Patient Safety Awareness Week  
(March 7-13, 2021)

KNOW YOUR RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Patient Safety Awareness Week was launched in 2002 by the National Patient Safety Foundation and the Institute for Healthcare Improvement (IHI) to encourage everyone to learn more about healthcare safety.

According to the World Health Organization (WHO), some studies suggest that as many as 400,000 deaths occur in the US each year as a result of errors or preventable harm. Not all cases result in death yet there are noted long-term impacts on the patient’s physical and emotional health, financial wellbeing and/or family relationships.

KNOW YOUR RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Whenever you start medical care or switch medical care providers, you have certain rights guaranteed under federal law. Many states have additional protection laws in place, so check your state’s healthcare laws to get specific details on their patient bill of rights.

THE MOST IMPORTANT FEDERAL PATIENT RIGHT YOU HAVE IS INFORMED CONSENT

Your healthcare provider must give you all of the information you need to make an informed decision on your care. If you need additional assistance, many hospitals can provide you with a patient advocate. Patient advocates are often associated with long term care. If the hospital does not have a patient advocate on staff, your state’s department of health may also be able to help.

HIPAA IS MORE THAN JUST A FORM THEY HAVE YOU FILL OUT AT ANY DOCTOR, DENTIST OR HEALTHCARE PROVIDER OFFICE. IT IS THERE FOR YOUR PROTECTION

Per the Center of Disease Control (CDC), the “Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPAA) is a federal law that required the creation of national standards to protect sensitive patient health information from being disclosed without the patient’s consent or knowledge.”
Rights you have under HIPAA include, but are not limited to:

» Receive a notice of the healthcare providers privacy practices and to ask questions or file a complaint about those practices.

» To access and request a copy of your medical records.

» To request an amendment to your medical records.

» To request a disclosure account: Who if anyone your healthcare provider has shared your information with.

» These rights apply to electronic and paper records. You can ask for a specific format you want to receive them in.

» You can still access your records even if your physician or healthcare provider is no longer practicing. You can get this information from the physician’s partners, health information manager or privacy officer, a local medical society, your state’s medical association or department of health.

YOU CAN ASK FOR A SECOND OPINION
Depending on the diagnosis, it can seem overwhelming. It is well within your patient rights to ask for a second opinion either at the healthcare provider location or outside of it. The original healthcare provider should facilitate supplying any information or records to the secondary provider or to you directly.

IF YOU, A FRIEND, OR A LOVED ONE HAS A MENTAL ILLNESS, YOU HAVE RIGHTS AND CANNOT BE DISCRIMINATED AGAINST
Did you know that half of all Americans will experience a diagnosable mental health condition in their lifetime? Being diagnosed with a mental illness does not revoke your patient rights. You have the right to ask your healthcare provider about any treatment that is being prescribed and seek a second opinion.
Munching for Months

KICKING COVID-19 QUARANTINE HABITS

We’re three months into the new year—are you still stuck with those old habits you picked up during 2020’s quarantine? March is National Nutrition Month and in honor of that, we’re going to help uncover what caused the change in your lifestyle and how to get you back on track.

SOME QUICK FACTS TO SHOW YOU ARE NOT ALONE:

» In a survey done by WW (formerly known as Weight Watchers), 72% of respondents said they gained more weight during the 2020 quarantine than during the holidays.

» Americans increased their workday by 40%. That is adding three more hours on top of the usual workday.

» Americans now spend 19+ hours staring at screens (laptops, tablets, smartphones, etc.). That is over an estimated 44 years of their lives staring at screens.

» Working remotely, many people skipped taking mental and physical breaks throughout their day that normally would be built in (commuting, grabbing lunch or coffee, chatting with coworkers, etc.)

» Increased alcohol consumption: According to the American Heart Association, in 2020, 1 in 4 Millennials and nearly 1 in 5 Generation Xers say they have upped their alcohol intake. Binge drinking is generally defined as four or more drinks for women and five or more drinks in one sitting for men.

» Stress eating: Which is defined as turning to food to cope with added stress that can worsen physical and emotional health.

