Medical Care In Our Community

Featuring information on doctors and medical services in our community.
By Matthew Tanner, PharmD

Proton Pump Inhibitors, also known as PPI’s, are drugs such as Nexium, Prilosec, and Prevacid. The purpose of these medications is to reduce heartburn by decreasing the amount of acid produced by specialized cells in the stomach. However, it is estimated that this class of drugs are often misused up to 70% of the time. PPI’s are associated with increased risk of bone fractures, infections, drug interactions, and magnesium and vitamin B12 deficiency. This year evidence has also surfaced implicating some correlation with a possible increase in the development of dementia. These risks typically do not occur when PPI’s are taken properly and for a short period of time. However, these side effects are showing up more commonly due to longer use and misuse of these medications.

PPI’s are most effective when taken twice a day, 30-60 minutes before breakfast, and again 30-60 minutes before dinner to prevent food triggering release of excess stomach acid. This dose is commonly used for acute issues such as stomach ulcers, Barrett’s esophageal strictures, or severe esophageal reflux. For maintenance of heartburn control these medications are generally given once every 24 hours. Over the counter PPI’s should not be taken for longer than a 14 day period without physician consultation. Prescription PPI’s are typically given for an 8 week period, followed by reevaluation of your symptoms with your healthcare provider. Please note that PPI’s do not treat heartburn immediately. They must travel through your body and can take up to 48 hours to begin decreasing acid production.

Once a patient exceeds these recommended treatment periods, significant side effects can develop. For instance, instead of a decrease in acid secretion, there can be a rebound effect causing a significant increase in acid secretion by an individual’s body. This side effect is typically seen after 3 months of continuous therapy, with symptoms lasting 3 or more months after development. Since this side effect will exacerbate heartburn related symptoms, it can lead to further overuse of the drug. Another side effect that can be seen as early as 3 months into treatment is a magnesium deficiency, which can result in

Continued on page 3

Morris Drug Co.
646 North Main Street • Pearson, GA
912-422-3631
Hometown Since 1916

Come give us a try and check out our new services and make us your home pharmacy!

Morris Drug Co. is happy to be your hometown pharmacy for over 100 years. We strive in meeting the needs of our patients in a professional and compassionate manner. At Morris Drug Co. we are focused on providing pharmaceutical services with the highest levels of customer satisfaction - we will do everything we can to meet your expectations.

Come See The Independent Difference! Same Drugs, Same Co-Pay, Better Service!

“I am proud to be able to come back and serve my hometown community’s healthcare needs.”
- Matthew Tanner,
Doctor of Pharmacy

Ask About Delivery to Atkinson & Coffee Counties
symptoms such as cramps, heart palpitations, dizziness, tremors, and even seizures in severe cases. PPI use increases bone fractures which may contribute to morbidity and mortality in elderly patients at risk for falls. Due to a higher pH in the stomach, use of these drugs may encourage infections such as C. difficile, a super infection of the gut causing severe diarrhea. Risk for development of pneumonia has also been seen with patients on PPI therapy. This year evidence has also been published showing some relationship with B12 deficiency and an increase in amyloid plaques and neurologic damage that may help us to understand this drug class and its association with dementia.

There are other options for heartburn and most actually work quicker. H2 blockers such as Pepcid and Zantac start working in 30 minutes and are a safer alternative. Antacids, such as Tums, are also a great option. They work immediately to neutralize acid and give the body a healthy dose of calcium. Other home remedies such as peppermint oil drops have been shown to help symptoms as well. As a rule try to eat at least 2-3 hours before bedtime, sleep with head 6 inches higher than bed, maintain a healthy weight, stop smoking, and avoid spicy foods or alcohol which may also make heartburn symptoms worse.

Heartburn is annoying. However, there are many treatment options and behavior modifications that can help us with these irritating symptoms. The take home point for this article is: if you are an individual that has been on a PPI for more than 3 months, prescription or over the counter, please consider talking to your healthcare provider about the risks associated with long term use. It may be possible to slowly taper off the PPI and replace it with a combination of over the counter medications and heartburn healthy behaviors. PPI’s are not meant to be continued indefinitely. If you are suffering from severe heartburn and having difficulty swallowing it is time to go see your physician and get referred to a throat specialist to make sure something more serious is not going on.

