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Practicing in Boca Raton and the Surrounding Community Since 1979

SUMMER 2016 - NEWSLETTER

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Hurricane Season: Health Related Preparations

The 2016 hurricane season began on June 1. We suggest the following preparations especially since we have not had a direct hit locally in over a decade and most of the local residents have not lived through a hurricane experience.

- a. Create a Hurricane Plan.
- b. Decide well in advance if you plan to stay in your home or evacuate.
- c. If you decide to leave plan to leave days in advance of the storm.
- d. Create a plan to communicate with loved ones and friends.
- e. Have a plan to protect your home, property and pets.
- f. If you require a special needs shelter you must download the application at pbc.gov special needs program application and mail it to the Special Needs Coordinator, 20 South Military Trail, West Palm Beach FL 33415.
- g. Assemble a two week supply of food, water, medicine and other needed items. Even if FEMA and local authorities respond rapidly you may need several weeks of supplies to sustain yourself before their help is available.

The office phone numbers will be forwarded to another location out of the area. If there is electricity and phone service we should be reachable at 561 368 0191. If that does not work then call my satellite phone at 1.254.240.9301. Satellite phones require me to be outside with the antennae pointed towards the stars. Leave a message and I will be checking the voicemail frequently.

Hospital emergency rooms will be open before and after the storm. The Emergency Departments lock down and shut down during the storm. The Emergency Medical Services 911 paramedics will not be allowed to drive once the winds reach 35 MPH. Boca Raton Regional Hospital is now staffed with full time residents in medicine and surgery so there will be doctors at the hospital to care for arrivals and inpatients during and after the storm until your personal physician can assume care. With communications down in the storm aftermath the hospitals have sent police officers to their homes if they need the doctor to come to the hospital. The office will open for services as soon as electricity is restored, the fire sensing equipment is functional and the Fire Marshall permits the reopening of the building.

Travelling Overseas This Summer? Health Precautions

If you are preparing to travel overseas please access the Center for Disease Control's website and travel section and look for your destinations to receive the latest health updates and recommendations for healthy travelling. Go to www.cdc.gov and look for your destination in the alphabetical listing. If you need vaccinations please make sure to leave enough advance time to receive the scheduled vaccines. Many of the vaccines recommended including yellow

fever, polio are not routinely stocked at your physician's office or pharmacy and will require a trip to the County Health Department or a visit to a travel medical office such as Passport Travel to obtain the suggested vaccines.

You should consider reviewing your health insurance policy and asking if it covers injuries and illnesses occurring overseas. You will be surprised at how poor most overseas medical coverage is. AIG and Allianz are reputable firms with travel health packages that are affordable (\$200- \$300 per year) and usually include medical evacuation programs if necessary. Certain credit card companies supply travel health insurance but their medical evacuation plan only covers travel to the nearest facility that will provide your needed service, not the facility you choose. Fortunately there are reasonably priced plans that include evacuation to the facility of your choice. Your insurance agent and travel agent should be able to provide you with travel health insurance options.

You will want to have your essential medical records with you either on a USB Flash drive or a disc. You will need your family contacts, your doctors' contact information, your medication list, your medication allergies and your active medical problem list. A copy of your most recent electrocardiogram and any recent blood tests will be helpful as well. Vaccination and immunization history and records are required at some destinations so access those as well. Some medical practices offer a patient portal that you can access via the internet with the correct user name and password. Please make sure you review the suggestions listed above to make sure your doctor's portal gives you access to the records you will need abroad. Certain countries require a letter or prescription from your physician for all prescription medications especially controlled substance medications. Without such documentation you will not clear customs. Check with your travel agent or the CDC website for that information. When in doubt call the office and we will assist as best we can. Travel safely and have fun this summer!

