LAREDO

Medical Update

YOUR HEALTH, YOUR LIFE

Winter Health GUIDE

MAKING SENSE
OF LABELS

DANGERS OF
DISTRACTED DRIVING

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Laredo MEDICAL CENTER

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DON'T BE BLUE:
Frozen Is Fine

Love blueberries and want to eat them year-round, but you're worried that frozen fruit may pack less of an antioxidant punch? Don't be. A recent study found freezing preserves the fruit's healthy qualities, while water leaching out into ice crystals actually increases the concentration of antioxidants.

Anthocyanin — the antioxidant that gives blueberries their color — helps your body reduce cell damage. So mix a handful of fresh or frozen blueberries into your cereal, smoothie or pancakes.

Is Your Food Really HEALTHY?

Have you noticed that your favorite foods are beginning to have words such as "whole grain" or "organic" on their packaging? Just because the packaging contains health-related wording doesn't mean the food inside is good for you. Researchers at the University of Houston found that consumers receive a "false sense of health" from nutritional claims featured on product labels. You can trust the nutrition facts label and ingredient list on the back panel to help you make an informed choice. Select items that contain a small number of familiar ingredients and those low in fat, calories, sugar and salt.

Have Joint Pain and Stiffness?
Eat Fish!

Recent research found that omega-3 fatty acids, found in several species of fish, such as salmon, trout and tuna, can help reduce joint pain and stiffness. Omega-3 fatty acids also increase the effectiveness of anti-inflammatory medications, which are used to ease discomfort. Your body does not produce these fatty acids on its own. To up your intake of essential fatty acids, add fish into your diet two or three times a week. One helpful tip: Choose wild salmon, which contains higher levels of omega-3 than the farmed variety. Not a fan of fish? Sprinkle walnuts or flaxseed on your salad or add them into a smoothie.

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DR. GHADIMI-MAHANI'S OFFICE IS LOCATED AT LAREDO MEDICAL CENTER, 1710 E. SAUNDERS STREET, SUITE A140. APPOINTMENTS CAN BE MADE BY CALLING (956) 796-3580 OR VISITING HIS WEBSITE, LAREDOHEMATOLOGYONCOLOGY.COM.

Laredo Medical Center Welcomes *Dr. Mohsen Ghadimi-Mahani,* Hematologist/Oncologist, to Its Medical Staff

Mohsen Ghadimi-Mahani, M.D., medical oncology

Laredo Medical Center is proud to welcome Mohsen Ghadimi-Mahani, M.D., medical oncology, to Laredo and its medical staff. A member of Laredo Hematology & Oncology Associates, Dr. Ghadimi-Mahani specializes in the diagnosis, treatment and prevention of blood diseases and cancers.

Dr. Ghadimi-Mahani says he knew he would begin his medical practice in a South Texas community after living in the Dominican Republic.

"I trained for medical school in the Dominican Republic, and there, I fell in love with the Latin culture and people," Dr. Ghadimi-Mahani says. "Living in Laredo gives me the opportunity to practice oncology and give something back to the community."

In medical school, Dr. Ghadimi-Mahani also discovered his interest in treating cancer patients.

"My father was diagnosed with cancer, so my family and I experienced first-hand what a life-changing diagnosis cancer can be," Dr. Ghadimi-Mahani says. "Because of this, I intend on being a source of information and support for my patients."

Certified by the American Board of Internal Medicine and Medical Oncology, Dr. Ghadimi-Mahani focuses on all types of cancers, including gastrointestinal, breast, lung, liver, prostate, lymphoma and cancers of the blood. He also provides cancer genetic counseling and testing in his office, and works with a certified nurse navigator, Diana Leal, RNC, WHNP-BC, MSN. Nurse navigator services include assisting patients with testing, appointments and resources. Together, Diana and Dr. Ghadimi-Mahani work with a multitude of doctors in treating their patients.

"Cancer treatment can be complicated. It takes a multidisciplinary approach involving many doctors," Dr. Ghadimi-Mahani explains. "Being able to provide comprehensive cancer care in one location is very convenient for the patient."

