

The Campus Prescription

A publication of the Sam Houston State University Health Center

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THE DOCTOR IS IN! - New physician at Health Center

Dr. Tom Hill joined the Health Center staff on August 2, 2004. Although Dr. Hill is new to the department, he is not new to the practice of medicine.

Dr. Hill attended medical school at UTHSC in Houston and completed his residency at UTMB in Galveston. He has 13 years of experience practicing medicine in hospitals, clinics, and private practice. Dr. Hill is active in the Huntsville medical community serving on three of the local hospital's committees.



Tom Hill, M.D.

The Health Center staff members are excited to have a quality physician such as Dr. Hill on staff. "Dr. Hill possesses positive attributes that will benefit the entire university community. We already have one excellent health care provider in Crystal Birdsong, our Nurse Practitioner. The acquisition of Dr. Hill's services will allow the students access to a duo of competent and compassionate medical practitioners," stated Keith Lott, director of the Student Health Center.

DID YOU KNOW THAT?

- 1,400 college students die each year as a result of alcohol-related incidents.
- 500,000 college students are injured each year as a result of alcohol-related accidents.
- 70,000 college students are victims of alcohol-related sexual assaults each year.
- 600,000 college students are victims of alcohol-related assaults each year.

Source: National Institute of Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism

ALCOHOL & MEDICINE- A Deadly Combination

Warnings regarding interactions with alcohol are placed on most over-the-counter and prescription medications. It is important to follow the instructions and heed their warnings when taking any medications. Unfortunately, some ignore these warnings resulting in prolonged illnesses, intensified side effects, and sometimes death. Excessive alcohol consumption while taking medication even further increases the possibility of negative outcomes. "I would advise patients taking medication to refrain from consuming alcohol as it increases the probability of an adverse reaction," stated Crystal Birdsong, Nurse Practitioner at the Student Health Center.

SOME COMMON DRUG-ALCOHOL INTERACTIONS

1. Antihistamines- increased drowsiness
2. Antibiotics- decreased effectiveness of the drug
3. Ibuprophen (Advil)- bleeding from stomach, nausea, drowsiness
4. Asthma inhalers- vomiting, muscle cramps, sweating, anxiety
5. Seizure medications- increased seizure activity
6. Antidepressants- seizures, increased depression, aggression
7. Narcotic pain relievers (Vicoden, Hydrocodone, etc.)- Respiratory arrest, liver toxicity, death
8. Steroids- psychosis, depression, personality changes

Always consult your health care provider or pharmacist if you have any questions regarding alcohol consumption while taking medication. Generally, it is best to avoid alcohol consumption while taking medication. It is not worth the risk.



Jessie Turner, Rph



“Contrary to popular belief, antibiotics do not always cure what ails you.”

NO MEDICINE?

Sometimes, the best medicine is no medicine at all. Contrary to popular belief, antibiotics do not always cure what ails you. It is important to understand that antibiotics only work against bacterial infections, not viruses that cause colds or flu. Due to the overuse of antibiotics, almost every type of bacteria has become stronger and less responsive to antibiotics when they are really needed. Patients often come to the Student Health Center expecting to leave with a prescription for an antibiotic. It is important to understand that viral infections account for the majority of coughs, congestion, and fevers. Viral infections can last from 1-2

weeks. If the health care provider is unsure if your symptoms are viral vs. bacterial, a blood test will be ordered to determine the cause of your symptoms, and an antibiotic will be prescribed if appropriate.

What works for a cold? Fluids and plenty of rest is best. If your nose is running like Niagara Falls, and your throat is scratchy, try an antihistamine like Benadryl or over-the-counter Claritin. If your head feels as stuffed as your favorite teddy bear, Sudafed will help you out. Consult with your health care provider before taking Sudafed if you have high blood pressure. If symptoms worsen after 5-7 days, schedule an appoint-

ment at the Student Health Center for an evaluation. Remember that prevention is the best medicine. Practice good hand washing and do not share drinks or food.



