

## To Your Health!

By Judy Hargis, P.A.



I am excited to be writing this column again. Now that I have finished my graduate degree and life has settled down, I am looking forward to sharing information on current medical issues and providing updates on recommendations for optimal health.

The next several columns will focus on exciting new research on the aging brain, statin drugs and heart disease risk in women, current health and cancer screening recommendations. Medicine is constantly changing, with new recommendations and guidelines emerging daily. Making sense of what this means and its relevance to each individual's health can be a daunting experience. This column is dedicated to helping readers sort through the large amounts of health information bombarding them via the internet and the media. My goal is to facilitate individuals and their families to be more informed, so they can take a more active role in their health outcomes.

In this struggling economy, small rural communities have been hit particularly hard, and access to health care has become increasingly challenging. It is important to commend the Vernonia Health Board, with its dedicated members, for their efforts to keep health care accessible and affordable in Vernonia. Many communities of this size have suffered under the weight of our broken health care system. They have experienced clinic closures and difficulty recruiting, and retaining healthcare providers. This has led to minimal or no healthcare access. Vernonia will continue to have a clinic, thanks to the dedication and hard work of this group. As Margaret Mead so eloquently wrote: "Never underestimate the power of a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens to change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has." This statement reflects the impact the board has had in keeping health care alive in this community.

I want to take this opportunity to thank "Verdura Family Wellness" for making the commitment to provide quality, affordable health care accessible to the community. In our current climate of corporate, profit driven health care, they share the values of the Health Board and the people of Vernonia.

In the next column I will focus on new research on the aging brain. I am looking forward to sharing health information with you and welcome your comments and feedback. Please contact me at: [Rebecca@the-independent.net](mailto:Rebecca@the-independent.net).

## DEQ seeks input on gray water reuse

The Oregon Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) is seeking comments through Monday, March 12, on two proposed permits it will offer Oregonians who wish to install and operate graywater reuse and disposal systems on their properties.

Graywater includes wastewater from showers and baths, laundry wastewater, and wastewater from bathroom and kitchen sinks. It can be used, under certain conditions and limitations, for beneficial purposes such as irrigation. Using graywater for select, allowed uses also helps preserve limited water supplies.

Under rules approved by the Oregon Environmental Quality Commission last August, Oregonians can reuse graywater by registering for coverage through one of two Water Pollution Control Facilities general permits, depending on the amount and type of graywater

they reuse. The permits, which would need to be renewed every five years, spell out certain conditions to follow to ensure that graywater use does not present a public and environmental health threat, including design elements for graywater reuse and disposal systems.

More details about the proposals and DEQ's graywater program are available on DEQ's website at <http://www.deq.state.or.us/wq/reuse/graywater.htm>.

Highlights of the permits:

- 2401 WPCF general permit for Tier 1 graywater reuse and disposal systems (\$40 annual fee plus a \$50, one-time new-permit application fee). Available for single-family residences and duplexes generating less than 300 gallons a day of Type 1 graywater. Type 1 is untreated or has passed through a filter or screen and is only to be used for subsurface

irrigation of landscape plants or compost.

- 2402 WPCF general permit for Tier 2 systems (\$50 annual fee plus \$534, one-time new-permit application). Available for any structure (home or business) generating up to 1,200 gallons of Type 1 or Type 2 graywater daily. Type 2 graywater has passed through both a physical and chemical/biological process to reduce concentrations of solids and organic material.

Persons interested in commenting on the proposed permits may mail, email or fax comments to DEQ. Comments may be mailed to Ron Doughten, DEQ Water Quality Division, 811 SW Sixth Ave., Portland, OR 97204 or emailed to [graywater@deq.state.or.us](mailto:graywater@deq.state.or.us). Faxed comments may be sent to Ron Doughten at 503-229-6037. Deadline for submitting all written comments is 5:00 p.m. Monday, March 12.

## Keep hazardous waste safe from storms

DEQ asks all Oregonians in areas that may be affected by winter storms and flooding to secure all hazardous material to help prevent toxic release.

Prior to the onset of winter storm events, the State of Oregon urges businesses and citizens to secure containers of chemical products and hazardous materials, other loose items and any waste materials that could become storm-driven debris.

The release of toxic materials and hazardous wastes into

the environment makes recovery from floods and storms more difficult in addition to adversely impacting the environment and public health. Workers and crews responding to the storms, residents and wildlife can come into contact with these materials. Even a small amount released into the environment can cause widespread damage and harm.

Containers of chemicals and other products should be securely sealed and where possible should be stored in areas that are unlikely to be affected by high winds or flood waters. Move items to higher ground if possible and utilize shelving that will likely remain above the flood line. Loose items (fire-

wood, lawn chairs, garbage cans, etc.) should also be secured to prevent property loss and minimize contribution to flood cleanup debris.

Household hazardous materials include products used in the home that contain toxic chemicals. Products labeled "Caution, Warning, Danger, Poison, Toxic, Flammable or Corrosive" are considered hazardous.

Some examples of materials or wastes that should be secured are:

- Aerosols
  - Antifreeze
  - Auto Batteries
  - Auto Fluids
  - Disinfectants
  - Household cleaners and drain openers
  - Fertilizer
  - Fuel containers containing gasoline, lighter fluid, propane, etc.
  - Latex / Oil-Based Paint
  - Pesticides
  - Pool Chemicals
  - Propane Tanks – less than 30 gallons
  - Solvents
  - Tires
  - Used Oil and Oil Filters
- For more information visit DEQ's website at [www.oregon.gov/DEQ](http://www.oregon.gov/DEQ) and click on the links under "Dealing with Disaster Debris?"

### Verdura Family Wellness

is proud to open our doors for business on  
**Monday, February 20th, 2012!**

Open Monday, Wednesday and Thursday from 8:30am to 5pm.

You can discover more information about our providers and practice philosophy, print patient registration forms through our Patient Portal, and view accepted insurance carriers on our website

**Come meet the staff and providers at our Open House on Saturday, February 18th, from 9:30am to Noon**

If you are unable to attend the Open House, you can visit Vernonia Pharmacy or the West Oregon Electric Co-Op for patient registration forms at your convenience

We look forward to partnering with the local health professionals in contributing to the community's wellness!

[www.verdurafamilywellness.com](http://www.verdurafamilywellness.com)

Verdura Family Wellness 510 Bridge Street, Vernonia 503-429-0300

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