



The Well

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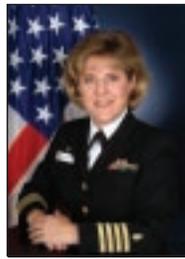
U.S. NAVAL HOSPITAL – ROTA, SPAIN

Summer 2004

CAPTAIN'S CORNER

Greetings, Rota!

There are few things that are as motivating for ensuring physical fitness than Spring in Andalusia, Spain. As we change uniforms from Working Blues to Whites, unpack our warm-weather clothing, and come out from the cover of winter jackets, it can often be a rude awakening when we try on our summer outfits. During the month of May, we celebrate National Physical Fitness month. What better time to make a personal commitment to healthy lifestyle changes? If you find yourself in a position of wanting to get in better shape, please come by and visit our Health Promotion Department for information on healthy lifestyle changes and personal nutrition planning. Additionally, our partner in wellness, the MWR Fitness Center, is always available for assistance in personal fitness training.



In February, the Naval Station, Rota community had a tremendous turnout of participants in our 4th annual Community Health Fair sponsored by the Naval Hospital Health Promotion Department and the MWR Fitness Center. My personal thanks and congratulations are extended to all of the resource experts in our community who presented information and provided outreach to the participants in this year's Health Fair.

Preventive medicine is the key to a healthy life. While certain things come to mind like exercise, healthy habits, and lowering your stress levels, there are numerous other areas that you should consider. Immunizations for yourself and your children go a long way to prevent certain diseases. Our Preventive Health Assessment Department and the immunization clinic provides the necessary care and can review your record and let you know what you may require. Don't hesitate to set up an appointment with your Primary Care Provider to ensure you are on a

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Hypertension, High Blood Pressure, Huh?

By Dr. Tutko, UNSH, Rota

So, you drag yourself to the doctor's office because of a rash. Then, the corpsmen calls your name, drops you into a chair, straps that cuff "thingee" around your arm, and turns on the machine. "Excuse me," you say. "I can't feel my fingers now." "Uhhmm, I'm just here for a rash." The corpsmen smiles and then an ominous "hmmmm" escapes his mouth once the machine has finished its business. Hypertension, high blood pressure, what? Pretty typical, huh? So what is high blood pressure really? And why does everyone get their socks twisted over those numbers?

Blood pressure is like any other pressure you may know. Water pressure, oil pressure, a pressure cooker, or that funny feeling one gets when their mother in law is visiting. It's the degree of force that blood circulates around your body. In general, it's a good thing, as blood carries everything we need for life, except maybe cheesecake. Unfortunately, when this force, blood pressure, is too high, it causes problems. How and why it causes problems is a little difficult to explain in this article, but what is important is that high blood pressure, when left untreated, causes Death. Fairly simple, huh? I know saying Death, notice the capital "D," is a little harsh, but it's the truth. Some years ago when researchers were sorting out why we die, they found that high blood pressure is directly linked to heart disease and heart attacks. It causes other scary things too, like heart failure and stroke, but by and large it is the heart disease and heart attacks that end our life earlier than expected. Having a high blood pressure doesn't kill us tomorrow, next week, or even next year, but leaving high blood pressure untreated creates the damage that causes heart attacks, heart failure, stroke, and a lot of other stuff. Knowing this, we take your blood pressure all the time, even when you're just visiting us for a rash or for something you picked up in Morocco from that sidewalk eatery.

You may wonder: When is blood pressure too high and what can be done to lower it? For most people, high blood pressure is when their blood pressure is above 140/90 on two separate occasions. Either number, the top or the bottom number of the blood pressure measurement, can be high alone or both can be high together. How high your blood pressure is decides whether you'll need to start medicine right away or whether you have a little time to try some "life changes" to lower it. "Life changes" are things like exercise and losing some weight if you're carrying more than you should. Okay, who wants to do that. It's a high price to pay, I know, but moderate exercise combined with a

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How To Talk To Your Kids About Drugs

Information provided by Debby Elwell and Partnership for a Drug-Free America

Fortunately, you don't have to do it well. You simply have to try. Your kids will get the message that you care and that you understand something about what they're up against. The alternative is to ignore the subject. If you do, you can bet that they will get information from others, including those who use drugs.

Kids use drugs and alcohol for a variety of reasons. If you understand the reasons you will be prepared to help them find alternatives. Kids use drugs and alcohol to feel grown up, to fit in, to manage their moods and to rebel.