Why vaccines are important for adults

Vaccines given during adulthood can prevent the spread of serious diseases that may lead to poor health, missed work, costly medical bills and even death. As you get older, the protection gained from certain childhood vaccines can wear off. Additionally, you may be at risk for certain vaccine-preventable diseases because of your age, job, lifestyle or current health status.

Getting vaccinated as an adult also helps protect the people most susceptible to contagious diseases, such as babies and young children, pregnant women and seniors.

Here are some vaccines commonly recommended for adults:

- **Seasonal flu.** Adults of all ages should get an annual flu shot but especially seniors, people with chronic health conditions and pregnant women. Between 70 and 85 per cent of flu-related deaths in Canada occur in people 65 years and older.

- **Shingles.** One in three adults contract shingles during their lifetime, and your risk increases as you age. Adults who are 50 and older should get the shingles vaccine.

- **Tetanus, diphtheria, pertussis (Tdap).** If you didn’t receive the Tdap vaccine as an adolescent to protect against whooping cough (pertussis), it’s vital to get the shot as an adult. Women should also get the Tdap vaccine during each pregnancy, to protect the newborn from pertussis.

- **Pneumococcal.** This vaccine prevents pneumococcal disease, which causes pneumonia, meningitis and sepsis. It’s recommended for all adults age 65 and older as well as for younger adults with conditions that affect their immune system, such as HIV, lymphoma and leukemia.

If you have chronic health conditions or work in the health care industry, you may require additional vaccines. Before travelling abroad, remember to check what vaccines you’ll need and get them administered four to six weeks before your trip.

Meet the eggplant

Large and purple or small and green, eggplants are a staple of many vegetarian diets, and for good reason. Here are the main health benefits of the eggplant.

**IT’S PACKED WITH ANTIOXIDANTS**
The flesh of eggplants is rich in chlorogenic acid, an antioxidant that prevents cancer and lowers cholesterol. In addition, the skin of the purple eggplant gets its pigmenta on from naringin, a compound that can slow cancer growth.

**IT’S RICH IN VITAMINS**
Eggplants contain considerable amounts of vitamins A, B and C. It’s especially rich in B1 and B6, which help absorb nutrients and promote brain health by stimulating neurotransmitter production.

**IT’S RICH IN MINERALS**
Eggplant flesh provides large amounts of calcium, magnesium and phosphorus. All three of these minerals help maintain healthy bones. In addition, phosphorus promotes good kidney function and muscle health.

**IT’S HIGH IN FIBRE**
One cup of cooked eggplant provides 12 per cent of the recommended daily fibre intake. Consuming eggplant will allow you to stay regular and may help reduce cholesterol levels.

In addition to being healthy, the eggplant is a versatile ingredient, perfect as a side dish or as a main course.

Eggplant flesh can taste a little bitter and its sponginess means it absorbs a lot of oil while cooking. Luckily, all you need to do to solve both problems is dice the eggplant by slicing it in half, sprinkling salt over it and letting it stand for an hour. Don’t forget to rinse off the salt before cooking.
Dry eyes, blurred vision and throbbing headaches are but a few surefire signs that it’s time to cut down on screen time. Spending hours on end in front of the computer or the TV is highly taxing for your eyes, and overstraining your peepers can trigger a host of unpleasant effects. Here are a few best practices when it comes to safe screen use.

- **Blink.** Humans blink an average of twelve times per minute, but intense concentration brings that frequency down to five. Consciously remind yourself to blink once in a while during periods of increased focus to avoid ending up with dry eyes.

- **Adjust your lighting.** Avoid looking at screens in dimly lit spaces: the harsh contrast between the bright display and the surrounding darkness takes its toll on your vision.

- **Eliminate glare.** Don’t let any light shine directly on a screen that’s in use. This creates an annoying glare that forces your eyes to constantly refocus.

