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A complimentary publication from
PRIMEWEST HEALTH'S
Disease Management/
Chronic Care Improvement Program

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inform yourself

PrimeWest Health Wants You to Know: You're Not Alone

As you read through this issue of *Inform Yourself*, we want one message to come through loud and clear: you are not alone. What we mean by that is that *millions* of people suffer from chronic diseases like asthma, Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD), depression, diabetes, and heart disease and/or high blood pressure. Having a long-term illness can be isolating. That feeling can sometimes be caused by feeling like no one else has to deal with the same issues you do. You might not see other people in your day-to-day life who have to check their blood sugar levels or use a rescue inhaler. But the fact is that those people are out there. You're not the only one—not even close to it!

PrimeWest Health is committed to working with you to help you manage your health. Care Management, one of the programs we provide, lets us partner with you and your health care providers to make sure you get the services you need. Your care manager can do the following:

- ☐ Help you when you have questions about your health care or prescriptions
- ☐ Schedule medical appointments as needed
- ☐ Promote good health and practices that may prevent problems
- ☐ Help arrange services you need to stay safe and healthy at home, depending on your benefit set

Your care manager can also play a valuable role in connecting you with education and community resources. Your care manager may know about support groups you can join. These groups can be a great place to share information. Plus, just being around people who share the same health issues you do can help you feel like part of a community—and that you're not alone.

PrimeWest Health encourages you to take advantage of our Care Management program. Let your care manager know when or how he/she can help you get the care and services you need. If you do not know who your care manager is, call Member Services at **1-866-431-0801** (toll free).

We hope you find the information in this issue useful. We also hope you will take comfort in knowing that you do not have to go through anything alone.

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Asthma, COPD, and Spring Cleaning

Does spring have you thinking about spring cleaning? Do you look forward to this annual project or dread it? Either way, it should be done—especially if you have Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD) or asthma.

Keeping a clean house is especially important for people with COPD and asthma because things like dust, mold, and pet dander can build up in your home. These things can trigger asthma attacks and make your COPD worse. And, if left unchecked, these things can also lead to unwanted pests in your home (which, you guessed it—can make your breathing problems still worse!). Sounds pretty bad, right? But before you rush out to get that broom and dustpan, take a few moments to carefully plan your cleaning.

The things you need to get rid of—dust, mold, pet dander, and pests—are triggers for many people. That means being near them can cause unpleasant side effects. Unfortunately, getting rid of these things through cleaning means you need to get near them. So, cleaning can be a problem. What's more, many household cleaners can sometimes cause flare-ups. So what should you do? The first thing to do is remember you're not stuck in this alone. There are people and products to help you.

Keeping a clean house is especially important for people with COPD and asthma because things like dust, mold, and pet dander can build up in your home.



If you can, ask a friend, neighbor, or family member who doesn't suffer from asthma or COPD to help you clean. Explain the problem and offer to do something for them in return if you can. You might be surprised how many people are willing to help!

If you do clean your own home, you're not alone there, either. Because so many people are irritated by the chemicals used in cleaning products such as ammonia, bleach, and anything else that gives off fumes, some companies have started making alternatives that are more lung-friendly. Read labels carefully and see if you can find a "non-toxic" cleaner to use.

These "non-toxic" cleaners can sometimes be a little more expensive than regular cleaning products. But, don't worry. You can make cleaning products that work just as well out of things you probably have at home. A mixture of baking soda, vinegar, and water is sometimes all it takes to do the trick!

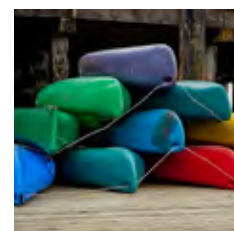
While you're cleaning, be sure to wear a mask. It will offer protection against the dust and other triggers that get stirred up during cleaning.

Another suggestion is to make sure the room where you are cleaning has a source of fresh air. Try opening a window while you clean. It's also important to only use one cleaning product at a time. The fumes from some products may interact with each other in ways that can be bad for everyone.

Follow these tips to cut down on asthma and COPD flare-ups while cleaning. Then sit back, relax, and breathe easy in your clean home.



Asthma & Diabetes CAMPS



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It's almost summer camp season! If you haven't made plans yet, consider sending your child to asthma or diabetes camp. These camps are an excellent opportunity for your child to have fun while learning about his/her disease and how to live with it. What's more, your child will learn he/she is not alone because the camps are filled with kids who have similar health concerns.