Summer Diseases from Mosquito Bites

Zika Virus is on the minds of most young women of child bearing age and young couples as the weather warms up and the mosquito population flourishes in our moist warm subtropical climate. While Zika is catastrophic to pregnant women and their offspring it is a mild virus in adults. Many are asymptomatic. Other mosquito borne viruses such as Dengue Fever and Chickengunya fever transmitted by the same mosquito breed are far more symptomatic, painful and uncomfortable. The best protection is to prevent the mosquito bites. Clearing up standing water from your property which can act as a breeding ground is essential. Wearing long sleeves and pants especially at dawn and dusk helps although the mosquito responsible for Zika, Dengue and Chickengunya Fevers bites during the day. Adequate insect repellent works. Consumer Reports suggests a product with 20% picardin, or 30 percent lemon eucalyptus plant plus DEET at > 8% and no more than 30%. Recommended products include, " Sawyer Fisherman's Formula Picardin or 2 Repel Lemon Eucalyptus." I found both at Walmart in the Camping Sporting Goods Section and they were less expensive than the on line price quotes I reviewed. Deep Woods Off with 25% DEET received excellent reviews as well and is available at most pharmacies and groceries. Interestingly enough homeopathic products such as citronella, Skin So Soft, lemongrass and Rosemary were found to be highly ineffective in the Consumer Reports Testing.

Sunburn, Sunscreen and How to Avoid Damaging Ultraviolet (UV) Light

Summer has arrived and individuals are outside trying to obtain the perfect tan. Exposing yourself to the sun allows your skin to be exposed to ultraviolet light. We are most concerned about ultraviolet light in UV-A spectrum (320-400 nm) and the UV-B spectrum (290-320). UV-A rays penetrate deeply and cause skin damage including photoaging of the skin, immunosuppression both locally on the skin and systemically and increased risk of cancer and infection. It is the UVB radiation that causes tanning. The delayed tanning that occurs 3 days after exposure is due primarily to UV-B radiation and is due to a redistribution of melanocytes and new melanin synthesis and

formation. This delayed tanning is at best mildly protective against sunburn at a level equivalent to SPF 2 – 3 but it has no effect on protecting you against cancer or photoaging.

Sunscreens can help reduce your risk of developing skin damage and cancer. Sunscreens are either inorganic containing products that physically shield and block the effects of ultraviolet rays or organic compounds that physically absorb the ultraviolet rays. You should be looking for a sunscreen that is “broad spectrum” protecting against UV-A and UV-B rays. You want a sunscreen that is substantive. “Water resistant” products protect up to 40 minutes after water immersion. “Very water resistant” products protect up to 80 minutes after water immersion. Data and research shows that a broad spectrum sunscreen with SPF 17 or greater will provide protection against squamous cell carcinomas and photoaging but are less effective in preventing basal cell cancers and melanomas.

It is recommended that we use sunscreen daily on all sun exposed skin. The clouds only scatter UV-B rays so on cloudy days you are being bombarded with UV-A rays despite it appearing to be overcast. It will require about a shot glass worth of sunscreen to protect the most sun exposed areas (two tablespoons) which are the face, ears, hands, arms and lips. You should be using an SPF of at least 30 which should be applied 15-30 minutes BEFORE sun exposure. It should be reapplied every two hours and after swimming or heavy perspiration.

- Remember that the sun’s rays are strongest between 10 a.m. and 4:00 p.m.
- Water, sand and, in the winter, even snow reflect UV radiation so be extra careful in those environments.
- Wear protective clothing such as closely woven, natural fiber, long sleeve shirts and pants, sunglasses and wide brimmed hats.
- Do not use tanning beds.
- Do not expect sunscreens to allow you to spend more time in the sun. Long exposure to the sun’s damaging UV rays increases your risk of skin cancer and photoaging.

Summer means longer days and more time spent outside. Be prepared and protect your skin from damage and injury.

Heat Related Illness

It is summer time and the heat and humidity are higher than at any other time of the year, making us more susceptible to heat related illness. Heat related illness occurs when your body cannot keep itself cool. As the air temperature rises, your body cools off by sweating. Sweating occurs when liquid on your skin surface evaporates. On hot humid days, the evaporation of moisture is slowed down by the increased moisture in the air. When sweating cannot cool you down your body temperature rises and you may become ill.

