Articles - Patient Care

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December 2020

Wellness Through Answers News November/December 2020

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Linking Connecticut Patients, Families, and Residents to Reliable Health Information

Have a Personal Health Question?

Wellness Through Answers staff can help you find answers. Our medical librarians research personal health questions for Connecticut residents. Our service is free and confidential. Call or email us with your question: (860) 679-4055 / hnet@uchc.edu

A Looming Childhood Vaccination Crisis

Fear of catching COVID-19 and the move to online learning resulted in many children missing routine vaccinations. **Forty percent of parents** reported their children missed scheduled vaccinations due to the pandemic. From January to September of this year, vaccinations for infectious diseases like measles, whooping cough, and polio **dropped by as much as 26%**. This downward

trend in vaccinations puts communities at increased risk for outbreaks of measles and other childhood diseases.

The American Academy of Pediatrics urges parents not to forgo **routine baby and child checkups, especially for children under the age of 24 months.** Children who fall behind on routine vaccinations can still catch up. The **Immunization Action Coalition** summarizes vaccine recommendations for babies, children, and teens. They also have a checklist of contraindications for childhood vaccines.

More on COVID-19

Here is a roundup of new articles and resources related to the COVID-19 pandemic:

• Daily updates on the **COVID-19 situation** in Connecticut
• Debunking pandemic **misinformation**
• Why some COVID patients get **sicker than others**
• How long do **COVID symptoms** last?
• How to make **childcare decisions** during the pandemic
• **Apps for managing** COVID-19 anxiety
• How to **exercise safely** during the winter
• How to **grieve and support the bereaved** during the pandemic
• *The Atlantic's "***Social Distance***"* podcast
• How COVID-19 **changed the English language** in 2020

Payments to Doctors Influence Medical Device Choice

If we need a medical implant, we trust doctors to choose the best device for us. The results of a new study about industry payments to doctors may prompt us to question their choice.

A large study examined payments to doctors who performed surgery on heart failure patients. The doctors implanted either **cardioverter defibrillators** or **cardiac resynchronization devices.** The authors found:

• Three out of four doctors received more than one payment from the device manufacturers.

• Among doctors accepting payments, the majority of them chose the device from the manufacturer who paid them the most.
• Findings suggested that doctors accepting payments were more likely to select the more expensive devices.

Fortunately for the patients in this study, there were no differences in the outcomes for doctors who took payments compared to those who did not. However, this study raises ethical concerns about the influence manufacturers have on doctors. Curious patients can research industry payments to doctors in the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid "**Open Payments Data**" tool.

Tips for Lowering the Cost of Prescription Drugs for Children

Child-friendly formulations of drugs may be more costly than the equivalent medications for adults. The website Pharmacychecker.com offers tips on **how parents can save** on prescription drugs for their children:

• Compare prices at different pharmacies
• Buy in bulk
• Enroll in drug savings programs
• Use a prescription delivery service
• Open a health savings account where you work
• Order from accredited online international pharmacies
• Look into your state's children's health insurance program

The Transgender Experience

What does it mean to be transgender? Filmmaker Fiona Dawson produced this brief "**Cisgender Transgender Explainer**" for the confused among us. Ms. Dawson's two-minute film distills the basics of what makes cis and trans people different. For those wanting to learn more about what it means to be transgender, here are some resources:

• **PFLAG** provides resources to help families and allies support their transgender loved ones. Resources include support groups, workshops, and blogs. Check out their "**Transgender Reading List for Adults**" and their workshop (archived online) "Gender Basics for Parents."
• **True Colors Resource Guide** Check out the "Foundations" section of the guide for terminology, age-appropriate discussions, and developmental checklists.

• **LGBTQ Nation** "Top 10 Books About **Trans Issues** that Every Cisgender Person Should Read"
• **Johns Hopkins Center for Transgender Health** offers a **glossary** of transgender terms, a list of "**Transgender and Gender Fluid Books** for Kids, Young Adults, and Adults," and "**Tips for Allies** of Transgender People."
• *New York Times* "Read **These 3 Books** on Trans Rights and Gender Identity"

More News and Resources You Can Use

Wellness-inspired **holiday gifts**

How to **start your own business** - programs for people 50 and older

How to **buy health insurance** for 2021 on the ACA marketplace

How to find **affordable mental-health therapy**

Body-scan meditation can improve your physical and mental well-being

Explore the connection between **gratitude** and well-being

Build a home for your feathered friends

Mindfulness podcasts for kids

Recipes for healthier **holiday pies**

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