These camps can be a valuable part of helping kids learn to manage their asthma and diabetes and that's why PrimeWest Health wants to help. We will cover all registration fees for qualified camps for children who are PrimeWest Health members when camp begins.

The following are qualified asthma camps:

- **Camp Superkids** – An overnight camp for youth ages 7 – 15. Held June 28 – July 3 in Loretto, MN.
- **Camp We-No-Wheeze Central** – An overnight camp for youth ages 7 – 13. Held August 15 – 17 in Annandale, MN.

Camp Healthy U is the qualified weight management camp. It is an overnight camp for youth ages 10 – 14. It is held June 14 – 19 in Loretto, MN. This camp is specifically for youth who have a body mass index (BMI) higher than the 85th percentile for their age and gender. The camp can help you determine if your child falls into this category. Call Camp Healthy U at **1-866-937-9622** (toll free).

The following are qualified diabetes camps:

- **Camp Daypoint** – A day camp for kids ages 5 – 9. Held August 17 – 21, 9 a.m. – 3:30 p.m. in Hudson, WI.
- **Camp Needlepoint** – An overnight camp for youth ages 8 – 16. Held August 16 – 22 or August 23 – 29 in Hudson, WI.
- **Camp Sioux** – An overnight camp for youth ages 8 – 15. Held June 7 – 12 or June 14 – 19 in Park River, ND. There is also a "camp sampler" program for youth ages 8 – 10 held June 7 – 10. A day camp is also offered for kids ages 5 – 9 and their parents on June 16.
- **Camp Sweet Life** – A day camp for kids ages 5 – 7 and an overnight camp for youth ages 8 – 15. Held August 9 – 12 in Madison Lake, MN.

If you have a different camp in mind, give PrimeWest Health a call at **1-866-431-0801** (toll free). We may be able to coordinate with the camp and cover the cost.



PrimeWest Health also wants to help with transportation to camps. If you arrange transportation through your county's Social/Human/Family Services office, PrimeWest Health will take care of the cost. We cannot, however, reimburse you for transportation you provide. That means if you drive your child to and/or from camp, we can't pay you back for mileage. If you need the number of your county's Social/Human/Family Services office, call Member Services at **1-866-431-0801** (toll free).

If your child is eligible for camp, you should get more information in the mail at least 2 weeks before the camp starts. If you do not get more information, but you think your child is eligible, call Jennifer at **1-888-588-4420 ext. 5351** (toll free).

Let us help your child have a fun—and educational—summer!

Spring Has Sprung! **STILL DEPRESSED?**

Now that spring is here, it may feel like there are signs of happiness everywhere you look. Flowers are in bloom and the sun is shining, and it may seem like people are going about their daily business with an extra spring in their step. You would love to feel this way, but you don't. And the fact that you feel depressed while everyone else seems happy can make you feel even more depressed. The pressure to be "out there" with everyone else can be overwhelming. Although many of us associate depression with the winter months, a lot of people suffer from depression in the spring.

One reason that people may find their depression worse in the spring has to do with change. Any kind of change, such as a shift in the weather, can cause anxiety. And that anxiety can lead to deepened depression. Your body also goes through a change with the arrival of spring. Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD) has been well documented in winter months—the sun goes away and our hormone levels change. But SAD can happen in reverse during the spring. After going so long without sun, our hormones change again once the sun comes back out.

Allergies can play another role in springtime depression. In fact, people who suffer from allergies seem to be at a higher risk of depression. Allergies can cause headaches, fatigue, and upset your sleep schedule. All of this can lead to a depressed mood.

Pressure to feel good, mental and physical changes due to the change in season, and allergies can all play a role in making your spring less than happy. If you are depressed, don't *avoid* seeking treatment because you think you shouldn't be feeling the way you do. Talk to your health care provider. He/she may be able to recommend therapy or counseling or prescribe medication to help you cope. He/she can also put you in touch with support groups where you can talk with other people who are experiencing the same or similar symptoms.

And, remember, if you ever have thoughts of suicide or harming yourself or others, call **911** or **1-800-SUICIDE** (toll free). If you don't feel comfortable talking on the phone, you can always text TXT4Life. When you text "Life" to **61222**, a trained counselor will respond to your text. If the counselor feels there is immediate danger, he/she will contact local emergency services.