Some people are at greater risk to develop heat related illness than others. This includes people 65 years of age or older, people with mental illness taking medications and the physically ill; especially those with heart disease, high blood pressure and lung disease. Individuals who have suffered from heat exhaustion or heat stroke in the past have an increased risk of developing recurrent heat illnesses.

When your body overheats due to very hot weather and or exercise in the heat, you are susceptible to heat exhaustion. Patients experience heavy sweating, non-specific weakness and or confusion, dizziness, nausea, headache, rapid heartbeat and dark very concentrated urine.

If you experience these symptoms in the heat you need to get out of the heat quickly. Find an air conditioned building and rest in it. If you cannot find an air conditioned building then get into the shade and out of the sun. Start drinking cool liquids (avoid caffeine and alcohol which exacerbate fluid loss and heat related disease). Take a cool

shower or bath or apply cool water to your skin. Remove any tight constricting clothing. If you do not feel better within 30 minutes you must contact your physician or seek emergency help.

Untreated or inadequately treated heat exhaustion can progress to heatstroke. Heatstroke occurs when the internal body temperature rises to 104 degrees Fahrenheit or higher. Heatstroke is far more serious than heat exhaustion. It can cause damage to your internal organs and brain and it can kill you. Patients with heatstroke are running a fever of 104 degrees or higher. They complain of severe headaches with a dizzy or lightheaded feeling. Their skin is flushed or red in appearance and they are NOT sweating. Many will be experiencing severe and painful muscle cramps accompanied by nausea and vomiting. Their heartbeats are rapid, their blood pressure low. They may be agitated, anxious and disoriented with some experiencing epileptic type seizures.

Heatstroke is a medical emergency and you must call 911 immediately. While you are waiting for help to arrive remove their clothing after taking the patient to an air conditioned or shady place. Wet the skin with water and fan the skin if possible. If you have access to ice or ice packs place them on the patient's neck, back, groin and armpits while waiting for help.

Heat illness is preventable. When the heat index is over 90 and you must go outside wear lightweight, light-colored, loose fitting clothing. Wear a hat or use an umbrella. Apply sunscreen SPF 30 or greater 15-20 minutes BEFORE going outside. Drink plenty of water before you go out and 2-4 glasses of cool water each hour you are outside working in the heat. Avoid alcohol and caffeine including soda with caffeine. Take frequent breaks every 20 minutes and drink water or sports drink even if you do not feel thirsty. Try to schedule your outside work for before 10 a.m. or after 6 p.m. to avoid peak sun exposure.

If you are being treated for chronic medical conditions ask your doctor how to prevent heat illness. Antihistamines, some blood pressure medications (beta-blockers and vasoconstrictors), diet pills, anti-depressants and antipsychotics impair your ability to control your internal body temperature. Water pills to prevent excessive fluid lead to dehydration. Anti-epilepsy and anti-seizure medicines impair your body's ability to regulate internal temperatures as well.

What is SPF "Sun Protection Factor" and What is the Daily UV Index?

SPF is a laboratory measure of the efficacy of sunscreen and is defined as the amount of ultraviolet radiation needed to produce sunburn on protected skin relative to unprotected skin. It is a measurement of redness or "erythema" and is mainly a measure of UV-B radiation exposure not UV-A (the more damaging type of radiation to deep skin structure) exposure.

The SPF of a product is not related to the duration of UV radiation exposure. The relationship between SPF and UV-B radiation protection is not 1:1 or linear meaning that an SPF 30 does not protect you for twice as long as an SPF 15. For example, an SPF of 15 can filter 94% of the sun's UV-B radiation while a SPF of 30 will filter 97%. UV radiation dosage depends on both how long you are out in the sun and how intense the UV radiation is.

The daily UV index is a measure of the level or intensity of UV radiation. It is presented on a scale of 1 (low) to 11+ (extremely high). The US National Weather Service and the US Environmental Protection Agency provide this data which is presented on most weather reports and published in newspapers and on line daily.

Is It Time For A New Bottle of Sunscreen?

