

The Liker Health Report

Keeping People Focused on Staying Fit & Healthy



The Liker Health Report is a quarterly publication intended to raise awareness of health-related issues and to encourage readers to take charge of their health and live healthier, more fulfilling lives.

Winter 2007

The Heart of the Matter: SMOKING CESSATION

If your New Year's resolution was to quit smoking, there's a new study to show why you should stick it out. A 20-year study of male and female Norwegian smokers showed that simply cutting back on the number of cigarettes smoked wasn't sufficient to reduce the risk of death from heart disease, lung cancer, and other tobacco related cancers. Even smokers who cut their number of daily cigarettes in half did not show any health benefit when compared to the smokers who continued at their regular quantity.

At the beginning of the study, 51,000 participants were between twenty and thirty-four years of age and smoked more than fifteen cigarettes per day. Researchers initially assessed their risk of developing cardiovascular disease and twice during the twenty year follow-up. The goal of the study was to determine whether the smokers who cut their cigarette consumption by at least half (or more) would be more likely to be alive the end of the study.

The researchers found that there was an equal chance of death from cardiovascular disease, lung cancer, chronic bronchitis or emphysema for all smokers regardless of how many cigarettes they smoked. The only risk reduction was observed in people who had quit completely. Additionally, the results were the same for women and men. The study was significant because many smokers and health providers erroneously believe that simply cutting back will improve their health and decrease their risk of premature death.

Smoking & Impotence

Male smokers are more likely to suffer from impotence. Long-term smoking causes blockage in the arteries that supply blood to the penis. Smoking can also worsen existing cardiovascular problems that lead to impotence.

If dying prematurely isn't sufficient to convince some people to quit smoking, there's growing evidence that smoking affects reproductive health and child-bearing. Female smokers are more likely to be infertile and the amount of time it takes to become pregnant is longer than for non-smokers. Smoking also seems to accelerate the loss of eggs and may induce menopause sooner than normal. Male smokers have a lower sperm count, reduced motility (sperm swim slower), and higher incidence of abnormally shaped sperm. Smokers who undergo in vitro fertilization are less likely to become pregnant even if they use a donated egg. Smoking makes the uterus less receptive to the embryo, thereby decreasing the probability that it will implant.

A recent Australian study showed that pregnant women who smoke are more likely than non-smokers to have children that will take up the habit in their teenage years. Researchers believe that the nicotine passes through the placenta and acts on the developing fetus' brain as if to "pre-program" it to take up smoking later in life.

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Your Lifestyle: **SLEEP** *by Steve Jordan*

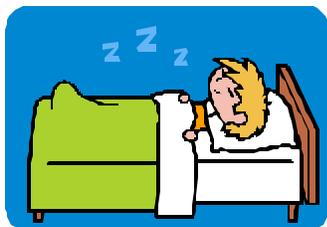
Are You Getting Enough Sleep?

One of the most important factors that I address when coaching my clients toward optimal health is the importance of getting enough sleep. Today we live in a world of late night TV and bright lights that make it easy to forget that our ancestors that we share the same physiology with, lived by the light and dark cycles of day and night. Despite the availability of 24-hour, 365 days a year light, our bodies are still tuned into the natural rhythm of daily and seasonal light/dark cycles. So let's get tuned in and turned off!

Circadian cycle is a biological day and night cycle that occurs about every 24 hours. Circadian comes from Latin words that mean about a day. For most living things, especially humans the day-night cycle is broken into periods of activity and periods of rest. The disruption of this natural phenomenon can be linked to many physiological imbalances such as adrenal stress, weight gain, depression, fatigue, and imbalances in hormones.

Much of the body's healing work takes place while you sleep. Without the need to attend to all of the functions of daily life, your immune system and organs of detoxification can focus attention on cleansing and restoration. This is the time when your body does major housecleaning, taking care of wastes that have accumulated during the day and repairing cellular damage.

Get into the habit of going to bed early, before 10 PM. The earlier you go to bed, the better. For the most restful and restorative sleep, make sure that your sleeping environment is as healthful as possible. Use natural cotton bedding to allow your body to breathe, and wear comfortable, loose cotton sleepwear. Keep your window open at least a few inches year round to provide plenty of fresh air.



Avoid eating for at least two hours before sleeping. This ensures that your body's energy can be used for healing and rejuvenation instead of for digestion. If you do want to eat something before bed, a piece of fruit is a good choice. Fruit is cleansing and is quickly digested. If you have difficulty getting to sleep, there are a number of factors to consider that can help you to get a good night's rest.