Accept rebellion. Learning how to take risks is an important part of growing up. Young people will take even more risks than adults because they want to push the limits. Part of growing up is to create a separate identity, apart from parents – a process, which ultimately leads to feeling of self-worth. Keep in mind your own rebellion as a teen. You may have worn different clothes and listened to different music and maybe your hair was just long, rather than purple. But the motivation was the same... to establish a separate identity and to bond with your peer group.

The problem comes when kids choose a path of rebellion that hurts them and destroys their self worth. That's the reality of drugs.

Keep it simple. You don't have to be an expert. For example, "Have you heard about kids using drugs?" "Why do you think kids get involved with drugs?" "How do other kids deal with pressure to use drugs?" It's also important to state exactly how strongly you feel about it. Don't threaten, but use unmistakably clear language: "Drugs can take over your life." "I love you too much to see you throw your life down the drain."

Don't get discouraged. It may seem as though nothing you say is getting through but don't believe it. Although you may not get a response right away, kids will play back your words weeks or even months later. And most importantly, they're getting the message that you care.

Some Dos and Don'ts.

- *Do* speak from the heart.
- *Don't* do all the talking. Listen and read between the lines. You'll learn a lot about what your kids think about drugs, about the world and about themselves. They'll also feel heard which will help their self-esteem.
- *Don't* threaten. Don't put your kid on the spot by asking directly if he or she has ever tried drugs. They'll probably lie, which undermines your whole conversation.
- *Do* confront the issue directly if you suspect your child has a problem with drugs.

Remember, it's okay if you don't know much about drugs. Your kids do. So listen to them and let them know how you feel. Let them know it's not a taboo subject and they'll be more likely to come to you with a question or concern. They'll know they can trust you to "stay cool."

For more information contact the Adolescent Substance Abuse Counselor in the Rota Community: Debby Elwell, 727-6422.

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Hypertension, High Blood Pressure, Huh?

healthier diet can lower one's blood pressure 12-15 points. And, even if you need medicine to lower your blood pressure, these changes will make it so you'll need less medicine to control it and increasing your fitness has been shown to make you live longer even if you are a little overweight. Unfortunately, Americans are becoming increasingly overweight at a younger age and increasingly less physically fit. You can't supersize anything without becoming supersized. My point, even if unpalatable, is true. Being physically fit and having a healthy lifestyle is important and can have beneficial effects not only on one's blood pressure, but health in general.

Does this mean that everyone can control his or her high blood pressure with only healthier living? No, a lot of people still need to take medicine to lower their blood pressure and prevent heart disease, heart attacks, and stroke. Healthier living is still important, but sometimes not enough. Taking medicine isn't always the easiest thing and there are many different medicines to lower one's blood pressure. Deciding which one to take is something to discuss with your healthcare provider. What is important is that the medicine lowers you're blood pressure and reduces you're risk of having heart disease, heart attacks, and strokes.

Honestly, without the humor, monitoring ones blood pressure is important. Now you know what to look for and why we measure your blood pressure with every visit, so don't hesitate to see your Health Care Provider and stay fit.

WIC Program, A Benefit For Rota Families

The Woman, Infants, and Children (WIC) Overseas Program is a nutritional education and supplemental food program funded by the Department of Defense that is part of the non-pay benefits for active duty service members and their families stationed overseas. This program is aimed at improving the quality of life for eligible pregnant women, infants, and children until their fifth birthday. The WIC Office is bldg. #197 on Cabrera Street. Call today to see if you qualify, x2921.

CAPTAIN'S CORNER

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healthy track for physical fitness, and check into the *New Beginnings* or *Ship Shape* weight-loss programs or the *Tobacco Cessation* program offered by Health Promotions if you could benefit from them.

Have you visited our hospital home page yet? Our website offers an expansive variety of ways to assist you, including links to healthcare resource sites that contain a wealth of information and the ability to schedule appointments online. Visit <http://www.rota.med.navy.mil> to enhance your health!

We are always here to help you and your family in improving your health. Please stop by and meet with our experts to assist you in reaching your goals.

The Skipper

FROM THE CHAPS...

Where Is Happiness?



All of us wish for “happiness of life” – a combination of interest, zest, excitement, achievement, satisfaction, health, and peace of mind and body. Indeed, we want to be happy in the world. Everyone desires to have happiness and the highest value of life and to possess the energy to meet daily responsibilities. Our hope is to live on a high level of physical strength, mental interest, and spiritual meaning.

