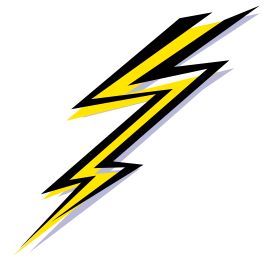




HOT FLASHES



Newsletter of the Women's Mid-Life Health Program, Women's Health Centre

Summer 2014 Edition

Fit Test (Fecal Immunochemical Test)

By Dr. Vicki Holmes MD

Did you know that colorectal cancer is the second most common cancer diagnosis and second leading cause of cancer death for men and women in Saskatchewan? What is amazing is that 90% of colon cancer deaths can be prevented with screening. If detected early it can be successfully treated.

How can colon cancer be detected early?

You would think that this should be easy but until recently it was not. Previous to the new FIT test, (fecal immunochemical test), we would do a Fecal Occult Blood test which was difficult. It detected any blood present in the stool, including animal blood, so meat and other foods had to be eliminated from your diet for three days before you tested and you needed to test daily for three days. Even I, who so strongly believes in screening, had a hard time selling this task to my patients. This new FIT test is SO EASY! It is specific to human blood cells, so there are no dietary restrictions and you only need to provide one stool sample.

The instructions are easy:

1. Empty your bladder, flush the toilet
2. Place the biodegradable tissue paper on top of the water in the toilet bowl, do your job
3. Take the little probe and rub on the stool
4. Replace the probe in the cylinder provided
5. Carefully fill in the form and take to the lab or mail it
6. Flush the paper down the toilet.

The five minutes it takes to do this could save your life!

The Screening Program for Colorectal Cancer has been sending information

letters and then the kit to everyone in Saskatchewan between the ages of 50 and 74, and will repeat this every two years. What a great idea, right? Sadly though, less than half of the people who are sent the test, reply.

How does this test detect cancer?

Cancer mostly arises in little adenomatous polyps that form in the colon. They have very breakable (friable) blood vessels on the surface that erupt and bleed as the stool passes. This cannot be seen even if you carefully check the stool before you flush. If you can see blood with the naked eye you need to see your doctor immediately.

How good is this test? 1% to 5% of the population have positive tests indicating blood in the stool. Of those who test positive, 2% to 10% have cancer and 20% to 30% will have adenomas (non-cancerous tumours) that would qualify for closer screening. If you detect and treat cancer when it is only starting to invade the surface of the bowel, the 5 year survival rate is 93%. But if you wait until the cancer is at stage 4, it will have gone through the bowel wall into the abdomen, into the lymph nodes and beyond. At this point, the 5 year rate of survival is reduced to only 8%! Now are you convinced early detection can save a life?

Colonoscopy, a test that allows your doctor to look at the inner lining of your large intestine with a scope, is more accurate in detecting colon cancer. So, why don't we screen with colonoscopy? Although this is still the "gold standard" it is costly and not all that pleasant to have done. Before the FIT test was available we were doing colonoscopies that screened healthy

people so those who had true colon disease had to wait an extremely long time to be diagnosed. The FIT test is a more efficient way of identifying those who really need a colonoscopy.

Who is at greatest risk?

Someone with:

1. A first degree relative with colorectal cancer (sibling, parent or child)
2. A personal history of adenomatous polyps
3. Family history of adenomatous polyposis or non-polyposis colorectal cancer
4. Inflammatory bowel disease such as Crohn's disease, Ulcerative Colitis

What are other risk factors for colon cancer?

- risk increases with age
- genetic predisposition
- eating a diet high in red meats and low in fruits and vegetables
- obesity
- lack of exercise
- drinking alcohol, especially beer
- smoking

The take home message is clear. Colorectal cancer is common and can be deadly. YOU CAN DO A SIMPLE FIT TEST to improve early detection and treatment. So if you have ignored the letter and trashed the kit....contact your family doctor and get another. It could save your life!

Immunizations in Midlife

By Kristi Federoff RN, BScN, MN, Immunization Clinician, Disease Control Department, Population and Public Health

My dog recently turned 8. Presuming the ‘1 dog year equals 7 human years’ rule still holds, we are now both in our 50s. Every year before his birthday a friendly immunization reminder notice always arrives from our vet. I too received some medical reminders before my birthday; for a mammogram, pap test and colon screening. But nothing about immunizations – even though it has been immunization that has saved more Canadian lives than any other health intervention in the last 50 years.

Immunizations – not just for pets (...or kids)

Vaccinations are recommended throughout life, for dogs and humans alike. Most of us recall being immunized as children, but vaccination coverage levels drop off dramatically in adulthood which leaves us unnecessarily vulnerable to disease. About 50,000 adults in the U.S. die every year because of vaccine-preventable diseases while many more suffer illness or serious complications such as pneumonia or brain damage.