Research shows that on average, it takes about 66 days to change a habit. So don’t wait! You can start now by trying some of these easy Eat Right suggestions created by the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics:

HEALTHY EATING ON THE RUN

1. Grabbing dinner at the supermarket deli? Select rotisserie chicken, salad-in-a-bag and freshly baked bread. Or, try sliced lean roast beef, onion rolls, salad and fresh fruit.

2. Always eating on the go? Tuck portable, nonperishable foods in your purse, tote, briefcase or backpack for an on-the-run meal. Some suggestions are peanut butter and crackers, granola bars, a piece of fresh fruit, trail mix, single serve packages of whole grain cereal or crackers.
3. For desk-top dining, keep single-serve packages of whole grain crackers, fruit, peanut butter, soup, or tuna in your desk for a quick snack.

4. Look for a sandwich wrap in a soft tortilla. Fillings such as rice mixed with seafood, chicken, or grilled vegetables are usually lower in calories.

5. Review nutrition information and compare calories. Menu terms that can mean healthier choices include: baked, braised, broiled, grilled, poached, roasted, and steamed.

6. A baked potato offers more dietary fiber, fewer calories and less saturated fat than fries if you skip the sour cream and butter. Top your potato with broccoli and a sprinkle of cheese or salsa.

HEALTHY TIPS YOU CAN DO WHILE WORKING REMOTELY

1. Get up and get moving: Adults should have at least 2 hours and 30 minutes of exercise per week. It can be as easy as taking a walk during the day.

2. Drink more water: Stay hydrated with plenty of water especially if you are increasing your activity levels, an older adult, or live/work in hot conditions.

3. Slow down at meal time: Instead of eating while binge watching your favorite Netflix show, try sitting down at a specific time each day, at a specific location and focus on the food you are eating. Create a positive atmosphere in which to enjoy your meal.

4. Experiment with plant-based meals: Meatless Monday: Many recipes that use meat can be made without it or you can swap it out with a wide variety of budget friendly options.

5. Cut back on your alcohol consumption.
We’re Keeping an Eye on Your Health

WORKPLACE EYE WELLNESS MONTH

When you think about eye safety what are the first industries that come to mind? Construction? Factory Work? Mining? You would be right. They are some of the highest risk jobs for eye injuries. However, did you know that auto repair, retail, hospitality workers, and yes, you, could also be at risk?

ACCORDING TO THE HEALTH AND SAFETY INSTITUTE:

» More than 2,000 workers injure their eyes at work each day
» That equals an estimated 730,000 workers in one year
» Eye injuries cost more than $3 million per year in the loss of production time, medical expenses, and worker compensation
» 10-20% of all work-related industries will cause temporary or permanent vision loss

Now you could be thinking to yourself, well I am not in any of those industries, so it will not impact me right? Wrong.

In June 2020, the New York Post reported that before the 2020 COVID-19 pandemic, the average American spends an estimated 44 years of their lives staring at screens. That is around 17 hours each day before states started to mandate restricted travel and stay-in-place orders.

After restrictions were put into place, it jumped another +2 hours and 3 out of 4 Americans surveyed said they would have been lost without their laptops, televisions, and smart devices. In addition, 60% of the people admitted they have argued with their partner over screen time habits.

Take a minute to check your own smart device and laptop use. Has it increased over the last year or stayed the same? How about your family?

Prevent Blindness, one of the oldest volunteer eye health and safety groups, designated March to be Workplace Eye Wellness Month, to raise awareness about what you can do to maintain healthy eyes, no matter where your work takes you.
EASY TIPS YOU CAN START USING RIGHT NOW

» **Use the 20-20-20 Rule:** 7 out of 10 adults say their eyes start to feel strained from looking at the screen too much. Every 20 minutes look at something 20 feet away from you for about 20 seconds.

» **Protect your eyes from blue light exposure:** Blue light itself is not bad, it’s only when you are overexposed that it can cause dry, sore or irritated eyes, difficulty focusing, and fatigue. Use a blue light screen filter on your smartphone, tablet, and laptop screen, computer glasses with yellow-tinted lenses or anti-reflective lens that reduce glare and increase contrast.

» **Know Your Environment:** Assess your work area and choose the right protective eyewear for that job. Safety glasses with side protection if you work around dust or flying debris, goggles if you handle chemicals, face shield or helmet if you are using welding, lasers or fiber optic equipment. All safety equipment should comply with Occupational Safety and Health Administration standards.