Tips for Getting to Sleep on Time

1. Get to sleep by 10:30 p.m. Make the necessary adjustments in your schedule to be asleep by 10:30. Going to bed at 10:30 and reading or watching T.V. until 11:00 defeats the purpose.
2. Minimize your exposure to bright lights when the sun goes down or especially 2-3 hours before going to bed at 10:30. Use low wattage light bulbs or candles to light your way.
3. Sleep in a dark room.
4. Eating sweets at night can disrupt your sleep cycle. If it is your cheat day have your sweet earlier in the day to avoid this sleep cycle disruption.
5. Avoid stimulants like coffee, sugar and nicotine after the late afternoon.
6. Drink plenty of water. When dehydrated the body responds as though it is experiencing stress and can produce those stress hormones which can keep you awake.
7. Exercise! Moderate exercises lasting 20 to 30 minutes three or four times a week will help you sleep better and give you more energy. Exercise in the morning or afternoon, not close to bedtime.
8. If you are still having trouble getting a good night sleep after implementing these tips consider consulting with your physician to find other natural or medicinal alternatives.

SWEET DREAMS!

Playing It Safe: LIVER & HEPATITIS B

Hepatitis B is a disease that causes inflammation of the liver (*hepa* = liver; *itis* = inflammation). It is caused by the hepatitis B virus (HBV), and it affects more than 300 million people worldwide. One in twenty Americans have been infected with HBV. An initial infection poses little risk to one's health; approximately 90-95% of adults who contract HBV will recover on their own without any complications. The other 5-10% live with the virus in their bodies for the remainder of their lives. Many of these chronically infected people, also called hepatitis B carriers, live relatively normal lives; however, some have an increased risk of future complications. Chronic liver inflammation can damage liver cells which leads to cirrhosis (scarring) of the liver and to liver cancer. As the leading cause of liver cancer, chronic hepatitis B kills nearly 6,000 Americans every year.

Hepatitis B is spread through contaminated blood, semen, vaginal secretions (including menstrual bleeding), and saliva. Unprotected sexual contact -- vaginal intercourse, oral sex, and anal intercourse -- with someone who has hepatitis B is the most common mode of transmitting the virus. Sharing syringes, needles, or personal hygiene items with an infected person also contribute to the spread of HBV. HBV can be transmitted by contaminated syringes for intravenous drug abuse, needles for acupuncture, tattooing, or body piercing, shaving razors and toothbrushes, as well as human bites. Less common today are blood transfusions, which prior to 1975 was a common mode of transmission.

HBV is a very hardy virus that can survive up to seven days on a dry surface. This makes hepatitis extremely contagious. In fact, hepatitis B is one hundred times more contagious than HIV. In the United States alone, there are 1-2 million carriers (one of every 240 people) and 300,000 new infections each year.

The symptoms of hepatitis B typically appear within two to six months after contact with an infected person. Approximately fifty percent of people do not experience symptoms, and many of those who do have symptoms attribute them to the "flu". Infected people can transmit the virus even if they do not have any symptoms; the person they transmit HBV

to may or may not have symptoms either. This is why hepatitis B is often referred to as the "silent infection".

Hepatitis B is the only sexually transmitted disease that is 100% preventable by a method other than sexual abstinence. A vaccine provides effective protection against hepatitis B in people who have an elevated risk of contracting the disease. For children today, the hepatitis B vaccine has been added to their routine childhood immunizations. Vaccination is required for admission to some schools.

SYMPTOMS

Fatigue
Fever
Nausea
Vomiting
Poor appetite
Headache
Malaise
Muscle pain
Joint pain
Dark colored urine
Light colored stools
Jaundice

Non-vaccinated people who are exposed to infected blood or other secretions should receive hepatitis B immune globulin within 14 days of exposure to minimize the risk of developing hepatitis B. They should also begin the immunization procedure. People who have a yeast allergy should not be vaccinated, as yeast is used to manufacture the vaccine.

PROTECTING YOURSELF & OTHERS AGAINST HEPATITIS B

- ▶ PRACTICE SAFE SEX.
- ▶ Do not share syringes or needles used for ear piercing or tattooing.
- ▶ Do not share personal hygiene items such as razors, nail clippers, pierced earrings, or toothbrushes.
- ▶ Disinfect areas that have been contaminated by blood, diarrhea, or other body fluids from an infected person.
- ▶ Get immunized.
- ▶ Check with your doctor if your sexual partner has had a previous hepatitis infection
- ▶ Inform your partner(s) and insist he/she/they get tested.
- ▶ Non-immunized people who are sexually active should be tested for HBV.

