

to your

Health!

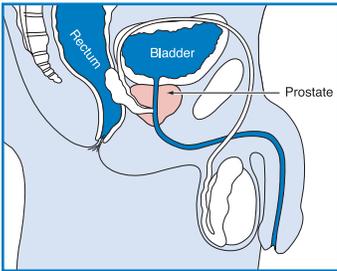
"Promoting Good Health Through Information"

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What is Benign Prostatic Hyperplasia?

Cat-Huong Ngy, Pharm.D.

Benign Prostatic Hyperplasia (BPH) is a non-cancerous enlargement of the prostate gland. It is a condition that affects the aging male population. By the age of 40, about 50% of men will develop moderate urinary difficulty. Once they are over the age of 80, approximately 80% of men will develop the disease. Other risk factors are obesity, alcohol consumption, and liver disease. Patients with BPH may have symptoms of pain and burning on urination, bedwetting, urgency, frequency, hesitancy, straining, dribbling, weak stream and incomplete emptying. Patients with advanced stage may have urinary retention, urinary tract infections, kidney stones, and blood in the urine. Patients who have blood in their urine or have



pain or burning on urination should seek medical attention immediately.

Treatment of BPH consists of watchful waiting and monitoring, surgery, and medications. Patients should discuss these options with their

providers to determine which is right for them.

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Visit our new patient education website at <http://www.palo-alto.med.va.gov/patienteducation/patienteducation.htm>

Recipe for Health

BARBECUE CHICKEN

Remove skin and fat before baking.

Ingredients:

| | |
|---------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------|
| 3 lb chicken parts (breast, drumstick, and thigh) | 2 Tbsp brown sugar |
| 1 large onion, thinly sliced | To taste black pepper |
| 3 Tbsp vinegar | 1 Tbsp hot pepper flakes |
| 3 Tbsp Worcestershire sauce | 1 Tbsp chili powder |
| | 1 C chicken stock or broth, fat skimmed from top |

Directions:

1. Place chicken in 13- by 9- by 2-inch pan. Arrange onions over top.
2. Mix together vinegar, Worcestershire sauce, brown sugar, pepper, hot pepper flakes, chili powder, and stock.
3. Pour mixture over chicken and bake at 350 °F for 1 hour or until done. While cooking, baste occasionally.

Yields: 8 servings

Serving Size: 1 chicken part with sauce

Each serving provides:

| | |
|--------------------|--------------------|
| Calories: 176 | Total fiber: 1 g |
| Total fat: 6 g | Protein: 24 g |
| Saturated fat: 2 g | Carbohydrates: 7 g |
| Cholesterol: 68 mg | Potassium: 360 mg |
| Sodium: 240 mg | |

www.smallstep.gov

Don't Let the Sun Burn Your Fun

Sylvia Luong, Pharm.D.

With the rain and clouds gone, everyone will enjoy spending time in the warm sun. However, too much sun can be harmful. There are things we can do to protect ourselves.

Harmful rays from the sun, sunlamps, and tanning beds can lead to:

- Skin cancer
- Eye problems
- Skin spots
- Wrinkled skin

Protect yourself:

- Stay in the shade – avoid the sun from 10AM to 4PM when sun rays are the strongest
- Use sunscreen on your skin – even on cloudy days
- Wear a hat – hats with wide brims shade the neck, ears, eyes, and head
- Wear sunglasses – make sure they block 99-100% of the sun's rays
- Cover up – loose, lightweight, long-sleeved shirts and long

pants or skirts protect your skin from the sun

- Avoid artificial tanning
- Check your skin regularly for signs of skin cancer – contact your doctor if you notice any changes in size, shape, color, or feel of any birthmarks, moles or spots on your skin

Who gets skin cancer?