As summer approaches those of us interested in protecting our skin reach for the bottle of sunscreen. A third of sunscreen users do not look at the bottle to see if the product has expired. The ingredients in sunscreen do expire and become ineffective so check the date of expiration. If you have run out of sunscreen *Consumer Reports* has

just reviewed the topic and rated the best new products to buy. If a lotion is your preference, their “best buys” include Walmart's Equate Ultra Protection and Sport SPF 50 No-Ad. They also like Coppertone Water Babies SPF 50. If you prefer a spray they recommend Walmart's Equate Sport Continuous Spray SPF 30. For extreme protection they suggest Coppertone UltraGuard SPF 70. They suggest that children can use adult sunscreen without problems.

New Employee Joins Nursing Staff

We are pleased to announce that Meagan Thompson has joined our staff as a medical assistant. Meagan has been a medical assistant for eight years with extensive experience in phlebotomy and IV Therapy. She “enjoys putting a smile on patients’ faces.” Anyone who meets Meagan and views her professional, polished and warm manner will understand quickly why she is considered a valuable addition. Meagan is a newlywed who enjoys cooking and family time. She replaces Tessa who took a position much closer to her home to reduce travel time. Say hello to Meagan on your next office visit.

Summer Medical Students Have Arrived

The Palm Beach County Medical Society has been sponsoring a program which allows promising students to learn from experienced medical practitioners while on their summer break in the hopes of attracting young future practitioners to Palm Beach County. They always have difficulty finding physicians to mentor the students.

Over the last few years we were fortunate to meet Alex Nusbeckel, now a graduate of the University of North Carolina and a first year medical student at the University Of Florida School Of Medicine. This year we are happy to work with Julia Lewis, a Boca Raton resident and junior honor student at the University of Florida in Gainesville. Julia was an honor student at Pope John Paul High School and valedictorian before beginning her higher education. She is joined by Andrea Cantos, a junior honor student at the University of Notre Dame in South Bend, Indiana and former honor student of the Baccalaureate program at Atlantic High School in Delray Beach.

The students are here seeing patients with me on Monday and Wednesday afternoons. I look forward to my patients teaching the students how they wish to be treated as patients by their doctors. This is your opportunity to be a mentor as well. If you prefer to not have the student present during your office visit just let us know. There are many non-patient contact functions to teach them in the office while you are here. If you have any questions or suggestions about the student's role in the practice please call me.

Influenza Vaccination Fall 2016. Morning Vaccinations are More Effective

As we prepare for summer heat, humidity, vacations and Hurricane Season in South Florida it is already time to pre order flu vaccine. We place an order in June for delivery in September. Once again we will be ordering the Quadrivalent Flu Vaccine for our patients less than 65 years old. Our patients over 65 years old will be receiving the Senior High Dose vaccine which is a trivalent vaccine protecting against the three most common viral forms of influenza expected to impact the United States this season. The Florida Department of Public Health will begin its vaccination advertising and promotion as of September 1, 2016 striving to have adults living and working in senior care facilities protected early. There is still some debate about how long our immunity to influenza vaccine lasts in senior citizens. Some models show a decline in immunity beginning at three months. Since influenza peaks in Florida in late January and early February we prefer to immunize our patients in late October and early November. It takes ten days or more for a patient to develop immunity after receiving the vaccine. In recent studies published in the journal Vaccine, 2016May, 34(24):2679-85 Anna C Phillip, PhD, of the School of Sport, Exercise and Rehabilitation Sciences at the University of Birmingham (England) and colleagues produced data that showed there is a superior antibody response to the flu vaccine if senior patients receive the shot in the morning as opposed to the afternoon. They believe normal daily variations in human hormonal levels and other internal chemicals account for this

morning benefit. Based on this data we will encourage all our patients over 65 years of age to schedule their influenza vaccination before noon to derive this morning benefit. For those patients choosing to receive their vaccine in a local pharmacy or in a community wide vaccination program we ask that you obtain written documentation of your vaccination so that we may record it in your chart. If you have any questions about flu shots in the fall of 2016 please call us.

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Interested? Please contact me for the details.

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