The Inside Story: **FOODBORNE *E. Coli* O157:H7**

Escherichia coli (*E. coli*) bacteria are a general group of bacteria that live in the intestinal tract of healthy humans and animals. The majority of the bacteria are harmless and actually help the body by absorbing certain vitamins and suppressing the growth of harmful bacteria. But a few strains of *E. coli* can cause serious foodborne infections. The recent *E. coli* outbreaks in fresh produce have once again turned consumers' attention to the issue of food safety. Previous outbreaks have occurred in raw or undercooked hamburgers, lettuce, alfalfa sprouts, unpasteurized milk, apple juice, and apple cider, contaminated well water, and most recently, spinach and carrot juice.



There are several strains of *E. coli* bacteria in the United States, and the most common is called *E. coli* O157:H7. This strain was first identified in 1982, and cattle are the most common source. Therefore, it is

easy to understand how produce is likely to be contaminated by virtue of it being grown in proximity to cattle ranches or fertilized with cattle manure.

E. coli is transmitted to humans by ingesting fecal material from cattle (on produce) or humans who are already infected with *E. coli*. Human-to-human transmission can occur by eating food prepared by an infected individual who has fecal material on his/her hands; swallowing unchlorinated or underchlorinated swimming pool water which contains feces; swimming in sewage-contaminated lake, stream or ocean water; having direct contact with an infected person who may have fecal material on his/her body or clothing; or touching infected animals at a petting zoo.



Did You Know?

Approximately 73,000 Americans are infected with *E. coli* O157:H7 every year and about sixty people die.

Typically, foodborne illnesses such as *E. coli* cause intestinal distress with the toxins that they produce. The *E. coli* O157:H7 toxin can damage the lining of the intestine and cause unpleasant, and sometimes, severe symptoms including abdominal cramps, diarrhea, nausea, vomiting, and a low-grade fever. These symptoms lead to fatigue, dehydration, and general malaise. The onset of symptoms can

SYMPTOMS

- ▶ Severe abdominal cramps
- ▶ Nausea
- ▶ Vomiting
- ▶ Watery or bloody diarrhea
- ▶ Low-grade fever
- ▶ Headache
- ▶ Fatigue

occur anywhere from 24 hours to 5 days after consuming the contaminated food or beverages and may last a few days or up to a week. Most healthy adults recover on their own without treatment; anti-diarrheal medications are not recommended unless prescribed by a physician.

The *E. coli* O157:H7 toxin can also damage the kidneys, leading to hemolytic uremic syndrome (HUS). HUS can in turn, lead to kidney failure and death. This most often affects children, people with compromised immune systems, and the elderly. Patients may require blood transfusions and/or kidney dialysis. If the intestines are severely damaged, a portion may have to be removed. About 1 in 12 people with HUS have long-term complications such as hypertension, seizures, blindness or paralysis.

Other Common *E. coli* Strains

- ▶ Enterotoxigenic *E. coli* (ETEC) is a bacteria strain which typically causes "travelers' diarrhea". It is found in contaminated food and water in developing countries.
- ▶ Enteropathogenic *E. coli* (EPEC) causes persistent diarrhea which lasts 2 weeks or more. It is also more common in developing countries and is transmitted through contaminated water or contact with infected animals.

Preventing Infection

Although some *E. coli* outbreaks are beyond our control, some basic food preparation guidelines can ensure that you and your family remain as healthy as possible. It is equally important to follow any consumer alerts or food recalls issued by the Food & Drug Administration. Discard any food included in the recall or any other food that has come in contact with the product in question.



- ▶ Thoroughly wash your hands with soap and warm water after using the bathroom, changing diapers, or having close contact with children in a day-care setting.
- ▶ Thoroughly wash your hands with soap and warm water before eating.
- ▶ Cook ground beef to an internal temperature of at least 160° F. Never eat raw or undercooked ground beef.
- ▶ Refrigerate foods below 40° F
- ▶ Do not drink unpasteurized milk or fruit juices.
- ▶ Store raw meat separate from ready-to-eat foods and use separate preparation surfaces (i.e., cutting boards) and utensils.
- ▶ Use bleach and hot water to clean raw meat juices from cutting boards
- ▶ Wash your hands thoroughly with soap and water after touching raw meat.
- ▶ Wash fresh fruits and vegetables before eating or cooking.
- ▶ Thaw frozen foods in the refrigerator or in the microwave (not on the kitchen counter).
- ▶ Refrigerate or freeze meat immediately after bringing it home from the market.

Did You Know?



Foodborne diseases cause 5 - 6 billion dollars in medical expenses and lost workplace productivity.