Anyone can develop skin cancer with prolonged exposure to the sun, but people with the following characteristics are at greater risk:

- Fair skin – light skin is more vulnerable because it has less melanin, a pigment that helps reduce burning
- Location – people who live in areas with high levels of UV radiation from the sun are at higher risk of developing skin cancer
- Long-term exposure to UV radiation – people who spend prolonged periods of time outdoors
- Sudden and intense sun exposure

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Benign Prostatic Hyperplasia *(Continued from page 1)*

Watchful waiting and monitoring is only for people who have minor symptoms. Patients need to have regular check-ups at three to six month intervals to assess if there are any changes in the prostate.

In patients with moderate or severe symptoms, medical attention is needed to avoid complications. Treatment options include surgery or medications. There are 2 types of procedures: 1) transurethral prostatectomy (TURP) and 2) transurethral incision of the prostate (TUIP). These procedures are determined based on the size of the prostate. In addition to the risks of surgery, patients may also develop erectile dysfunction after these procedures.

Medications can help improve symptoms of BPH by relaxing the prostate's muscles and shrinking the prostate. Medications take time to work and doses may need to be increased slowly over time to be effective. Common side effects are dizziness, headache, stomach upset, low blood pressure, and erectile dysfunction. Providers will discuss which medications are right for patients.

Medications commonly used for BPH include:

1. Alpha-adrenergic blockers help relax the muscles of the prostate and provide moderate relief of symptoms. They

include alfuzosin, doxazosin, tamsulosin and terazosin. Although all four drugs work equally well, there are slight differences in the side effects of each one.

2. Enzyme (5 alpha-reductase) inhibitors help shrink the prostate. They include finasteride and dutasteride. They work by blocking the future growth of the prostate and preventing the need for surgery. These medications only provide modest relief of symptom; therefore, it may take 3 to 6 months for symptoms to improve. Some side effects are inability to achieve an erection, a decreased sexual desire, and a reduced amount of semen. Patients also will need to have a prostate-specific antigen (PSA) test regularly.

3. Combination therapy of both alpha blockers and 5 alpha-reductase inhibitors provides moderate relief of the symptoms and decreases the chance of getting worse in patients with enlarged prostate and bothersome symptoms of BPH. It also helps prevent sudden problems with urinating (acute urinary retention) and can reduce the need for surgery in the future.

It is important for patients to recognize common symptoms of BPH and seek medical attention for the necessary treatments.

Drugs for Obesity

Helen Au, Pharm.D.

We're hearing more and more about obesity these days. Obesity is a serious problem because it places people at a higher risk for developing heart disease, diabetes, high blood pressure, and arthritis. It is a major public health concern because so many people are obese. Over a quarter of adults in the United States are obese. Options for treating obesity include diet, exercise, drugs, and surgery. This article reviews the drugs that can be used to treat obesity.

What is obesity?

Obesity is a chronic disease that occurs when there is too much body fat. It is defined by the body mass index (BMI) which is a number that takes into account both height and weight. A BMI of 18 to 24.9 is considered healthy. A BMI \geq 25 defines overweight and a BMI \geq 30 defines obesity. Risk of serious health problems increase as the BMI increases.

Diet and exercise have been shown to help patients lose weight and maintain weight loss. However, it is important to work with a healthcare professional before beginning any kind of weight loss and/or exercise program. It is also important to continue this lifestyle change even after weight loss goals are met in order to maintain a healthy weight.

The drugs:

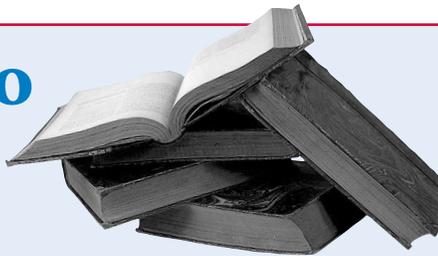
While diet pills and supplements are readily available at nutrition centers and drug stores, these are usually not approved nor regulated by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA). Without FDA regulation, it is unknown if these pills and supplements work to promote weight loss or if they are even safe to take.

