March is National Nutrition Month

March is a good time to make a resolution to choose healthy food. When people make the right food choices they decrease their risk of obesity, heart disease, diabetes, arthritis and other chronic health problems. Due to a poor diet and physical inactivity, our nation is facing an epidemic of chronic disease. The Otsego County Health Department recommends eating a balanced diet that includes whole grains, low-fat and fat free dairy and eating five to nine servings of vegetables and fruit every day. People should meet this goal by eating whole fruits as fruit juice loses vitamins, minerals and fiber. Fruit juice is also higher in sugar and calories. When choosing juice make sure it is 100% juice with no added sugar and limit to 4 to 12 ounces a day based on age. A healthy diet combined with physical activity is the key to good health. For more information call Otsego County Department of Health at (607) 547-4387. A good website to visit is http://www.preventioninstitute.org/sa

March is Also National Colorectal Cancer Awareness Month:

Beat Colon Cancer Before it Beats You!

By Pat Crispell, RN

Cancer of the colon and rectum is the second leading cause of cancer related deaths in the United States for both men and women. People living in the U.S. are at a greater risk to develop colorectal cancer because our diet is high in red meat and lacks fiber. Through proper screening, early detection and immediate treatment, colorectal cancer can be prevented. Colorectal cancer almost always develops from precancerous polyps (abnormal growths). Colon cancer can be present for several years before symptoms

A good website for family medical information: http://familydoctor.org/

Understanding Medical Language: Simple is Better

Improving your health is as easy as “Ask Me 3”

(NAPSA)—Imagine you are at the doctor’s office. After your exam, your doctor says you have “diabetic neuropathy,” “hypertension” or “coronary disease.” How do you react? Do you know what this means? What if, instead, your doctor says you have “nerve problems,” “high blood pressure,” or “heart disease?” You may recognize these terms, but do you know how they will affect your health? Do you know how to treat them? Do you understand what changes you have to make in your life?

If your health care visits leave you with more questions than answers, you are not alone. Most people want health information that is written in plain language, and easy to understand and use. Medical words are hard for many people to understand—no matter how much education they have. Tell your doctors, nurses and pharmacists when you do not understand the information they give you. It may help you learn how to better take care of yourself and your family.

You may not be able to change the way your health care providers talk. But you can take steps to help you get the answers you need:

1. Don’t be shy—ask questions. Make a list of questions to bring with you to your doctor so you do not forget to ask them. The Partnership for Clear Health Communication—a team of national health care groups—has set up the “Ask Me 3” program. “Ask Me 3” suggests three simple but important questions people can ask their health care providers:
   • What is my main problem?
   • What do I need to do?
   • Why is it important for me to do this

See "colon cancer" on the next page…

See "ask me 3" on the next page…

MISSION STATEMENT

“The mission of the Otsego County Public Health Department is to respond to the public health challenges in a changing environment. We employ current public health knowledge and best practices to control disease, prevent injuries, promote and encourage healthy behaviors and assure the accessibility of quality health services. We partner with the state health department, county health departments, local health care providers, community organizations and the residents of Otsego County in building a healthier and safer community.”
“ask me 3” continued…

If you think of more questions after your visit, write them down. Call the doctor’s office when you return to your home or job to get answers to your questions.

2. **Bring a family member or friend.** This person may be able to help you take notes and hear the provider’s instructions – in case you miss something.

3. **Speak up.** Tell your health care provider if you do not understand the information he or she has given you. Ask him or her to repeat the instructions until you know what you need to do.

4. **Repeat instructions.** After the health care provider gives you instructions, repeat them back to him or her. Make sure you’ve got them right.

5. **Ask for more information.** If your provider says you have a health problem, ask for extra information—such as a hotline number or brochure. It may help you figure out what is happening to you and how to treat it.

Work closely with your health care providers. They can advise you on ways to lead a healthy, active life. Try to understand all your medical information. This way you can be a more active partner in decisions about your and your family’s health.

For more on how to talk with your health care providers you can go to the Partnership for Clear Health Communication Web site at www.AskMe3.org. It has information on the “Ask Me 3” program and how it can help you. It also has a checklist to help you get ready for your next health care visit.

**DID YOU KNOW THAT DENTAL CARE IS AVAILABLE TO UNDERINSURED OR MEDICAID RECIPIENTS? CHECK THE SCHEDULE BELOW AND CALL 1-877-24-TOOTH FOR AN APPT.**

---

March 2007

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sunday</th>
<th>Monday</th>
<th>Tuesday</th>
<th>Wednesday</th>
<th>Thursday</th>
<th>Friday</th>
<th>Saturday</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sidney Head Start</td>
<td>Cobleskill Wal-mart</td>
<td>Richfield Springs</td>
<td>Richfield Springs</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>12 Sidney Head Start</td>
<td>13 Community Center, Hobart</td>
<td>14 BOCES Masonville</td>
<td>15 OFC Norwich</td>
<td>16 Richfield Springs</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>19 Delaware Opps</td>
<td>20 Community Center, Hobart</td>
<td>21 Unadilla</td>
<td>22 Oneonta</td>
<td>23 SCCAP Cobleskill</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>26 Delaware Opps</td>
<td>27 Community Center, Hobart</td>
<td>28 Bainbridge</td>
<td>29 OFC Norwich</td>
<td>30 Richfield Springs</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

**UPCOMING HEALTH EVENTS**

**Immunization Clinics:** You must pre-register prior to the clinic date – call 547-4230. Children receiving immunizations must bring shot records. All immunization clinics are 1:00 to 3:00 pm.

- March 5 Oneonta Clinic
- March 12 Cooperstown
- March 19 Oneonta Clinic
- March 26 Cooperstown

**Rabies Vaccination Free Clinic:** Vaccination is required for ALL dogs and cats three (3) months of age or older in Otsego County. The incidence of confirmed positive rabies cases in raccoons, skunks and bats continues in our county. Clinics are 6:00 to 8:00 pm.

- March 6 Meadows Office Complex

**Blood Pressure Clinics:**

- March 5 11-12:00 Cherry Valley Senior Meal Site
- March 7 11-12:00 Richfield Springs Vets Club
- March 21 12-1:00 Nader Towers Wellness Center

---

**Colon cancer” continued…**

( constipation, bleeding, abdominal pain) will develop.

Screening tests can find precancerous polyps so they can be removed before they become cancerous. Screening tests can also find colorectal cancer early, when treatment works best.

When should you begin to get screened? Generally you should start soon after turning 50 and at regular intervals. You may need to be tested earlier or more often if your family history warrants it, i.e. a close relative had colorectal polyps or colorectal cancer or you have inflammatory bowel disease.

A simple screening test, done in the privacy of your own home is the fecal occult blood test (FOBT). The test checks for hidden blood in the stool. A small amount of stool is placed on a test card from three consecutive bowel movements. The cards are then sent to a lab to be checked for blood.

Currently FOBT kits are available FREE from the Otsego County Department of Health if you qualify. If you are over 50, have not done a screening test in the past twelve months, have no health insurance or a high co-pay, or your insurance does not cover screening, or if you have medicare, you will qualify.

Please call Pat Crispell at (607) 547-6421 for more details and a FREE GIFT!