- **Take breaks.** Keep the 20-20-20 rule in mind any time you find yourself in front of a screen for an extended period. The idea: every 20 minutes, focus your gaze on a spot that’s 20 feet away and hold it for 20 seconds. This relaxes the muscles that your eyes use to focus.

- **Position your screen adequately.** When you sit at your desk, the top of your computer screen should be at eye level and there should be an arm’s length of space between you and the monitor. Similarly, for watching TV a good rule of thumb is to sit four screen widths away.

- **Only wear glasses when needed.** Because you look at screens and books from a different distance, your reading glasses might not be suitable for computer work.

If you believe that your eyesight is declining, consult your eye doctor without delay.
Georgia Dermatology & Skin Cancer Center
GaDerm.com
Mohs Surgery
Skin Cancer Removal
Routine Skin Exams
Mole Removal
Psoriasis
Eczema
Warts
Rashes
Acne

Dr. Matthew Lucas
Hallie S. Brigmond, PA-C
DeLeice H. Carter, NP

(912) 384-3204
1380 W. Gordon St. - DOUGLAS

New Patients, Referrals & Most Insurance Plans Accepted!

Tips for surviving heat waves

Heat waves are a serious health hazard. In the absence of air conditioning, here are some things you can do to minimize the risk of heat-related medical emergencies.

- Drink lots of water, even if you’re not thirsty.
- Avoid alcoholic beverages, which can cause dehydration.
- Eat water-rich foods like watermelon, tomatoes and cucumbers and opt for cold meals such as salads and sandwiches.
- Take a cold shower or bath.
- Visit the local swimming pool to cool down. Alternatively, you can use a water hose, watering can or a cold compress.
- Between 10 a.m. and 3 p.m. the sun is at its strongest, so avoid going outside between these times if possible.
- Protect yourself from the sun. If you have to be outside, stay in the shade and wear sunscreen with an SPF of 30 or higher.
- Wear loose, light-colored clothes that breathe well.
- Visit an air-conditioned space like a mall, library or movie theatre.
- Close your windows and blinds to keep the air inside your home cooler. Keeping your windows open at night is a good idea if the outside temperature is lower than the inside temperature.
- Reduce physical activity and avoid serious exertion if possible.

In addition to the above, it’s a good idea to be familiar with the signs of heatstroke and heat exhaustion, which includes red skin, lack of perspiration, dizziness, nausea and confusion. Be especially vigilant around seniors and children.

Keep a close eye on your pets; they too can suffer health complications during a heat wave.

4 easy ways to support someone with depression

Depression is a mood disorder that causes persistent feelings of sadness, hopelessness and lack of interest. Unsurprisingly, it can be devastating for the person with the disorder. However, friends and family members may also be impacted. If someone you love is suffering from depression, keep these four things in mind.

1. DON’T TAKE SYMPTOMS PERSONALLY
Depression makes it difficult to connect with people, even loved ones. If a person with depression lashes out at you or says hurtful things, remember that it’s the illness talking.

2. BE A COMPASSIONATE LISTENER
Be someone that listens without judgment. Instead of telling a depressed person to “cheer up” or “snap out of it,” try saying: “I’m here for you,” “I want to help,” and “you’re not alone in this.”

Many people worry about discussing their depression for fear of stigmatization or being hospitalized. However, talking openly with a non-judgmental listener has been shown to be beneficial.

3. GUIDE THEM TOWARD PROFESSIONAL HELP
Encourage your loved one to find a therapist or psychiatrist and consider treatment options like medication. Offer to go with them to the first appointment or help prepare a list of symptoms to discuss with a professional.

4. DON’T TRY TO FIX THEM
Do what you can to guide a person with depression toward the right resources, but remember that it’s not up to you to cure them. Recovery is ultimately their own responsibility. Focus instead on being a positive presence in their life.