Foodborne Illnesses

Foodborne illnesses result in 325,000 hospitalizations and 5,000 deaths annually in the United States. Doctors and scientists have identified more than 250 different foodborne illnesses caused by bacteria, viruses, and parasites. Humans who become infected by these pathogens become ill as a result of either of the following:

- ▶ The pathogen produces a toxin which causes illness.
- or***
- ▶ The human body reacts to the pathogen itself.

Diarrhea is the hallmark sign of an intestinal infection. It may be caused by the toxin (action) or the body's attempt (reaction) to expel the pathogen.

Researchers believe that there is an interaction between intestinal bacteria, genes, and their human hosts. Some intestinal bacteria are able to recognize that they have entered a human host, and they activate their genetic material which allows them to live in the host and cause disease. As more research is done in this area, doctors will develop new methods for treating foodborne illnesses.

If You Become Ill...

If you develop any symptoms of a foodborne illness, the most important self-care action is to lie down and rest. Drink small sips of water, non-carbonated drinks (such as Gatorade), clear soups, or diluted bouillon to prevent dehydration. Do not drink alcohol or caffeinated beverages as they will act as diuretics. To relieve the headache or muscle aches which may accompany the other symptoms, Tylenol is helpful.

If you are unable to keep fluids down, call your doctor who may prescribe medication to stop the nausea and vomiting. Dehydration can be a serious danger. Infants, children, elderly persons, and persons with weakened immune systems dehydrate rapidly, and so a doctor should be called immediately.

Personal Health: END-OF-LIFE ISSUES

The last issue of The Liker Health Report touched on advance directives and types of end-of-life medical care. This issue will expand on some of the end-of-life issues that terminally ill patients and their families must deal with.

Medical advances of the 20th century have allowed patients to extend their lives beyond what would have been considered impossible a hundred years ago. In a time when the average life expectancy was less than half of what it is today, people typically died rather quickly from infectious diseases and traumatic injuries. Most people didn't live long enough to develop cancer or heart disease, but if they did, their survival time was limited. Diagnosing diseases was not as advanced as it is today, and with less technology patients were often diagnosed in the final stages of their disease. Even with early detection, treatment wasn't always available.

Today, however, with all the modern miracles of science, patients can expect to live longer with a relatively good quality of life. New medications, therapies, and surgical procedures can restore health to people who would have otherwise died fifty or a hundred years ago. Technically speaking, ventilators and other medical devices can keep a person's body alive indefinitely.

The end-of-life issues are very different today. Years ago, terminally ill patients usually lived with their families until they passed away. Today, families are separated by geography, and the dying process is no longer an integral part of family life. As lifestyles changed, more medical care options have become available including residential, hospice, and hospital care.



Discussing issues related to death and dying are a necessary part of health care. Patients who understand the likely outcome of their disease and are well-informed about their options are better able to make decisions about what type of treatment, if any, they would like to undergo. They are usually better equipped to handle the stress when they feel that they have some measure of control over their situation.

TYPES OF MEDICAL CARE

Home Care -- medical care that is provided in a patient's home by professional caregivers; this may include administration of prescription drugs in addition to personal care such as feeding and bathing.

Hospice Care -- end-of-life care that includes symptom relief (i.e., pain relief) for patients who have less than 6 months to live and who have agreed to discontinue life-sustaining measures. Hospice caregivers also provide psychological and social support to the patient and family members. Hospice care can be provided in the patient's home, a hospice facility, or the hospital.

Nursing Home Care -- medical care in a licensed residential facility staffed by nurses and allied health professionals.

Respite Care -- temporary care of the patient so that family members or other caregivers can take a rest or attend to other matters. Respite care can be in the patient's home, in a nursing home, or in a hospice facility and may last days or weeks.

Open dialogue between patient and/or family members and the doctor is crucial to ensuring that the patient's wishes are adhered to and that the quality of life is the best it can be. The doctor will provide a realistic assessment of the patient's prognosis with various treatment options and will inform the patient as to what to expect (pain, side effects, or disability) with each of the treatment options. An advance directive comes into play at this stage of a fatal illness. If the patient does not have an

advance directive, he/she can inform the doctor and family members which care he/she would like to receive (i.e., pain medication) and which care to refuse (i.e., ventilator).

An advance directive can also name a specific individual as the **durable power of attorney for health care**; this person can legally make medical care decisions for the patient should he/she become incapacitated or chose not to fully participate in his/her own care. Some patients do not wish to be involved in the decision making. They may leave the smaller details up to the durable power of attorney or to the doctor. In any case, the patient is allowed to die with as much dignity and as comfortably as possible.

