UC Health & Wellness Newsletter

Upcoming Event Dates:

• “How Money Works” with Dan DeBloise.
  Wed., February 4
  Session 1
  Clark City Center
  9:30-11 Breakfast served
  Session 2
  Boehlert Conf Room
  12-1:30 Lunch served
  Registration required

• Chair Massages - with Sarah
  January 16th 10-3pm
  Strebel Student Center
  Registration required

It’s NOT about resolutions.

We tend to focus our resolutions on aspects of our lives that feel negative, looking at things we should be doing or things we should not be doing.

I should exercise more...I should stop smoking...I should watch my weight...I should drink less soda/coffee/alcohol...

It IS about being inspired.

Why make yourself feel bad by thinking that your current behavior is negative? It is what it is. Change that thinking and make 2015 the year you feel great about any changes you are able to make, feel inspired to move forward and then celebrate your accomplishments.

Here’s your chance!

Join the Utica College student Student Medical Society in their annual charity fund-raising “Couch to 5K”

Race will be held on the UC campus
  April 25, 2015
  Training begins Jan 26

For more info or to register click here

Register for H & W events by clicking here
Or contact Caren at cbsummers@utica.edu for information

From Utica College Human Resources
Who besides me has arthritis? My guess is that some of my fellow employees are also dealing with the aches and pains of this common ailment. Here’s the lowdown from the Staff at the Mayo Clinic...

Arthritis is inflammation of one or more of your joints. The main symptoms of arthritis are joint pain and stiffness, which typically worsen with age. The most common types of arthritis are osteoarthritis and rheumatoid arthritis.

Osteoarthritis causes cartilage — the hard, slippery tissue that covers the ends of bones where they form a joint — to break down. Rheumatoid arthritis is an autoimmune disorder that first targets the lining of joints (synovium).

Uric acid crystals, infections or underlying disease, such as psoriasis or lupus, can cause other types of arthritis.

Treatments vary depending on the type of arthritis. The main goals of arthritis treatments are to reduce symptoms and improve quality of life.

The most common signs and symptoms of arthritis involve the joints. Depending on the type of arthritis you have, your signs and symptoms may include:

- Pain
- Stiffness
- Swelling
- Redness
- Decreased range of motion

Arthritis treatment focuses on relieving symptoms and improving joint function. You may need to try several different treatments, or combinations of treatments, before you determine what works best for you.

Medications

The medications used to treat arthritis vary depending on the type of arthritis. Commonly used arthritis medications include:

- **Analgesics.** These types of medications help reduce pain, but have no effect on inflammation. Examples include acetaminophen (Tylenol, others), tramadol (Ultram, others) and narcotics containing oxycodone (Percocet, Oxycontin, others) or hydrocodone (Vicodin, Lortab, others).  

Nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs). NSAIDs reduce both pain and inflammation. Over-the-counter NSAIDs include ibuprofen (Advil, Motrin IB, others) and naproxen sodium (Aleve). Some types of NSAIDs are available only by prescription. Oral NSAIDs can cause stomach irritation, and some may increase your risk of heart attack or stroke. Some NSAIDs are also available as creams or gels, which can be rubbed on joints.

- **Counterirritants.** Some varieties of creams and ointments contain menthol or capsaicin, the ingredient that makes hot peppers spicy. Rubbing these preparations on the skin over your aching joint may interfere with the transmission of pain signals from the joint itself.

- **Disease-modifying antirheumatic drugs (DMARDs).** Often used to treat rheumatoid arthritis, DMARDs slow or stop your immune system from attacking your joints. Examples include methotrexate (Trexall) and hydroxychloroquine (Plaquenil).

- **Biologics.** Typically used in conjunction with DMARDs, biologic response modifiers are genetically engineered drugs that target various protein molecules that are
Corticosteroids can be taken orally or be injected directly into the painful joint.

**Therapy**

Physical therapy can be helpful for some types of arthritis. Exercises can improve range of motion and strengthen the muscles surrounding joints. In some cases, splints or braces may be warranted.

**Surgery**

If conservative measures don't help, your doctor may suggest surgery, such as:

- **Joint replacement.** This procedure removes your damaged joint and replaces it with an artificial one. Joints most commonly replaced are hips and knees.
- **Joint fusion.** This procedure is more often used for smaller joints, such as those in the wrist, ankle and fingers. It removes the ends of the two bones in the joint and then locks those ends together until they heal into one rigid unit.
- **Weight loss.** If you're obese, losing weight will reduce the stress on your weight-bearing joints. This may increase your mobility and limit future joint injury.
- **Exercise.** Regular exercise can help keep your joints flexible. Swimming and water aerobics may be good choices because the buoyancy of the water reduces stress on weight-bearing joints.
- **Heat and cold.** Heating pads or ice packs may help relieve arthritis pain.
- **Assistive devices.** Using canes, walkers, raised toilet seats and other assistive devices can help protect your joints and improve your ability to perform daily tasks.

Many people use alternative remedies for arthritis, but there is little reliable evidence to support the use of many of these products. The most promising alternative remedies for arthritis include:

- **Glucosamine.** Although study results have been mixed, it now appears that glucosamine works no better than placebo. However, glucosamine and the placebo both relieved arthritis pain better than taking nothing, particularly in people who have moderate to severe pain.
- **Transcutaneous electrical nerve stimulation (TENS).** Using a small device that produces mild electrical pulses, TENS therapy stimulates nerves near the aching joint and may interfere with the transmission of pain signals to the brain.
- **Yoga or tai chi.** The slow, stretching movements associated with yoga and tai chi may help improve joint flexibility and range of motion in people with some types of arthritis.
- **Massage.** Light stroking and kneading of muscles may increase blood flow and warm affected joints, temporarily relieving pain. Make sure your massage therapist knows which joints are affected by arthritis.
Almost every American has experienced some back pain at one time or another. Back pain is the second most common diagnosis in the outpatient setting, after headaches. Whether the cause is degenerative or traumatic, back pain leads to missed days of work and temporary disability in three-to-four percent of the American population each year.

Our backs weren’t designed for the modern sedentary lifestyle. Anthropologists believe that early humans were bipeds (walked upright), but also spent time on all four limbs. After examining the skeletons of prehistoric species, they think the spinal structure changed as human beings stood for longer periods. The lower spine curved more and more over the eons. That curve, the lordosis, supports upper body weight better than the straight spine of much earlier primates that walked on all fours.

Does a more curved lower spine help us deal better with life as an upright but often seated creature? Just the opposite. While increased curvature of upper or lower spine does handle the weight of the upper body on the pelvis, the benefits of a slightly curved spine end at a certain point. Complications of poor posture and obesity tend to offset the stabilizing design. Perhaps further modifications over eons will help us to live life seated. No one is sure. Nonetheless, maintenance of the natural “S” curve is essential to good back health.

S.O.S: Save our “S”

The spine is naturally configured in an “S” curve from the side. A slight concave curve of the cervical spine (neck) gently changes to the longer convex thoracic (chest) area ending in a concave curve of the lumbar region. The neutral “S” curving cervical, thoracic and lumbar spine is also the most stress-free state.

United HealthCare Services 2012

What helps your joints?

WALKING
SWIMMING
STRETCHING