Finally, make sure to look after your own health when caring for someone with depression. It may be helpful to talk with a family member, friend or mental health professional about what you’re going through.
In the U.S. there are over 80 classes of OTC drugs; that’s a lot of choice for the average person who isn’t familiar with the language of medicine and chemistry. And although pharmacists consider it their jobs to help consumers select the most appropriate products, many people choose non-prescription drugs on their own, without any guidance. The good news is the Food and Drug Administration now requires all OTC medicines to follow the same protocols in labeling, which does make it a bit easier for the consumer.

Always look at the Drug Facts label on the packaging of the product. The first thing it will indicate is the active ingredient. Next it will list the intended uses and any warnings. After that you’ll see a list of the inactive ingredients, the purpose of the product, directions for use and any other information. You should also look for the expiration date and directions about what to do in case of an overdose.

Remember that all drugs can interact together, whether they’re prescription or non-prescription, and they can also affect any pre-existing medical conditions you may have. Talk to your pharmacist if you have any questions about a product you’re about to buy or already have in your medicine cabinet at home.
Fostering healthy eyes in children

Approximately 80 per cent of the skills and knowledge learned during early childhood is acquired through sight, making good vision a critical component of your kids’ healthy development. Here are a few tips to help you stimulate your children’s growing peepers.

Infants and babies

Plenty of toys are designed to foster good eyesight in babies—think mirrors, mobiles, animated toys and books with big, bold illustrations. Further engage your little one’s vision by exposing him or her to bright, high-contrast colors, and favor games that involve seeing, like peekaboo. Schedule your child’s first eye exam between the ages of six and twelve months to catch any potential trouble as early as possible.

Ages 3–5

Puzzles, mazes, I spy, connect-the-dots, card games and building blocks all double as excellent tools to boost children’s eyesight. Read with your kids daily, and limit their screen time to under two hours each day. Healthy eating habits and adequate sleep are also needed to ensure proper cognitive and visual development. Have your child’s eyesight examined before he or she starts preschool, or around three years old.

School-aged children

Children should only work in front of a screen when the surrounding lighting is adequate, and should take a five-minute break every 45 minutes to avoid eyestrain. Encourage your kids to head outdoors as often as possible: having fun outside the house on a regular basis has been shown to decrease the risk of myopia. Of course, nutritious food and proper rest remain the best defense against premature vision decline. Kids should undergo an eye exam every year as long as they’re in school.

Strokes’ favourite victims are you, ladies!

It’s not that long ago that heart disease was mainly considered to be a man’s illness. But did you know that nowadays women are considered to be at greater risk of dying from a heart attack than men? In fact, heart disease and stroke are the number one killers of women!

Fortunately, researchers are focusing more on women’s cardiovascular health and we now know that with a bit of effort, certain risk factors can be reduced. Obesity, high blood pressure, and stress are particularly harmful to the health of a human heart but can be moderated by healthy lifestyle choices.

It goes without saying that smoking and excessive amounts of alcohol should be avoided. Daily physical activity—even just walking the dog—will help you maintain a healthy weight and reduce stress levels. A low salt, low fat diet that is rich in potassium from fresh fruits and vegetables as well as magnesium from whole grains, nuts, and legumes will also help to reduce the risks.

Another important factor in saving lives is knowing how to recognize the symptoms of a stroke. Dizziness, sudden loss of balance, vision problems, confusion, sudden severe headache, loss of consciousness, and paralysis of an arm or leg are warning signals that warrant a call to emergency services.

In short, women have to make their heart health a priority. Even though women often tend to put their families first, it is a true act of love to take all necessary precautions to increase the duration and the quality of their lives so they can continue caring for those who are close to their hearts.

Adopting a healthy lifestyle will reduce your risk of heart disease and stroke by 80 percent.
Chiropractors are more than just back doctors!

Over the last 25 years there have been more than six government studies done on chiropractic treatments in various countries, including Canada, Sweden and Australia. All these studies have shown that these treatments are safe and effective. It’s no surprise, then, that chiropractics has been a recognized profession for several years now, particularly given the fact that it takes a holistic approach to health and considers the body to have its own natural healing abilities. With this philosophy in mind, chiropractors focus their attention on the relationships the nervous and musculo-skeletal systems have with other systems in the body, placing particular emphasis on the spine.