» **Plan For An Emergency:** Whether you are working at home or in an office, you should have a plan in place in case there is an emergency. In a workplace environment, have eyewash stations that are easy to get to and make sure someone has advanced first aid training. At home, make sure you wear safety equipment when working with machines or hazardous materials.

» **Put It In Writing and Review Regularly:** Once your plan is in place, write it down and display it where you and others can see it. Regularly review the plan to make sure you, your co-workers, and family are being proactive with your eye care.

Want another fun way to learn more about workplace eye safety? Take the Prevent Blindness 10 question quiz to see how you score and share these insights with your friends, family, and coworkers.

National Drug & Alcohol Facts Week®
(March 22-28, 2021)

TEST YOUR KNOWLEDGE PLUS GET THE FACTS

Grab your pencils and let’s hit the books! We’ll start off with an easy question to test your knowledge:

Q. Which drug do adolescents use the most? Is it alcohol, marijuana, nicotine (vaping) or none of them?

A. If you said alcohol, you would be right. Vaping is on the rise with older teens (14%), but the #1 drug of choice for seniors in high school in 2019 was alcohol. 52% compared to marijuana at 35%.

Talking about drugs and alcohol can be a tough challenge for any parent, guardian or educator. That is why the National Drug & Alcohol Facts Week® was launched in 2010. National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA) created this week-long event to connect students with scientists in the effort to “counteract the myths about drugs and alcohol that teens get from the internet, social media, TV, movies, music or from friends.”

Check with your school to see what events they are planning or visit: https://teens.drugabuse.gov/national-drug-alcohol-facts-week to get an interactive toolkit for your teen.

Now it’s time for your next question:

Q. ____% of people with oral cancer who survive beyond five years of diagnosis. Is it 10%, 25%, 55% or 62%?

A. If you guessed 62% you are correct! Cigarettes and chewing tobacco are considered to be drugs that contain chemicals, which when used, flood the mouth and throat, increasing the risk of oral cancers (vocal chords, esophagus, tongue, etc.)

Final question on this week’s pop quiz:

Q. Lean or Sizzurp is the nickname for what type of drug that has become popular with teens? Is it heroin, synthetic marijuana, crystal meth or promethazine?

A. If you said promethazine or prescription cough medicine, you would be correct. It can easily be combined with soda and candy. A recent study found that half of the references to codeine on Instagram used this slang. Side effects of abusing codeine include, but are not limited to: nausea, dizziness, impaired vision, memory loss, hallucinations, increased blood pressure, and seizures. High doses of codeine can lead to overdose and death.

Talk with your doctor if you have any concerns about your health.
There is no right or wrong answer when it comes to why a teenager uses drugs and alcohol. From the feeling of just wanting to fit in, struggling with mental health issues, using it as a coping mechanism to deal with stress, using it to enhance academic or athletic performance, or chasing that first high they felt, it is a deeply personal issue for both the teen and their family.

**APPS**

Here are some free resources that can help you understand the pressures today’s teens face and how to help empower them to make healthy choices for their future:

» **This Is Quitting**: The Truth Initiative’s text messaging program that helps young people (ages 13-24) quit vaping.

» **PTSD Coach**: Created by the National Center for PTSD, these mobile apps provide self-help, education, and support following a trauma.

» **Boys Town Your Life Your Voice App**: Geared towards teens and young adults to deal with situations like addiction, bullying, anxiety, anger, identity, depression, distorted thinking, suicidal thoughts, and what to do if they are worrying about a friend.

**ORGANIZATIONS**

**Alateen**: This is a free program that offers support for teens (ages 13 to 18) with parents, relatives or friends coping with alcoholism.

**Narateen**: Similar to Alateen but the focus is on drug addiction vs. alcoholism.

**Get Smart About Drugs**: A DEA Resource For Parents, Educators and Caregivers

**Boys Town National Hotline**: 1-800-448-3000. Text VOICE to 20121. Open 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. It is accredited by the American Association of Suicidology (AAS). Spanish-speaking counselors and translation services for more than 100 languages also are available 24-hours a day.