While protection against some diseases such as measles is usually lifelong, adults require boosters against other diseases such as tetanus (lockjaw) or diphtheria to maintain our protection. Sometimes viruses that cause disease change over time, such as influenza, require a new vaccine every year. Finally, as we age our risks increase for diseases such as shingles or pneumonia.

What’s your “H-A-L-O”?

Vaccines recommended in adulthood vary depending on

Health, Age, Lifestyle, and Occupational factors—also known as our “H-A-L-Os”. One size does not fit all and just as each woman is unique so are our HALOs.

Health Factors: Some chronic health conditions or medications may predispose us to either getting or suffering greater complications from vaccine-preventable diseases. If you have cancer, diabetes, or lung, liver or heart disease there are additional vaccines to safeguard your health.

Age: Our immune systems become less effective as we transition through our midlife years and beyond. Vaccines can reduce our risks by providing extra “immunity insurance”. For example, if you are 65 years or older you are entitled to a free dose of pneumococcal vaccine. Did you know that pneumococcal disease kills more Americans every year than all other vaccine-preventable diseases combined!

Lifestyle Factors: International travel, playing contact or limited-contact sports (e.g. soccer or basketball), sexual activity (sexually transmitted infections can happen at **any** age) or smoking are examples of lifestyle choices that will influence vaccine recommendations.

Occupational Factors: Certain jobs increase the risk of contact with diseases (e.g. health care, labs or daycare work). Editor’s note: members of the veterinary field even receive a rabies vaccine.

Vaccines to Consider

Vaccine	Should you get it?
Influenza	Absolutely! One dose every fall. This protects you and those around you.
Pneumococcal	Maybe. One dose at age 65 or older. Those with certain chronic health conditions may need this vaccine earlier.
Tetanus & diphtheria (Td)	Yes! Tetanus boosters are recommended every 10 years. This is only considered a “booster” if you’ve had at least 3 tetanus/diphtheria containing shots sometime in your life. If you haven’t, you’ll need to complete the series. Often given after wounds. Today almost all cases of tetanus in Canada occur in adults 20 years and older.
Hepatitis A	Maybe. Often recommended for travel. (2-dose series)
Hepatitis B	Maybe. Can be an occupational, travel or sexual contact risk. (3-dose series)
Human papillomavirus (HPV)	Maybe. Great cancer prevention vaccine for women up to 45 years of age. (3-dose series)
Measles, mumps, rubella (MMR)	Maybe. Depending on your age. Canadians born before 1970 are considered immune, otherwise up to two doses are recommended.
Pertussis (whooping cough) Tdap	Yes! All Saskatchewan adults are entitled to one free dose of Tdap for whooping cough protection. This is especially important if you’re around infants or young children (parents, grandparents) in whom pertussis can be deadly.
Varicella (chickenpox)	Maybe. If you’ve never had chickenpox you’ll need 2 doses. Adults are 25 times more likely to die from chickenpox than children.
Zoster (shingles)	Maybe. A 1-time dose if you are 50 or older can reduce your risk of shingles and the excruciating pain that may linger for months afterwards.

Vaccines for Life

Vaccines offer an effective strategy to protect our health and well-being in midlife and beyond. So the next time you

are visiting your physician or public health clinic, ask about your immunizations.

Fibre for Healthy Bowels and more ...

By Donnelly Sellars, Registered Dietitian

We know we need it and it helps us poop, but what does it really do? The word fibre is a general term that includes two, very different types, insoluble and soluble fibre. Thankfully most foods that contain fibre contain both types.

Insoluble fibre is found in whole grains, fruits and vegetables. This fibre is considered the "gut friendly" fibre because it does not get broken down by the digestive system. It adds bulk to the stool and helps promote regularity. There is even evidence to suggest that a diet high in insoluble fibre may protect against colon cancer.

Soluble fibre is mostly found in beans and pulses (dried peas, edible beans, lentils and chickpeas), as well as some fruits and vegetables. This fibre is partially broken down by the digestive system and actually forms a gel-like substance once it mixes with water. Soluble fibre can slow down the digestive process, making you feel fuller for a longer period of time. Other benefits of soluble fibre include helping lower cholesterol levels, helping with blood sugar control, increasing healthy gut bacteria and better management of diarrhea and loose stools.

So how much fibre should you be getting in a day? The general recommendation is between 21g to 38g per day for men and women over the age of 18. This recommendation includes both soluble and insoluble fibre. If you don't think that you eat enough fibre and are looking to increase your consumption, remember that there can be some side effects to a large increase of fibre! Make sure you increase your intake slowly and drink more water as intake goes up. This can help prevent gas, bloating and diarrhea.