Crystal Birdsong, NP-C

MENINGITIS

“The CDC recommends that all incoming college freshmen residing in dormitories get the meningitis vaccine.”

Bacterial meningitis is a serious illness. Meningitis is an infection of the brain and spinal cord coverings and can also cause blood infections. Anyone can get meningitis. Ten percent of the population carries the bacteria harmlessly in their nose and throat. Meningitis is spread through coughing, sneezing, kissing, and sharing drinks/ food/ cigarettes.

Bacterial meningitis is most common in the late winter and early spring months. Unfortunately, early symptoms are flu-like, but the important differentiation is a rapid onset of symptoms. **The following are symptoms of bacterial meningitis:**

1. **High Fever**
 2. **Vomiting**
 3. **Stiff neck**
 4. **Confusion**
- If a person experiences these symptoms they should seek

immediate medical attention. The meningitis vaccine is very safe and about 85% effective in preventing most strains of infection. The protection from the vaccine lasts about three years. The Center for Disease Control (CDC) recommends that all incoming college freshmen residing in dormitories get the meningitis vaccine. The meningitis vaccine is available at the Student Health Center.

THE INSIDE SCOOP - Frequently Asked Questions



Q: Can I contract a STD if I use a condom during sex?

A: Yes. Genital herpes and genital warts are spread via the skin. Warts and herpes are both viruses that can affect areas not covered by a condom. Once exposure has been established, these viruses never leave the body.

Q: What over-the-counter medications relieve nasal congestion?

A: Sudafed works great if taken as directed. Consult with your health care provider before taking anything for congestion if you have high blood pressure.

Q: Is it true that eating small meals throughout the day can help me lose weight?

A: Absolutely! Food intake triggers metabolism. Eating a high protein snack between sensible meals helps increase the metabolic process thus burning more calories throughout the day.

Do you have a question that you would like to have answered in our newsletter? E-mail it to uhc_cab@shsu.edu.

A PRESCRIPTION FOR ABSTINENCE



Keith Lott, Director

A man went to the doctor with a condition that prompted the physician to prescribe medication. The doctor wrote out a prescription and the man immediately had it filled at the local pharmacy and took the medication as prescribed. At the end of the week, the man's condition had worsened to the point that he was admitted to the hospital. The treating physician arrived at the hospital to discuss the man's condition. Upon inquiry, the doctor explained that he had previously prescribed the second most effective medication for the man's condition because the most effective medication was expensive and not available at the local pharmacy. The man

replied, "I wish that you would have prescribed the most effective medication or at least would have given me the option to choose. I would have gladly paid more and drove a little further to get the most effective medication. Now I will experience a much greater expense and inconvenience as a result of my condition."

Those that have opportunities to educate others regarding alcohol consumption and sexual activity often promote the second and third best choices for students regarding these two important issues. I vigorously advocate a strong emphasis on abstinence regarding alcohol consumption and sexual activity for students because it is clearly the healthiest choice. Obvi-

ously, someone who does not consume alcohol is not going to die of alcohol poisoning. Likewise, someone who is sexually abstinent until marriage will not experience the potential negative consequences associated with sex outside marriage. I feel that health educators have the obligation to "prescribe" the healthiest choices for students and then allow them to make informed decisions. If students choose the second or third best choice it should not be because they were not educated and encouraged to make the healthiest decision regarding alcohol consumption and sex before marriage - abstinence.

NURSE NOTES

Strains & Sprains

Have you ever lifted an object and developed back pain or perhaps injured your ankle while playing sports? If so, you are painfully familiar with strains and sprains. **Strains** occur when muscles or tendons are stretched or torn. **Sprains** occur when ligaments are stretched or torn. Sprains are more serious than strains. For self-care tips, remember

R.I.C.E.:

Rest– stop using the injured part immediately

Ice– apply ice ASAP to ease pain and limit swelling. Use ice for 20 minutes and remove for 30 minutes-repeat 3-4 times per day. Never put ice directly on skin.

