

January 2008 Newsletter

Medication Update - Non-Steroidal Pain Relievers (NSAIDs):

Ibuprofen (Advil, Motrin), Naproxen (Aleve), and Celebrex are commonly used NSAIDs. This category does not include aspirin and Tylenol (acetaminophen). NSAIDs are often taken quite casually and their risks are not appreciated. If you frequently use Ibuprofen and the like, remember that these drugs often:

- raise your blood pressure,
- increase the long-term risk of kidney and liver disease
- cause ulceration of the esophagus, stomach and duodenum,
- contribute to congestive heart failure
- lead to increased fluid retention and edema, often evident as ankle swelling
- increase the risk of heart attacks (Naproxen (Aleve) may be safer in this regard.)
- cause chronic headaches

Before taking these medications, think twice. Do you really need a pain medicine at all? Would a little aspirin and/or acetaminophen work as well? These last two drugs have their own risks, of course, but in moderate doses may be better choices for many people. Many other alternatives are available, and can be determined on a case-by-case basis.

If you do need to take an NSAID, use the lowest effective dose for the shortest time that you can. For those with known heart disease, naproxen (Aleve) might be a better choice than Ibuprofen. Many people see some magic in the idea of an 'anti-inflammatory' medicine: however, keep

in mind that inflammation is often integral to our body's healing process, and we should think twice before interfering with that process. As with most drugs, caution should be the watchword when it comes to using NSAIDs.

Telephone Consultation

Have a problem but don't think you need to come into the office? For some situations a telephone consultation may be a reasonable alternative to an office visit, and save you a lot of time. Telephone consultations may be scheduled just like office visits, and if they are under five minutes there is no charge.

Insurance Update

Are you insured by Blue Cross Blue Shield (BCBS)? We are happy to continue billing BCBS for your visits but we ask that you pay at the time of visit, and then keep the check that BCBS sends directly to you. By paying at your time of visit, your bill will be discounted by 15%.

Please note that Dr. Hahn and Dr. Hassell are not contracted with any health insurance companies. This means they are "out of network" providers on all health plans. To find out what level of coverage will be provided from your health insurance plan, ask your insurer what coverage they offer for visits to a "non participating" or "out of network" provider.

Would you like to pay your bill by Visa or MasterCard? Please call our billing department if you have questions or would like to make payment on your account.

Rx reminders

Remember that the first step in getting a prescription refilled is to call your pharmacy, even if the prescription states 'No Refill.' The pharmacy will then fax our office with the refill request, which includes all the prescription details. We will return the fax to the pharmacy the same day. (Your pharmacy may tell you that the process will take four days, but that is not the case with our office.)

The Cookbook

For those of you who have asked about buying cookbooks in bulk, they are available in cases of 20 for \$300, which reduces the price to \$15 per book. (The regular price is \$20.)

For anyone unfamiliar with *Good Food, Great Medicine*, the book is self published and simply presented, and was written by sister-and-brother team Mea and Miles Hassell. It offers an overview of the evidence supporting the case for a Mediterranean-style whole food diet, and suggests ways to translate that information into practical day-to-day living, cooking, and eating.

Tips for a happier 2008

Think about making a fresh start this new year with your eating habits. (Except for your birthday, when you should be able to eat anything you like.) No improvement is too small. You may even be surprised to find your tastes changing along with your diet.

Eat less fast food. Eat more slow food. Watch TV less. Shut down your computer sooner. Get more sleep. Get more exercise. (It is a leap year, after all.)

Upcoming Speaking Events

1/14/2008 – *Nutrition Elective* at OHSU (Miles Hassell MD)
(*This is a medical student audience*)

2/7/2008 - *Myth Busters* at Providence St Vincent Medical Center.
Discussing common misconceptions about which health choices matter and which ones do not. For example, are eggs and butter bad for you?
(Miles Hassell MD)
(*This talk is open to the public and free. Stay tuned for more information as the date approaches.*)

2/12/2008 – *Management of High Triglycerides* at OHSU Lipid Journal Club (*This is a physician audience*)