Dr. Ghadimi-Mahani provides the latest standard of care put forth by the National Comprehensive Cancer Network.

"Following the same standard of care as larger cancer institutions is what I offer my cancer patients," says Dr. Ghadimi-Mahani. "A large part of recovery comes from the support of family and friends."

Before relocating to Laredo, Dr. Ghadimi-Mahani was an assistant professor at the University of Texas Medical Branch (UTMB) in Galveston division of medical oncology and hematology. He graduated summa cum laude with his medical degree from the Universidad Iberoamericana, Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic, in 2007. Dr. Ghadimi-Mahani completed his internal medicine residency at the Methodist Hospital in Houston and completed his fellowship in medical oncology at UTMB. He is a member of the American College of Physicians and the American Society of Clinical Oncology and is fluent in both English and Spanish.

To learn more about cancer services offered at Laredo Medical Center, visit LaredoMedical.com or call (956) 796-3223.

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STAYING AT YOUR BEST During the Winter

WITH FEWER HOURS OF SUNLIGHT, STAYING POSITIVE IN THE WINTER CAN BE CHALLENGING FOR MANY PEOPLE. THESE THREE STEPS CAN HELP KEEP YOU ON TOP OF YOUR GAME THIS SEASON.

Step 1: BOOST YOUR OVERALL IMMUNITY.

Keeping your immune system healthy is your best defense against colds, influenza (flu) and other respiratory infections common during the winter months. A strong immune system can also help you recover faster if you do become sick.

As you age, your immunity can waver, so keep it at optimal levels by looking for ways to balance your life. Adults need seven to nine hours of sleep each night. Try going to bed earlier if you've been skimping on sleep.

The stress of holiday plans and gatherings can leave you overwhelmed and under the weather. Make time for the events that matter the most, but schedule some time to relax and reflect, too.

Eating well is also an important part of maintaining a healthy immune system. Add yogurt or kefir, which contain good forms of bacteria, to your diet to reduce infections while improving digestion. Rely on whole foods, such as fresh fruits and vegetables, low-fat dairy, lean proteins, and whole-grain carbohydrates, to nourish your body. Stay away from processed foods whenever possible. Other ways to keep your immune system happy include:

- **Enjoy tea time.** Whether you prefer Earl Grey or chamomile, tea's natural antioxidants can give your immune system an extra kick. Wind down after a busy day with decaffeinated tea — just limit your sugar and cream intake.
- **Start your meal with a bowl of soup.** A broth- or veggie-based soup can help keep your respiratory system running well and banish bad bacteria. If your soup contains tomato, you get the added benefit of lycopene, an antioxidant that has been shown to lower risk of certain types of cancer.

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THE BASICS OF A HEALTHY WINTER GETAWAY

If travel is on your agenda, protect your health with these simple tips.

1. **Keep germs at bay —** Two weeks before you embark on your winter adventure or business trip, get your flu vaccination if you haven't already. While traveling, avoid touching your face, and wash your hands before meals and after contact with frequently shared surfaces. Use hand sanitizer to keep your hands clean in crowded airports and on flights.
2. **Fit in exercise —** Long periods of sitting during travel can sap your energy and even contribute to blood clots. Once you arrive at your hotel, make use of the fitness center or perform a few stretches and jumping jacks in your room. Combine physical activity and sightseeing by exploring your destination on foot or strolling through an indoor local attraction if it's too cold for outdoor exercise.
3. **Stop SAD before it starts —** Seasonal affective disorder (SAD) is a form of depression that typically affects people during the fall and winter months when shorter days equal less sunlight. Even those who live in areas with ample year-round sunshine may travel to regions where colder, shorter days leave you feeling a little blue. Talk with your doctor if you develop SAD symptoms, such as anxiety, sadness, or feelings of emptiness or guilt.
4. **Manage jet lag —** According to the National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute, jet lag, which often occurs when you change time zones during travel, can cause fatigue, nausea, irritability, poor concentration and insomnia. Help prevent jet lag by gradually adjusting your sleep schedule before leaving for your trip. En route, drink plenty of water to avoid dehydration — a common side effect of flying that can worsen jet lag symptoms — and limit caffeine and alcohol both on the plane and during your stay to improve sleep quality.