Where, then, is the happiness of life to be found? It’s not found in money. Jay Gould, the American millionaire, had plenty of that. When dying, he said: “*I suppose I am the most miserable devil on earth.*” It’s not found in position and fame. Lord Beaconsfield enjoyed more than his share of both, he wrote: “*Youth is a mistake, manhood a struggle, old age a secret.*” Certainly, it’s not found in any pleasure. Lord Byron, who reveled in pleasure all his days, wrote on his last birthday: “*My days are in the yellow leaf, the flowers and fruits are gone, the worm, the canker, and the grief are mine alone.*” And, the happiness of life isn’t founded in power either. The name, Napoleon the Great, stands prominent for power. Musing, a lonely prisoner on St. Helena summarized thus: “*Alexander, Caesar, Charlemagne, and myself founded empires. But on what did we found them?*”

By the “happiness of life,” I mean one that’s deeply interesting, even exciting. It’s full of meaning and rich in fulfillment. Such a life isn’t free of difficulties or problems, of course not. But, it does possess the power to overcome them and to accomplish victorious

levels of experience.

The happiness of life I talk of is based on an ultimate value system in which joy and eagerness serve as both cause and effect. People who live by the joy and eagerness prototype of thinking seem to complete a remarkable mastery over circumstances. Even the ancient words were saying “*A joyful heart is good medicine, but a broken spirit dries up the bones.*”

But an interesting corroboration of this point of view is remarkably brought forward by Norman Cousins, a well-known editor, in his book *Anatomy of an Illness as Perceived by the Patient*. When he was stricken with a serious collagenic illness – a disease of the connective tissues – he had experienced mental and physical tension and exhaustion. To get the adrenal glands restored to proper function seemed to be the only possible cure. How did Cousins get those adrenal glands, and the endocrine system in general, working well again so that health might be restored, despite the medical odds against it?

A Canadian physician, Dr. Hans Selye, showed in his great book, *The Stress of Life*, that adrenal exhaustion could be caused by emotional tension such as frustration, suppressed rage, and overstress. Dr. Selye, whose conclusions and findings have received international acclaim by medical and scientific leaders, detailed the effect of negative emotions on body chemistry. So the question arose in the sick patient’s mind: *If negative emotions produce negative chemical changes in the body, wouldn’t positive emotions produce positive chemical changes?* Then Cousins was led to ask, “*Is it possible that love, hope, faith, joy,*

confidence, and the will to live have therapeutic value?”

Cousins was familiar with Dr. Han Selye and worked out a program of joy inspiration by watching humorous movies and reading joke books. He made the joyous discovery that 10 minutes of genuine belly laughter had an anesthetic effect that would give him at least two hours of pain-free sleep. As further proof of the healing power of self-induced joy, he described, “*by the discovery that there is a physiological basis for the ancient theory that joy and laughter is good medicine.*”

A well-known surgeon says: “*Encourage your child to be merry and to laugh aloud; a good, hearty laugh expands the chest and makes the blood bound merrily along. A good laugh will sound right through the house. It will not only do your child good, but will be a benefit to all who hear, and be an important means of driving the blues away from a dwelling. Merriment is able manner, few being able to resist the contagion. A hearty laugh is delightful harmony; indeed it is the best of music.*”

Where is happiness of life? “*A joyful heart is good medicine, but a broken spirit dries up the bones.*” (Proverbs 17:22)

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If you would like to have *The Well Street Journal* mailed to you, please call the Health Promotion Department at ext. 3350.

Visit the Health Promotion Department website through the Naval Hospital Home Page at <http://rota-www.med.navy.mil>.

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This newsletter is not intended to provide medical advice on personal wellness matters, which should be obtained directly from your physician.

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About ASACS

Adolescent Substance Abuse Counseling Services are available in the Rota community. All teens aged 12-19 and their family members may use this service. The two primary objectives of the ASACS program are Prevention and Treatment. Prevention services include counseling and education for the purpose of preventing teens from becoming involved with alcohol or other drugs by teaching them to make healthy and safe choices. Treatment services provide adolescents who have already experimented with substances or who have begun to use more regularly, an opportunity to learn about the impact it has on their lives and to get support for making different choices. We also help adolescents who have been affected by someone else’s alcohol or drug use by providing them with a safe place to sort out their feelings.

For an appointment or more information, call Debby Elwell at 727-6422.