This spring, take time to think about your feelings. Know that you are not alone. Seek treatment and be gentle with yourself.



Symptoms of depression can include the following:

- Sadness, irritability, anxiety, or anger
- Tiredness or lack of energy
- Change in sleep patterns (sleeping too much or not being able to sleep)
- Noticeable weight gain or loss
- Withdrawal or inability to concentrate or focus
- Aches and pains that don't go away and seem to have no cause
- Feeling hopeless, helpless, and worthless
- Thoughts of death or suicide

The Highs and Lows of Diabetes and Sleep

If you have diabetes, you may have experienced a high blood sugar reading when you wake up in the morning. On the other hand, you may have experienced a low blood sugar reading.



Waking up with either of these readings can be scary. That's why it's important to be informed. This article is for people who take insulin to control their diabetes. If you do not take insulin and have these symptoms, talk to your health care provider. And, of course anyone with any concerns about their diabetes control or symptoms should do the same.

Morning highs...

A high blood sugar reading in the morning can be the result of something called the "dawn phenomenon." Your body releases hormones between approximately 3 – 8 a.m. in order to prepare your body to wake up. These hormones make your body less sensitive to insulin. Unfortunately, these hormones are released at the time when your nighttime insulin is likely starting to wear off, which worsens the effect.

Another reason you might experience a high blood sugar reading in the morning is due to the "Somogyi effect." This term is used to describe high morning blood sugar that happens after an episode of low blood sugar. It can happen if you take too much insulin before bed or if you don't eat enough before bed.

If you experience high morning readings, be sure to talk to your health care provider. He/she may recommend adjusting your medications and/or increasing your physical activity (this will help you better manage your blood sugar in general). You may also want to talk to your health care provider about changing your diet.

....and lows

A low blood sugar reading in the morning can be the result of high physical activity during the day and/or before bed. Another cause could be taking too much insulin too late in the evening or just taking too much overall. It can also be caused by skipping your evening meal or not eating enough.

Just like with high morning readings, if you have low morning blood sugar, you should talk to your health care provider. He/she will make sure you are injecting insulin the right way and may consider changing the kind or amount of insulin you take.

To treat low blood sugar right away, you should eat or drink something that has 15 grams of carbohydrates, such as the following:

- 3 glucose tablets
- ½ cup of fruit juice or non-diet soda pop
- 5 or 6 hard candies
- 1 tablespoon of sugar, plain or dissolved in water
- 1 tablespoon of honey

Wait 15 minutes and recheck your blood sugar levels. If it's still low, repeat the process above.

Getting your day off to a good start by having a good blood sugar reading is important. Empower yourself by knowing what causes high or low readings so you can work to prevent them from being a common occurrence.

Sources: Everyday Health Media, LLC; MedlinePlus; WebMD

Don't Forget to BROWN BAG IT!

PrimeWest Health encourages you to Brown Bag It. What do we mean by that? What we mean is that each time you go to a health care appointment, we encourage you to put all the medications you take in a brown bag and take it with you to your appointment! You should bring all prescription medications, vitamins, over-the-counter, herbal, and alternative medications you take. Why do this? It will help your provider do the following:

- Make sure you are taking the right medications
- Make sure you are taking your medications correctly
- Make sure none of your medications react with each other

Plus, it can be a good “jumping off point” for you to ask questions about your medications. You can find more information about brown bagging it and a medication record to help you keep track of your medications on our website. Go to www.primewest.org/managing-medications.

Source: Cobb, J. “Brown Bag It! Get a Medication Review for Safety’s Sake,” *For Your Health*, Michigan Pharmacist, May/June 2011, Vol. 49, Issue 3, p. 7.



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Pseudoephedrine: Read the Label

If a medication is sold over-the-counter (OTC), that means it’s safe, right? Generally, this is true. However, if you have certain medical problems such as high blood pressure or if you are pregnant, you need to read warning labels carefully. It is important to make sure the medication is right for *you*. One OTC medication you need to be careful with is pseudoephedrine (sold under the brand names Sudafed®, SudoGest™, Claritin-D® and others). This medication is often used to treat sinus congestion.