A varied diet that includes whole grains, beans, and lots of fruits and vegetables can provide plenty of soluble and insoluble fibre, to meet the recommended levels. If you find that you are having trouble and are asking the question about these new "high fibre" products and fibre supplements that are out there — good question! Lately some food companies have been adding inulin or chicory fibre to foods in order to increase the fibre content. Inulin and chicory fibre are basically the same (inulin comes from

chicory), and are forms of soluble fibre. Fibre supplements like Metamucil (psyllium fibre) and Benefibre (wheat dextrin) are also forms of soluble fibre.

Fibre supplements and foods with added fibre can fit within a healthy diet, and have their benefits, but it is important to still eat a diet with plenty of fruits and vegetables, as well as whole grains, to ensure adequate insoluble fibre intake as well.

Here are a few foods and their fibre content (soluble and insoluble combined).

1/2 cup black beans - 7.5g
1/2 cup chick peas - 5.3g
1 pear (with skin) - 5.1g
1/2 cup quinoa - 5g
1/2 cup green peas - 4.4g
1 apple (with skin) - 3.3g
1 banana - 3.1g
1/2 cup brown rice - 1.8g
1/2 cup strawberries - 1.7g
1/2 cup raw carrots - 1.6g



Black Bean and Corn Summer Salad

1 540 ml can Black Beans (drained and rinsed)
2 cups (500 ml) Corn (thawed if using frozen)
1/4 cup (50 ml) Cilantro (chopped)
1/4 cup (50 ml) Lime Juice
2 medium Tomatoes (chopped)
1/2 cup (125 ml) Onion (chopped)
1 tsp (5 ml) Ground Cumin

Combine all ingredients in a bowl and serve. This versatile dish can be used as is, or can be added to a lettuce salad with avocado for a nice Tex-Mex lunch!

Nutrition Information per 1/2 cup serving:
Calories: 111, Protein: 6 g, Fat: 0 g, Carbohydrate: 22 g, Fibre: 5 g, Sodium: 43 g



Here are some of our volunteers who get your newsletter ready for mailing. Fun and dedicated crew!

Next newsletter will feature our editors and the typist!

Having Trouble Sleeping? Why Not Try Hypnosis?

By Paula Reynolds, BA (Psych), M.H., C.Cht., Certified Coach, Essence Hypnotherapy

Hypnosis is an ancient method of treatment. The name comes from the Greek word *hypnos*, which means *sleep*. In this natural state, one is not actually asleep but rather in a state of relaxation where the brain slows down to 8 to 13 cycles per second. This alpha state allows the subconscious mind to become dominant so that suggestions given at this time will make new pathways in the brain.

The world has become fast-paced and it is easy to lose the ability to let go and focus on sleep. People have become inundated with technology and commitments, causing a retraining of their brains into constant vigilance and stress. More and more people suffer from insomnia which leads to increased stress, anxiety and frustration. It becomes a very circular issue.

There are many scientific studies that show hypnosis as an effective treatment method (modality) for sleep issues. Using the power of the mind combined with techniques of self-hypnosis (it's really all self-hypnosis), and without medication, it is possible to train oneself to sleep more efficiently.

To get started, you should visit a hypnotherapist to rule out any underlying issues and to learn the techniques that are right for you.

When you visit Essence Hypnotherapy, you receive a CD that you will listen to everyday for a prescribed amount of time. This CD conditions your mind to the suggestions given to you in your session. As the suggestions are repeated they compound and strengthen which retrains your brain to respond with a new behaviour.

The length of time it takes to retrain your brain depends on the person and the severity of the sleep issue. Positive thinking and enjoying the process are important parts of creating a new reality. It is important to remember that our mind creates our reality.

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Saskatchewan Drug Information Service has a new name, medSask - easier to say but the same great service. If you have questions about prescriptions, over-the-counter medications or natural products, call 306-966-6378 (Saskatoon) or 1-800-665-3784 (anywhere in Saskatchewan), 8AM - midnight Mon to Fri, 5PM - midnight weekends, holidays. **There is no charge for the service.**

FALL FORUM

Canadian Cancer Society, Women's Mid-Life Health Program SHR, and Telehealth are co-hosting the Forum

Colorectal Cancer Detection and Prevention

60 seconds Can Save Your Life

Oct 2nd from 6:30-8:30 PM

For people living in and near Saskatoon, join us at Saskatoon City Hospital, Rependa Centre.

This forum will be in partnership with Telehealth and will be broadcast live in all Telehealth Centers signed up in Saskatchewan. Watch for Telehealth posters in your area and our website for details.



Hot Flashes Now Available Electronically

The Women's Mid-Life Health Program works to keep up with the times on a limited budget. We're combining both in our offer to send your copy of the Hot Flashes newsletter via email. Please contact us at info@menopausecentre.org if you prefer this delivery option.



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