Compression– wrap the area firmly, but not too tight

Elevate-raise above heart

Seek immediate medical attention if:

1. an injured joint looks crooked, blue, or feels numb or cold.
2. you suspect a broken bone.

Gastroenteritis - "Oh, my stomach!!!"

Gastroenteritis (GE) is inflammation of the stomach, small intestines and/or large intestines. It is commonly known as the "vomiting and diarrhea bug" and is usually caused by a virus.

Symptoms may include:

- Nausea
- Vomiting
- Diarrhea
- Fever
- Stomach ache
- Abdominal cramping

Treatment:

It is important to drink fluids to avoid dehydration. For the first 24 hours, sip clear liquids only (ice chips, water, chicken broth). After the vomiting has ceased and you are able to keep liquids down, start with bland foods such as rice, toast, crackers, or potatoes. Avoid milk and alcohol. Viral GE is contagious and is not treatable with an antibiotic. The virus is spread by close contact with others having the virus, such as kissing, drinking after each

other, etc. To prevent this infection, practice stringent hand-washing, particularly before eating. Seek medical attention if vomiting or diarrhea persists for more than 2 days, if you have blood in vomit or diarrhea, or if you experience a high fever or abdominal pain.



Ana Maiorano, LVN

R.I.C.E. is effective when caring for strains and sprains.

LABORATORY TESTS - Complete Blood Count



One of the most commonly ordered laboratory tests is the complete blood count (CBC). A CBC tests the many types of cells in the blood such as white blood cells, red blood cells and platelets. The quantity of each of these cells gives insight to a patient's condition. For example, a blood specimen with a high number of white blood cells indicates that a bacterial infection is present; whereas,

a low white blood cell count is indicative of a viral infection. Knowing how many of these cells are in a blood sample provides information that assists health care providers to accurately diagnose and treat patients' conditions. This is important not only to the patient, but to the general public as it assists the health care provider in avoiding the unnecessary prescription of antibiotics.



Pat Luna, Medical Technologist

"The renovations will require the department to temporarily relocate to modular buildings located in the Estill Hall parking lot which is located behind our facility."

Student Health Center

Clinic, Laboratory & Pharmacy

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STUDENT HEALTH CENTER RENOVATIONS

The Student Health Center facility is undergoing renovations that are scheduled for completion by Summer 2005. The air conditioning and heating system along with the ceiling and lighting were replaced over the summer. During Fall 2004, renovation of the interior will take place. The renovations will require the department to

temporarily relocate to modular buildings placed in the Estill Hall parking lot which is located behind our facility. Other than the temporary relocation of the department, no major changes to services are expected.

"I eagerly anticipate having a facility that reflects the quality of the services and programs

that we provide to the students.

The inconvenience of moving and operating from a temporary location will be well worth it on the day that we move back into a completely renovated facility," stated Keith Lott, Director.



HEALTHY QUOTES

When wealth is lost, nothing is lost; when health is lost, something is lost; when character is lost, all is lost.

-Billy Graham

True friendship is like sound health; the value of it is seldom known until it is lost.

-Charles Caleb Colton

A man too busy to take care of his health is like a mechanic too busy to take care of his tools.

-Spanish proverb

To insure good health: eat lightly, breathe deeply, live moderately, cultivate cheerfulness, and maintain an interest in life.

—William Londen

Take care of your body. It is the only place you have to live.

—Jim Rohn

I have every sympathy with the American who was so horrified by what he has read of the effects of smoking that he gave up reading.

- Lord Conesford

DISCLAIMER: The information in this newsletter is intended to assist SHSU students in making healthy decisions by providing general guidelines. Persons experiencing medical conditions or requiring specific information should contact their health care provider.