



Health & Education

Have a safe and happy St. Patrick's Day

Free Pediatrics Care

Now parents can get affordable natural health care for children 18 and younger three days a week through the National College of Naturopathic Medicine's westside location, 4444 SW Corbett Street, starting April 3, 2000.

Unlimited free visits are offered, by appointment only, on teaching shifts at NCNM Natural Health Center-Corbett. Teaching shifts are comprised of naturopathic medical students honing their clinical skills under the supervision of licensed naturopathic doctors and clinical faculty.

"Our students are the driving force behind this service," said Chris D. Meletis, ND, Dean of Clinical Education. "They have been working in some pediatrics clinics around town and felt there was an urgent need for this option. We are delighted to offer this opportunity to the community, and appreciative of our students' response to this need."

By offering an unlimited number of free visits, said Dr. Meletis, the children have access to continued naturopathic care for ongoing problems such as chronic ear infections and food sensitivities. NDs are licensed in Oregon as primary care physicians and treat a variety of childhood ailments. They are also trained to make medical referrals as needed, and to coordinate care with MDs and other health care professionals.

NCNM was founded in 1956 and is the oldest accredited naturopathic medical school in the U.S. It offers a four-year Doctor of Naturopathic Medicine degree and a three-year Master of Science in Oriental Medicine degree, with teaching clinics in several Portland-area locations.

Tobacco users quitting in records numbers

CONTRIBUTOR STORY
FOR THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

State Says Aggressive Campaign to Help Tobacco Users Quit is Working. Instead of reaching for a cigarette, the Department of Human Services-Oregon Health Division, says tobacco users are reaching for the phone. Oregon's tobacco Quit Line, providing support statewide, has shown remarkable success after only one year of operation. According to the Division, almost 10,000 callers have asked the Quit Line for help since January of 1999.

"Really, we are just thrilled with the numbers of Oregonians who are quitting," said Clay Parton, director of the state Tobacco Prevention and Education Program. "We hoped that the Quit Line would fill a void, but had no idea that it would prove to be such a popular way for Oregonians to quit using tobacco."

A recent survey conducted by OHD found 76 percent of Oregon's smokers want to quit. "We know it can be difficult to remain tobacco-free during the weeks and months after New Year's resolutions," Parton said. "We want Oregonians to know that the Oregon Tobacco Quit Line is available to help them throughout the year to make their tobacco-free pledge a reality."

In spite of the success of the Quit Line, tobacco use remains the largest preventable cause of death in Oregon. Each year, 6,200 Oregonians die from tobacco related illnesses and 800 die from secondhand smoke.

Quit Line counselors - some ex-smokers themselves - understand that different approaches work for different people. Quit Line counselors help smokers develop techniques to cope with stress and create personalized programs that fit into individuals' varying schedules. New callers to the Quit Line begin by participating in a personal counseling session, which lasts up to 45 minutes. Counselors analyze the callers' smoking patterns and help them identify upcoming stressful events and coping strategies that don't rely on tobacco.

Once a specially trained Quit Line counselor determines a caller is ready to stop smoking, then one-on-one

telephone counseling begins. Or, if a caller has already quit and is having a hard time, a counselor can help the caller stay on track. And the best part is that the entire conversation can take place from their home or work, when it is convenient for them.

The Quit Line also provides a referral service for local programs to help people quit tobacco for good and distributes quit-kits and self-help

materials for people who want to quit tobacco on their own.

To talk to a counselor, call 1-877-270-STOP (English), 1-877-2NOFUME (Spanish) or 1-877-772-6534 (TTY). The Quit Line staff is available Monday through Thursday, 9 a.m. until 8 p.m.; Friday, 9 a.m. until 5 p.m.; and Saturday, 9 a.m. until 1 p.m.

The Oregon Tobacco Prevention and Education Program is a

comprehensive effort to reduce the use of tobacco and exposure to secondhand smoke. It includes programs in local communities, schools, businesses, media and special populations. The program is funded by a tobacco tax increase approved by voters in 1996. Ten percent of the new revenue is allocated to tobacco use prevention and reduction.

Health Briefs

Women should think twice before binge drinking

Women in their child-bearing years might want to think twice before going out and binge drinking.

"Binge drinking, or consuming four or more drinks in one sitting, during the early weeks of pregnancy can be damaging to the unborn child," said Dr. Sherry Sellers, an assistant professor of pediatrics at Baylor College of Medicine and Texas Children's Hospital in Houston.

Sellers says brain cell formation and multiplication occurs between the eighth and sixteenth weeks of pregnancy. Studies have shown that drinking more than two ounces of alcohol a day or binge drinking can cause decreased intelligence, unusual facial features, attention problems and hyperactivity in some children.

In addition, drinking too much alcohol during pregnancy can cause Fetal Alcohol Syndrome, one of the leading causes of mental retardation in newborns.

Study uses radiation, gene therapy to treat prostate cancer

A new study involving radiation treatment and gene therapy offers hope to men suffering from prostate cancer.

Researchers at Baylor College of Medicine and The Methodist Hospital in Houston have taken a gene from a herpes virus, combined it with a common cold virus, and injected it directly into the cancer cells, where it produced the enzyme thymidine kinase.

"Thymidine kinase combined with the drug valacyclovir forms a toxic substance, says lead investigator Dr. Brian Butler, chief of radiology oncology at Baylor and the medical director of the radiation therapy department at Methodist. "In other words, the radiation is killing the cancer cell at the same time the gene therapy is killing the cancer cell."

Butler says a study in mice showed this type of gene therapy prevented tumors from traveling through the blood stream to other parts of the body. He believes this type of therapy might one day replace chemotherapy treatment.

Beef can be part of healthy diet

You don't have to say bye-bye to beef to maintain a heart-healthy diet. "We've found that it's okay to include meat in your diet as long as it is lean," said Lynne Scott, director of the Diet Modification Clinic at Baylor College of Medicine in Houston.

To be considered lean, three ounces of cooked meat should have less than nine grams of fat, Scott suggests choosing cuts that have most of the fat trimmed. Cuts with the word "loin," such as tenderloin, top loin and sirloin, are usually leaner choices. The grade of meat is also important. "Select" is the leanest grade, followed by "choice" and "prime," which is the

highest in fat.

In addition, it's important to grill, broil or roast the meat. Do not use fat, like butter or shortening, when cooking and trim any visible fat.

Hair braiding is not healthy. Hair braiding may look cool, but is not very healthy for your hair or scalp.

"Braiding creates a great deal of tension, which can interfere with the blood supply and cause the hair to fracture," said Dr. John Wolf, a dermatologist with Baylor College of Medicine in Houston. "This can lead to the destruction of the hair follicle, which ultimately leads to permanent hair loss."

Braiding can also cause hygiene problems. Wolf says it's virtually impossible to shampoo your hair when braids are in place. Failure to properly clean the hair can lead to dandruff, dermatitis and other skin problems.

Stretching is key for 'weekend warriors'

A good stretching program can help keep 'weekend warriors' in the game. "Stretching should be part of any sporting activity," said Dr. Lon Castle, a sports medicine specialist with Baylor College of Medicine in Houston. "It's important to stretch between 15 and 20 minutes and target the hamstrings, groin, thighs, biceps and shoulders. Also, a slow jog or bike ride will help get the blood flowing to the heart."

There is no data that shows stretching prevents muscle injuries. However, not stretching can cause injuries to the tendons, especially the Achilles tendon. Castle says holding each stretch between five and 10 seconds will help you avoid these types of injuries.

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