



## A MONTHLY NEWSLETTER FROM THE WELLNESS CENTER AT NORUMBEGA POINT

*January, 2012*

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### **January is National Fiber Focus Month**

Many of our residents do not go into each meal thinking about where they can get more of their daily recommended fiber, but your fiber intake does have a big effect on your daily lives. You have heard of fiber, but do you understand what it is and how to include it in your diet?

#### ***What is it?***

Fiber is best described as carbohydrate that cannot be digested. It can be found in varying amounts in all plants that are eaten. There are two types of fiber that are found in these foods, known as “soluble fiber” and “insoluble fiber”. These are named according to how well the fiber dissolves in water; both are important to include in your diet. Soluble fiber helps make the food in your digestive tract soft and bulky, while insoluble fiber adds bulk and helps push the food along your nearly 25 feet of intestines! Soluble fiber is found in oatmeal, berries, beans, apples, pears, and nuts/seeds. Insoluble fiber is found in foods like celery, carrots, cucumbers, and whole grain products.

#### ***Why should I eat fiber?***

The daily recommendation for fiber intake in adults is 20-35 grams, while most Americans get on average only 15 grams. High dietary fiber intake has been linked to a lower risk of heart disease and type II diabetes in several large studies that followed participants for many years. Additionally fiber has benefits for digestive health. In a study done by Harvard, eating insoluble fiber was associated with nearly a 40% lower risk of diverticulitis. Finally, dietary fiber, along with plenty of fluids, helps relieve constipation. To preserve the health of your digestive tract, try to reach the daily recommendation for fiber intake.

#### ***Where can I add more to my diet?***

Norumbega provides many foods that are excellent sources of fiber. At breakfast, try to eat oatmeal or other high fiber cereals and fruit. A medium banana has 3 grams of fiber and 1 cup of oatmeal provides another 4 grams. For lunch, forego the ice cream and have some applesauce instead; 2/3 of a cup provides more than 3 grams of fiber. At dinner, make sure you eat your vegetables. Winter squash packs a punch with 3.5 grams of fiber in only 1/2 a cup; a medium potato (with skin on) provides 5 more grams. If you begin to add fiber to your diet, do so slowly as it will take your

#### *Wellness Center Office Hours:*

- Non-Emergent  
Monday –Friday  
1:30-3:30 pm

#### *Blood Pressure Checks:*

Thursday, January 5th  
10:00am - 11:00am

#### *Dysphagia /Swallowing Lecture*

Monday, January 9  
2:00 pm Totem Pole Room

#### *To Contact Wellness:*

Call the front desk at  
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***Please feel free to let us know if  
you have any requests health  
related presentations for the  
upcoming year.***

## Dysphagia Lecture presented by Parmenter VNA – January 9, 2:00 pm

Eating and swallowing can become more difficult as a result of aging. Reduced moisture and loss of muscle strength in the mouth and throat can cause swallowing problems. Dysphagia can affect over 20% of adults over the age of 50 and can have dangerous consequences. Lee Murphy, a Speech-Language Pathologist will discuss the physiology and symptoms of swallowing difficulty. To conclude, she will explain some strategies that will reduce risk of choking and aspiration. Please come with questions!

### January is Glaucoma Awareness Month

**Q: What is glaucoma?** Glaucoma causes damage to the optic nerve, which carries images from the eye to the brain. With glaucoma, that nerve is damaged, causing irreversible vision loss.

**Q: What are symptoms?** Typically, none. The disease is painless and causes gradual vision loss. Early on, glaucoma can cause a subtle loss of contrast between objects and their backgrounds.

**Q: How can I prevent glaucoma?** You can't. But you can probably control it if you detect it early. Americans over the age of 45 should have comprehensive, annual eye exams. A doctor of optometry can evaluate the functional status of your eyes and detect certain chronic and systemic diseases.

**Q: Who is at risk for glaucoma?** Everyone, but groups with highest risk are: people over age 45, African-Americans family members of those who have it and those with eye injuries. Also at risk: Those with high myopia (nearsightedness), diabetes and hypertension or use steroids/cortisone on a regular basis.

**Q: What can you do to reduce your risk?** Get regular, annual eye exams.

### *Say Good-bye to Dry Skin*

Chilly winter weather means lots of time indoors with the furnace fired up. Dry, forced-air heat can lead to flaky skin and chapped lips. But you can defend your skin from the brutal elements.

**Shower power.** A long, hot soak in the tub feels great on a cold day, but hot water can dissolve skin's natural oils. A better bet is a short, lukewarm shower with a moisturizing soap or body wash. Go easy on the soap—too much can dry the skin.

**Rub it in.** Moisturizers come in four forms: ointment, oil, cream and lotion. Ointments are the most emollient and work well on areas prone to flaking, such as feet, knees and elbows. Oils, creams and lotions work best when applied immediately after a shower. Fragranced or medicated products can be irritating, so use them with caution.

**Nurture your nails.** Dry air also parches fingernails. Massage cuticle cream into nail beds to avoid painful hangnails. Rub hand lotion into fingernails, too, to help prevent peeling and splitting.

**Pucker protection.** Exposure to harsh weather puts lips at risk for chapping. Licking the lips makes matters worse—the evaporation of moisture exacerbates the dryness. Apply lip balm frequently to keep lips soft and soothed.