

THE HONEYCOMB

Faith Community Nursing Newsletter - Sheboygan eFree Church

*Gracious words are like a honeycomb, sweetness to the soul
and health to the body. Proverbs 16:24*



Let's Get To The Heart

Unlike other health conditions, including certain heart conditions such as Congestive Heart Failure (CHF), high blood pressure (HBP or Hypertension) has no obvious symptoms that can alert someone that something is wrong. This is why hypertension (high blood pressure) is known as the "silent killer."

Although there is no cure for high blood pressure, you can protect yourself by being aware of the risks, and making positive changes to improve your heart health. Also, know where you stand by knowing your numbers!

Three good reasons for knowing your BP numbers:

- High blood pressure doesn't usually cause any noticeable symptoms.
- High blood pressure is at the root of heart disease and, if left untreated, can cause organ damage.
- It's possible to treat hypertension with simple lifestyle changes if caught early!

Stop in at the FCN-sponsored annual blood pressure screening on Sunday, February 13th. FCN staff will be in room 109 from 9-9:30am. Be sure to wear a short-sleeved or thin, long-sleeved shirt for comfort and accuracy.

Check Your Personal BPS Devices

February is American Heart Month and Kristie Ahlborg, our FCN Coordinator, wants you to be sure your heart is healthy. On the two Wednesdays prior to Valentine's Day, stop by her office with your personal blood pressure screening devices and have them checked for accuracy.

Kristie maintains office hours on Wednesdays, 10:30am-12:30pm, so be sure to stop in on February 2 or 9 for her to help you out.



Be Safe This Winter

Winter is upon us. The snow and cold are here, and the Packers have begun battling on the "frozen tundra"! We Wisconsinites again embrace winter and our love for the seasons! Yet each year people young and old get hurt (and even die) from winter's severe conditions. Since I, too, have had my share of falls and injuries, I am eager to offer some tips and precautions to help traverse this winter's challenges.

Winter activities are fun and educational, but care is needed to avoid serious injuries and illnesses. Perform a personal conditioning inventory to ensure you are fit for the outdoor activity. Kids are generally in great shape but need supervision to ensure they play safely (and keep their warm clothes on!). Be sure to inspect sleds, snowshoes, skis, and snowboards to ensure they will perform well, wear layered clothing and bring along extra clothes. When with a large group, use a buddy system.

Slips and falls happen quickly. I know from experience! On one walk by the lake, I fell three times. Another time, I fell walking on icy grass, injuring my shoulder! Always take your time, be careful carrying heavy items, beware of wet pavement and grass, wear non-skid soled footwear, make sure pathways are well lit and, if you use a cane, attach a rubber cap or icepick attachment.

Hypothermia occurs when your body temperature drops to a dangerous level. Out in the cold, you can lose heat quickly, even if you're warmly dressed. The younger and older you are, the more likely this is to happen. Don't stay outside too long, take breaks to warm up, stay dry, dress in thin, loose layers, wear a hat, mittens, and lined boots, and cover your mouth to protect your lungs.

Frostbite is an injury caused by freezing of the skin and underlying tissues and occurs in areas farthest from your heart. People with heart disease and other circulation problems are at the highest risk. Stay covered up (especially hands, feet, and face), use hand and foot warmers, go inside right away if your skin turns red or dark and run the affected skin under warm (not hot) water, and know the warning signs of frostbite.

Snow shoveling requires good technique plus balance, conditioning, and strength. Wear boots with good traction, and even consider cleats. The heart works double-time if it's cold out because it's also keeping you warm. Try pushing the snow instead of lifting whenever possible and use an ergonomic shovel. Take frequent indoor breaks, or break up the job throughout the day.

Fires and carbon monoxide poisoning can happen during the winter months due to the many heating devices used to keep warm. Have furnaces and fireplaces inspected and serviced, crack a window, install smoke and CM detectors and maintain the batteries. Space heaters need to be a minimum of three feet from any combustible items, and never leave heating devices unattended.

Driving in winter requires extra vigilance due to road and weather conditions. Breaking down or getting lost has added dangers in cold conditions. Winterize your vehicle addressing antifreeze, windshield wiper fluid, and tires. Keep a charged cell phone and charger with you, beware of bridges and overpasses and select your routes based on conditions and traffic. Allow more travel time, allow more distance to stop, and carry an emergency kit (first aid, a flashlight and extra batteries, a blanket, jumper cables, a shovel, sand, an ice scraper, flares, extra warm clothes, water, and food.) Always let someone know your travel plans.

Viral colds and respiratory illness accompany the colder months. One reason is that we cluster together inside more. Another reason is that, just like your heart, your immune system must work double-time out in the cold, not only responding to the cold effects on the body but also to the numerous infectious attacks on the body. These result in you being more vulnerable to illness. Stay as warm as possible, avoid overexertion, stay hydrated and nourished. Practice good facial hygiene taking care of how you sneeze and cough, wash your hands frequently, and maintain up-to-date immunizations, especially the flu shot.

Have a safe and wonderful winter! - Dr. Jeff Lynds

meet
ANDREA MEERDINK



Licensed Practical Nurse
Prevea Orthopedics, Sheboygan

I've wanted to be a nurse since I was a little girl. I grew up with a special needs sister and would often help my mom care for her. Caring for people has become something I truly think God has created me to do.

I started out working as a CNA at Pine Haven Christian Homes for a little over a year, then at St. Nicholas Hospital for three years before finishing the LPN program at LTC.

I am truly thrilled to be part of the FCN staff and I look forward to using my nursing skills to serve others!