive Medicine, Wellness and Readiness Service)

A Letter of Health and Wellness

March/April 2004

CANCER AWARENESS

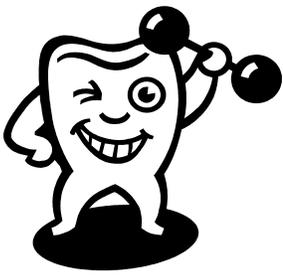
March is Cancer Awareness Month



Good Health

A new study, from the Center for Disease Control states that lack of exercise and poor nutrition may be as great a health risk as smoking and may pass smoking in causing cancer. Take this Living Smart Quiz, developed by the American Cancer Society. Circle Yes or No next to each questions, then turn the page and keep reading to see how you can keep living smart!

1. I eat at least five servings of vegetables and fruits every day. Yes No
2. I eat at least six servings of bread, rice, pasta, and cereal every day. Yes No
3. I drink reduced-fat or fat-free milk and yogurt, and seldom eat high-fat cheeses. Yes No
4. I rarely eat high-fat meat like bacon, hot dogs, sausage, steak, or ground beef. Yes No
5. I take it easy on high-fat baked goods such as pies, cakes, cookies, sweet rolls, and doughnuts. Yes No
6. I rarely add butter, margarine, oil, sour cream, or mayonnaise to foods when I'm cooking or at the table. Yes No
7. I rarely (less than twice a week) eat fried foods. Yes No
8. I try to maintain a health weight. Yes No
9. I am physically active for at least 30 minutes on most days of the week. Yes No
10. I usually take the stairs instead of waiting for an elevator. Yes No
11. I try to spend most of my free time being active, instead of watching television or sitting at the computer. Yes No
12. I never, or only occasionally, drink alcohol. Yes No



**From The Ft. Huachuca
DENTAC COMMANDER
COL Mark N. McDonald, DMD**

So You Want To Pierce Your Tongue?

Oral piercing can cause pain, swelling, infection, drooling, taste loss, scarring, chipped teeth, and tooth loss. Most dentists discourage oral piercing because of these risks. Regulations vary in each state, so be careful if you decide to get any kind of piercing. To avoid serious infections such as HIV or Hepatitis, make sure that you ask the person performing the piercing about care after the piercing, possible side effects, cleanliness and anything that may concern you. Does the piercer use a fresh needle for every piercing? Some may reuse needles to keep down the cost of the piercing. Make sure they completely sterilize all needles and instruments in an autoclave, which uses extreme heat to sanitize instruments. If they are not prepared to answer your questions in a clear, professional manner, go somewhere else. Also, make sure that they use the right kind of metal, such as surgical-grade stainless steel. Some people have allergic reactions to certain metals, which can lead to further complications.

Chipped teeth

Fractured teeth are a common problem for people with oral piercings. People chip teeth on tongue piercings while eating, sleeping, talking and simply chewing on the jewelry. The fracture can be confined to the enamel of your tooth or may go deep into your tooth, which may require a root canal or extraction.

Possible infections

Any infection can be serious. See your dentist at the first sign of a problem. It is not unusual for the tongue to swell after being punctured, but in some cases the tongue becomes infected and swells so much that it can cut off your breathing. In rare cases, doctors may pass a breathing tube through a patient's nose until such an infection passes. Dentists are learning that oral infections can lead to infections in other parts of the body. Your mouth has high levels of bacteria. When you puncture any part of the oral cavity, these bacteria may find its way into your bloodstream. Bacteria can reach your heart and cause a variety of health problems.

How do I maintain my piercing?

Once your tongue has been pierced, it will take three to four weeks to heal. Barring complications, you will be able to remove the jewelry for short periods of time without the hole closing. Some suggest that you remove the jewelry to protect your teeth every time you eat or sleep. Some parlors sell plugs that you can place in the hole, which should allow you to remove the jewelry for as long as necessary. The piercer will place a larger, starter 'barbell' in your tongue to give it enough room to heal when your tongue swells. If you decide to keep the piercing, make sure to get a smaller barbell after the swelling goes down, which will be less likely to get in the way of your teeth and more difficult for you to chew on.

Keep it clean

Keep your piercing clean. Use an antiseptic mouthwash after every meal and brush the jewelry the same as you would your teeth. After the tongue has healed, take the piercing out every night and brush it as you would your teeth to remove any unseen plaque. Consider removing the piercing before eating, sleeping or strenuous activity. If you have any questions about how to keep your mouth healthy, ask your dentist. Also, remember to brush and floss a minimum of twice a day and see your dentist for regular checkups.



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PREVENTING FALLS AMONG SENIORS

Falls are not just the result of getting older. Many falls can be prevented. Falls are usually caused by a number of things. By changing some of these things, you can lower your chances of falling.

You can reduce your chances of falling by doing these things:

1. Begin a regular exercise program.

Exercise is one of the most important ways to reduce your chances of falling. It makes you stronger and helps you feel better. Exercises that improve balance and coordination (like Tai Chi) are the most helpful.

Lack of exercise leads to weakness and increases your chances of falling.

Ask your doctor or health care worker about the best type of exercise program for you.

2. Make your home safer.

About half of all falls happen at home. To make your home safer:

- Remove things you can trip over (such as papers, books, clothes, and shoes) from stairs and places where you walk.
- Remove small throw rugs or use double-sided tape to keep the rugs from slipping.
- Keep items you use often in cabinets you can reach easily without using a step stool.
- Have grab bars put in next to your toilet and in the tub or shower.
- Use non-slip mats in the bathtub and on shower floors.
- Improve the lighting in your home. As you get older, you need brighter lights to see well. Lam shades or frosted bulbs can reduce glare.
- Have handrails and lights put in on all staircases.
- Wear shoes that give good support and have thin non-slip soles. Avoid wearing slippers and athletic shoes with deep treads.

3. Have your health care provider review your medicines.

Have your doctor or pharmacist look at all the medicines you take (including ones that don't need prescriptions, such as cold medicines). As you get older, the way some medicines work in your body can change. Some medicines, or combinations of medicines, can make you drowsy or light-headed, which can lead to a fall.

4. Have your vision checked.

Have your eyes checked by an eye doctor. You may be wearing the wrong glasses or have a condition such as glaucoma or cataracts that limits your vision. Poor vision can increase your chances of falling.