Step 2: DO THE NECK CHECK.

Feeling under the weather before a workout? Do a neck check. When you have a regular exercise routine, skipping out when you're feeling sick could actually make you feel worse in the long run. If your symptoms are above the neck — runny nose or sore throat — feel free to head to the gym, but take the intensity down a notch or two. Moderate exercise, such as walking, can help loosen sinus congestion and increase energy levels.

Experts suggest skipping a workout and resting if you have any digestive issues, chest congestion or a fever. If you have a fever, physical activity can lead to a dangerous spike in body temperature.

Once you're feeling better, gradually work your way into your exercise routine. Depending on the severity of your illness, you may need to work out for a shorter time or at a lower intensity for a few days.

Step 3: STAY ACTIVE INDOORS AND OUT.

Changes in weather and temperature can affect how you exercise during the winter. Dress appropriately in layers. The layers closest to your skin — including your socks — should be made of moisture-wicking materials to keep skin dry, while exterior layers should be wind- and water-resistant. Apply sunscreen to your face and neck before heading outdoors. Don't think you need sunscreen in winter? According to the American Melanoma Foundation, 80 percent of the sun's ultraviolet rays pass through even on cloudy, cooler days. Also, put on sunglasses that protect against 99 to 100 percent of UV rays.

Don't discount non-exercise physical activity (NEPA), typically defined as a physical activity that doesn't involve raising the heart rate. A recent study published in the *British Journal of Sports Medicine* found that when people older than age 60 stay active — whether or not they make time for cardiovascular exercise — they tend to have better heart health. So what counts as NEPA? Performing light yard work, hunting, washing the car or doing small repairs around the house are a few examples. If you're having trouble making time for regular exercise, have a set schedule of chores or activities that keep you moving.

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Breast Health Beyond Cancer

WOMEN OF ALL AGES MAY NOTICE CHANGES IN BREASTS FROM TIME TO TIME, BUT THERE IS USUALLY NO NEED TO PANIC.

Many women today take precautions to manage their health, following sensible diets, exercising regularly and performing breast self-exams every month. Naturally, women may become concerned if they notice changes in their breasts, such as lumps or unusual discharge. While cancer may be the first thing that comes to mind, chances are, most women are probably experiencing symptoms of common noncancerous breast conditions.

As women mature, breast tissue changes. Age, hormones, injuries and diseases such as diabetes can affect the breasts, causing benign cysts, lumps and tumors to develop. While some abnormalities may point to breast cancer, most are symptoms of harmless changes in the tissue and ducts in the breast.

DIAGNOSING COMMON CONDITIONS

If you notice lumps, redness, tenderness or abnormal discharge coming from the breast, schedule a visit to your doctor. He or she will determine the cause of the condition through a physical exam and imaging scans, including mammogram, ultrasound or possibly magnetic resonance imaging (MRI). What your doctor is likely to discover is some type of fibrocystic change, which simply means that scar-like tissue or fluid-filled cysts have formed in the breast. Many of these conditions do not need to be treated unless they are causing pain, in which case, over-the-counter pain relievers or outpatient surgery may offer some relief.

Have you scheduled your mammogram this year? Call (956) 796-3729 for an appointment today. Learn more about breast cancer by visiting LaredoMedical.com and clicking "Health Library."

YOUR GUIDE TO BREAST CONDITIONS

Jose O. Vazquez-Vicente, D.O., obstetrics & gynecology

Noncancerous conditions affecting the breast include:

- Diabetic mastopathy, which causes small, hard lumps to form in the breast.
- Fibroadenoma, which is characterized by a smooth rubbery or hard lump that moves around in the breast tissue, is most commonly found in teenagers and young women.
- Hyperplasia, which occurs when there is an overgrowth of cells in the lobules or ducts of the breast.
- Intraductal papillomas, which are small growths that occur in the breast ducts and may cause nipple discharge.