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End-Of-Life Issues

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Decisions regarding *where* a person would prefer to die can also be made. Some people prefer to die in their own home surrounded by loved ones. When death is imminent and no further medical treatment (other than pain management) is requested, patients may be allowed to leave the hospital to go home or to a hospice care facility.

A person's religious, cultural, and personal beliefs about death and dying influence the decision making process. It may be comforting to have a member of the clergy or a spiritual counselor spend time with the patient. These professionals can help resolve the feelings of sadness, despair, or anger that often accompany the dying process.

Preparing for death could be considered a "luxury" as there are many people who die instantly, without having the opportunity to say goodbye to loved ones. Deciding how extensively you want to be involved in your medical care is up to you. Knowing that one has some semblance of control may enable one to die peacefully.

QUESTIONS FOR LOVED ONES*

- ▶ *Will you seek out information about my disease, advance directives, your role as caregivers, and what to expect as I near the end of life?*
- ▶ *Will you respect my wants and needs, even if they're different from what they used to be, or if you don't agree with my choices?*
- ▶ *If I cannot communicate for myself, will you speak for me to make sure that what I've asked for is done?*
- ▶ *Will you care for yourself so that you are not exhausted caring for me?*
- ▶ *Will you stay with me even if the going gets rough?*

*from the National Hospice & Palliative Care Organization



The Medicine Cabinet

Imitrex

Treatment of Migraine Headaches

Generic Name: Sumatriptan (soo-ma-TRIP-tan)

Drug Classification: migraine headache pain reliever

Purpose: treats symptoms of migraine headaches; does not prevent migraines.

Action: targets the nerves and blood vessels believed to trigger migraine headaches.

Dispensing Method: oral tablets or nasal spray taken at the first symptoms of a migraine.

Major Precautions: Imitrex is only to be used at the onset of migraine headache symptoms. It is not to be used routinely and only 1 dose should be taken. Drink plenty of water when taking the tablet. If pain does not ease after the first dose, your doctor may prescribe a second dose with a minimum of 2 hours between doses. No more than 200mg (tablets) or 40 mg (nasal spray) should be taken within a 24 hour period. Imitrex should not be taken within 2 weeks of taking an MAO inhibitor for depression.

Side Effects: drowsiness; dizziness; flushed face; tingling feeling; upset stomach; diarrhea; vomiting; muscle cramps; nasal irritation (if using the nasal spray). If any of the above side effects are bothersome or become worse, notify your physician. **SERIOUS:** chest pain or tightness; rapid heartbeat; breathing difficulty; wheezing; redness, swelling, or itching of the face, lips or eyelids; hives or rash; vision changes; sudden or severe stomach pain. Call your doctor immediately if you experience any of the above side effects.

As with any medication, always follow your doctor's instructions, and if you have any problems, side effects, or questions, follow up with your doctor or pharmacist.



Did You Know?

By the year 2015, more people worldwide will die from tobacco-related diseases than from AIDS.

What's the Message?

FOR YOUR **SMOKING AWARENESS:**

To reduce the mortality risk from smoking, smokers must quit completely; cutting back is not effective.

Smoking decreases fertility in both men and women.

FOR YOUR **SLEEP AWARENESS:**

Adequate, restful sleep is important to a health regimen, as are exercise and good nutrition.

The body utilizes sleep to restore and rejuvenate itself.

FOR YOUR **LIVER HEALTH:**

Consider getting the hepatitis B vaccine.

Practice safe sex to prevent transmitting the hepatitis B virus to a sexual partner.

FOR YOUR **E. COLI AWARENESS:**

Any child or elderly person with a suspected *E. coli* infection should be taken to the doctor immediately.

Take the necessary precautions to avoid acquiring or transmitting an *E. coli* infection to others.

FOR YOUR **END-OF-LIFE AWARENESS:**

Creating an honest and open dialogue between a terminally ill patient, family members, and the doctor can assist in the dying process.

Having an advance directive is added insurance that your wishes will be followed should you become seriously or terminally ill.

Dear Dr. Liker... My daughter was just diagnosed with type 1 and type 2 diabetes. How can she have both?

There is an escalating new phenomenon called "double diabetes". Patients suffer from both types of diabetes. Typically, the patient has type 1 (the pancreas makes little or no insulin) first. As he/she puts on extra weight, type 2 (the body is unable to use insulin properly) develops. Using insulin correctly in type 1 actually promotes weight gain, so unless good eating habits and exercise are part of one's lifestyle, it is not unexpected that type 2 can develop.

Doctors are trying to juggle the best medication regimen to treat both types. Insulin is necessary for type 1 and oral medication for type 2. However, everyone seems to agree that losing weight is one of the best solutions for the patient. Eating less and exercising more are vital to preventing long-term complications.

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