Reading the label will tell you if an OTC medication is okay to take with your medical condition. For example, pseudoephedrine may not be safe for pregnant women. This is because it may cause birth defects when used during the first trimester. The label will also tell you that it may cause increased blood pressure and heart rate. This can be a problem if you have uncontrolled high blood pressure or heart problems. This side effect could cause a heart attack or stroke.

Pseudoephedrine can also cause problems in people who take thyroid medication. In addition, it can be a troublemaker in people who have a history of seizures and people who have kidney problems or glaucoma.

The good news is that there are OTC medications made specifically for people with certain conditions. Reading the label will tell you whether or not it is safe to take.

Ask your health care provider or pharmacist if you have any questions about how an OTC medication could affect you. He/she can tell you which OTC medications you can use safely.

Show Your Heart Some Love: Try Something New!

Spring is a great time for fresh starts! If you're looking for something new and heart healthy to freshen up your diet, we have a few suggestions that you may not have thought of: beets, hummus, and dark chocolate. These may seem like odd choices, but all have been shown to have positive health benefits for your heart...and we're betting that you may not have tried them lately!

Beets are an excellent source of folate, potassium, fiber, and riboflavin. Riboflavin plays a key role in building your body's healthy red blood cells. And, a study by Kansas State University has shown that the nitrate found in beetroot can increase blood flow to muscles by 38 percent! So give beets a try! We've included a recipe below to get you started.

Looking for a healthy alternative to dips or sandwich spreads? Hummus, made from chickpeas, olive oil, lemon juice, and salt, could be just the thing. The olive oil in hummus is rich in healthy fats that contribute to heart health. And, the high levels of protein and iron in

hummus can help curb hunger and give you extra energy. It can be used in place of mayonnaise in salad dishes, tastes great on bagels, and works well as a sandwich topping. Hummus comes in many different flavors, from spicy to sweet, so you're sure to find a flavor you love.

Chocolate isn't typically thought of as a healthy snack, but research shows that cocoa may reduce risk factors for heart disease. The trick is finding the right kind of chocolate. Look for dark chocolate that is at least 70 percent cacao.

This will ensure it has the greatest amount of the cholesterol-lowering compounds that make it good for you. But, as with everything, remember to enjoy dark chocolate in moderation—about 1 ounce per serving.

Eating healthy doesn't have to be a chore. Little changes, like adding beets, hummus, or dark chocolate to your diet, can have positive health benefits for your heart and taste great at the same time!



Sources: Harvest of the Month, *Fitness*, Cleveland Clinic

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Pink Party Salad



Servings: 6

Serving Size: 1 cup

Ingredients:

- 4 potatoes (washed and cut in half)
- 3 cups beets, cooked (peeled and diced into 1 inch peices)
- 1 cup green peas, fresh or frozen, cooked
- 3 eggs, hard boiled
- 1 apple
- 1 tsp. lemon juice
- 2 Tbsp. olive oil
- 3 Tbsp. vinegar
- 1 Tbsp. sugar



Directions:

1. Place beets in a large pot of boiling salted water. Reduce heat to a simmer and cook until beets are tender when pierced with a knife, 15 to 20 minutes; drain.
2. Boil the potatoes in 2 cups of water in a deep kettle. Cover and cook over moderate heat for about 20 minutes, until the potatoes are tender.
3. When thoroughly cool, dice potatoes and place in a big bowl.
4. Add diced beets and mix with the potatoes.
5. Set aside 1/4 cup of peas for garnishing and add the rest to the bowl.
6. Save 1 egg to use as a garnish. Chop the rest and add to the bowl.
7. Peel the skin off the apple and remove the core. Cut the apple into small pieces, place in a small bowl and sprinkle with lemon juice. Add apple to the salad.
8. Add the vinegar, olive oil and sugar.
9. Mix thoroughly. Chill and serve.

Nutrition Facts:

Calories 190, Total fat 5g, Saturated fat .5g, Sodium 90mg, Protein 5g, Carbohydrates 34g, Fiber 5g

Source: U.S. Department of Agriculture

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Health and wellness or prevention information



Reduce Reuse Recycle

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Member Services 1-866-431-0801

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This information is available in other forms to people with disabilities by calling Member Services at **1-866-431-0801**. To reach us through Minnesota Relay for TTY, Voice, ASCII, or Hearing Carry Over, call **1-800-627-3529** or **711**; for Speech-to-Speech relay service, call **1-877-627-3848**. Calls to all of these numbers are free.