Dr. Vazquez-Vicente is an independent member of the medical staff at Laredo Medical Center.

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Distracted Driving= DANGER

WHEN DRIVERS ARE PREOCCUPIED, EVERYONE ON THE ROAD IS IN JEOPARDY.

3,328
people in 2012 were killed in accidents related to distracted driving.

50%
of high schoolers age 16 or older text or email while driving.

660,000
drivers at any given moment are using a cell phone while driving.

10 percent
OF ALL DRIVERS YOUNGER THAN AGE 20 WHO WERE INVOLVED IN A FATAL CRASH WERE DISTRACTED AT THE TIME OF THE ACCIDENT.

The average text is read in 4.6 seconds. Driving at 55 miles per hour, five seconds of driving is equal to 100 yards, nearly the length of a football field.

You may already know the danger of using cell phones and other electronic devices while driving, but distracted driving is defined as anything that takes your eyes off the road, your hands off the wheel or your mind off driving.

Other common driving distractions include:

- adjusting the music
- eating and drinking
- grooming or putting on makeup
- interacting with other passengers
- texting

Young and inexperienced drivers are the most likely to be involved in a distracted driving accident, but no drivers are immune to the dangers. Studies have shown that texting while driving impairs your ability to drive as much as — or even worse than — being drunk behind the wheel.

STAYING FOCUSED, STAYING SAFE

Thankfully, distracted driving accidents are completely preventable. If you have a new driver in your family, talk about the risks of all forms of distracted driving, not just texting or talking on the phone. Encourage everyone in your family to leave their smartphones in the glove compartment or another inaccessible place to avoid the temptation to check while on the road.

Don't be afraid to call out distracted drivers who are putting you and others danger. Offer to read or send a text for him, or suggest she pull over to make a phone call.

* Statistics from distraction.gov (National Highway Traffic Safety Administration)

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Show Your STRIPES

BESIDES SAYING "THANK YOU FOR YOUR SERVICE," WHAT ELSE CAN YOU DO TO EXPRESS YOUR GRATITUDE FOR THE SACRIFICES OUR MILITARY VETERANS HAVE MADE?

ORGANIZED SUPPORT

Ready to show gratitude to the veterans in your community but not sure where to start? Contact the following organizations for information about how you can help:

American Legion (Legion.org), an organization that supports members of the Armed Forces and veterans

U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (volunteer.VA.gov), a government organization responsible for providing medical care and benefits for military veterans

Disabled American Veterans (DAV.org), a charitable organization that provides various forms of assistance to disabled military veterans and their families, free of charge

MilServe (MilServe.org), a program that matches volunteers with opportunities to serve veterans

United We Serve (Serve.gov), a volunteer organization that promotes service initiatives throughout the United States

Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW.org), a national nonprofit organization that offers support programs and community service projects to benefit veterans

Wounded Warrior Project (WoundedWarriorProject.org), an organization dedicated to raising awareness of and assisting injured service members

Show your support for veterans with one of these meaningful gestures.

- help a veteran record and share a personal account of his or her military experiences through a national project such as the Veterans History Project (LOC.gov/vets)
- offer to assist a veteran or his or her family with household tasks or home repairs
- organize an event at your workplace to recognize veterans and their family members
- participate in Take a Veteran to School Day (History.com/take-a-veteran-to-school), a program that links veterans with local schools and invites them to share their stories with students
- provide transportation for a disabled veteran who has difficulty traveling alone
- share your professional expertise with a veteran in need of assistance with issues such as legal aid, tax preparation, career counseling or financial planning
- visit a sick or wounded veteran in the hospital

To learn more about services provided at Laredo Medical Center, veterans can call a dedicated line at (956) 796-3223. For a list of doctors available in the Laredo area, visit LaredoMedical.com.