Weight loss drugs that are approved by the US FDA for treating obesity are available. Three of the most commonly prescribed agents include phentermine, sibutramine (Meridia), and orlistat (Xenical). When diet and exercise are not enough to promote weight loss, the prescription agents may be an option. However, not all patients are candidates. Furthermore, these drugs have side effects that may not be tolerated. Finally, the drugs work best when combined with a healthy diet and exercise regimen.

Conclusion:

Obese patients are at risk for many diseases. Obesity is the second leading cause of preventable death after smoking. Therefore, it is important to treat obesity and the first step is to live a healthy lifestyle that encompasses a healthy diet with exercise. ■

Want to learn more?



The American Cancer Society is an excellent source of readable, up to date, useful information. These received great reviews:

American Cancer Society's Complete Guide to Prostate Cancer (2005) and American Cancer Society's Complete Guide to Colorectal Cancer (2006).

They were mentioned as two of the best new books on men's health, along with: Seven Steps to Stop a Heart Attack, by Bob Arnot (2005), 100 Questions & Answers About Erectile Dysfunction, by Pamela Ellsworth (2002), and Robert Spapolsky's Why Zebras Don't Get Ulcers: an updated guide to stress, stress-related diseases, and coping. 3rd edition (2004). Check them out at your local library! ■

Sun Burn *(continued from page 2)*

What is SPF?

SPF stands for sun protection factor. The higher the SPF, the more it helps prevent sunburn. However, there is a limit to the amount of protection you can get from higher SPFs. Take a look before you decide to spend more money on a higher SPF.

- SPF 15 blocks 93% of UVB
- SPF 30 blocks 96.7% of UVB
- SPF 40 blocks 97.5% of UVB
- SPF 70 blocks 98.6% of UVB

How to use sunscreen:

In order for sunscreen to work effectively, it is important to apply it correctly. It is important to apply sunscreen liberally to all areas of the body exposed to the sun. It should also be reapplied as often as the label recommends especially after swimming, toweling, or excessive sweating.

Lastly, even if you use sunscreen, prolonged exposure can still cause skin damage. Protect your skin from sun damage and follow these tips today! ■

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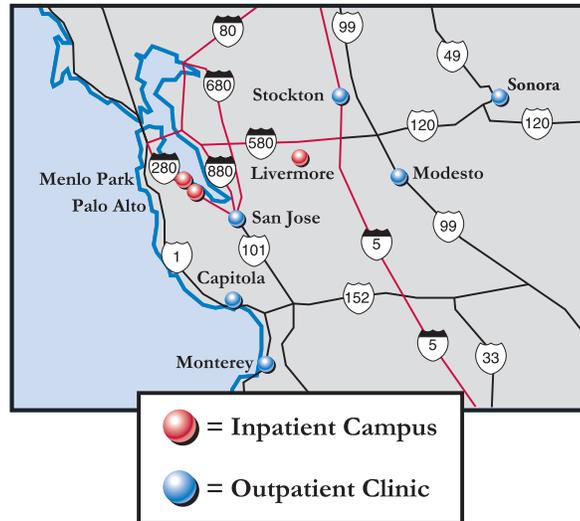
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www.palo-alto.med.va.gov



Skin Cancer Quiz

1. Over one million people in the United States are expected to get skin cancer this year.

True or False

2. More people in the United States will get skin cancer this year than all people who get cancers of either the prostate, breast, lung, or colon combined.

True or False

3. Everyone, regardless of skin color, can get skin cancer.

True or False

4. Skin cancer rates are rising because people use too much sunscreen.

True or False

5. The most dangerous skin cancer is called melanoma.

True or False

6. Getting a tan will help your skin remain smooth and healthy.

True or False

7. Consistent use of sunscreen will completely protect a person from skin cancer.

True or False

Quiz Answer Key

1. True
2. True
3. True
4. False
5. True
6. False
7. False

Questions or Comments?

If you have any questions or topics you would like addressed in *To Your Health* feel free to contact:

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Tips for Healthy Living

Make a Saturday morning walk a group habit.

Flavor foods with herbs, spices, and other low fat seasonings.