Over the years there has been growing interest in neuro-vertebral health. Current schools of thought stress that we are all responsible for our own bodies and that the way we treat them has a direct effect on our overall health. Did you know that your posture can reveal a lot about your spinal health?

For example, if you have, a tendency to curve your back when seated; have a rounded upper back; a hip that’s higher than the other; a shoulder that’s higher than the other; or a tendency to tilt your head forward or keep it slightly turned, it could mean that you have certain problems with your spine. Do not hesitate to consult a chiropractor; they can help treat neuro-vertebral problems, headaches, hypertension and digestive troubles.
Three tips to make living with arthritis easier

Arthritis can make it difficult to perform a variety of tasks, from getting dressed in the morning to washing dishes at night. Here are three ways you can improve your quality of life if you have arthritis.

1. Keep moving. Regular exercise is essential for maintaining joint function and bone density and can help relieve arthritis symptoms. Plus, exercise promotes better sleep and helps with weight management.

2. Maintain a healthy diet. Eating an anti-inflammatory diet — which involves replacing sugary, refined foods with fruits, vegetables, fish, lean meats and whole grains rich in antioxidants — has been shown to help reduce arthritic pain caused by joint inflammation. If you’re overweight, a low-calorie diet is especially for shedding pounds; weight loss can reduce pressure on your joints.

3. Make your home accessible. Small adjustments made to your home — such as using a shower stool or keeping items on lower shelves — can ease pain and stress. Look for ergonomic equipment and assistive devices that can be used at home to improve your grip and avoid unnecessary bending or reaching.

Finally, ask for help from family members and friends if you need it and continue to meet with your doctor regularly to address ongoing health concerns.

How good is your skincare routine?

Our skin — the largest organ in the human body — plays several crucial roles. It regulates our internal temperature, contributes to vitamin D production, protects us from the cold and eliminates waste (via the sweat glands), to name just a few. Here are some tips to help protect your skin against dryness, irritation and premature aging.

- Shield it from the elements. Exposing your skin to the sun without proper UV protection (i.e., sunscreen) leads not only to sunburns but also to premature aging. Conversely, wind and cold air have a drying effect, so it’s important to properly cover your skin, hands included, before going outside during winter.
- Stick to the shower. A nice long bath is fine every now and then, but choosing the tub over the shower too often will leave you with rough, dry skin. In any case, bathe in water that’s lukewarm, never hot.
- Use a mild soap. Some harsh soaps have a particularly damaging effect on the skin’s moisture barrier. Choose a gentle alternative, such as a superfatted soap — a vital ally for sensitive skin — to cleanse your skin without drying it out. Also, make sure to rinse off thoroughly to get rid of any potentially irritating residue.
- Dry off gently. When you get out of the shower, pat your skin dry rather than rubbing it.

- Moisturize. After your shower, apply a hydrating cream or serum to your skin to help maintain or restore its moisture barrier. Make sure to drink enough water throughout the day.

HEALTHY LIFESTYLE

Stress, smoking (which degrades hyaluronic acid, a vital component of the skin’s moisture barrier) and lack of sleep all speed up the skin’s aging process. On the other hand, exercise and a healthy diet rich in antioxidants (eat your veggies!) help keep skin looking and feeling its best.
Athletes can benefit from chiropractic care to treat or prevent sports-related injuries. To understand how, it’s important to keep in mind that an injury to a specific area can have a significant impact on other parts of the body.

Unfortunately, many medical treatment options for athletic injuries tend to solely focus on the injured area without taking into consideration the body as a whole. This can result in the pain simply migrating to another area and thereby jeopardizing athletic performance.

Chiropractors can treat bones (especially the spine), muscles and joints through precise realignments that aim to optimize athletes’ mobility. Using various techniques adapted to the unique morphology of their patients, these health professionals can contribute to improving overall performance.

Athletes who seek chiropractic care to prevent or treat sports-related injuries will benefit from a professional opinion and effective targeted treatments. No matter your sport of choice, making an appointment with your local chiropractor will always be a winning decision.