

Health/Fitness

Let's Learn Together How to Help and Heal People with Substance Use Disorders

Yvonne R. McGinnis /CEO, Remembering Mary, LLC

Alcohol and Substance use disorders are treatable illnesses. Rendering a proper diagnosis can lead to a productive and healthy life. Community perceptions leads one to believe that the use of alcohol and drugs is a weakness rather than a medical condition. The truth of the matter is that addiction affects our entire community. It is a preventable and treatable medical condition that should be treated like any other illness.

As a local community-based prevention advocate, Remembering Mary, LLC is participating in the celebration of a spectacular event, known as The National Alcohol and Drug Addiction Recovery Month. In commemoration of 20 consecutive years of sustained recovery, join the Voices for Recovery: Together We Learn, Together We Heal, a celebration of the hope, healing and support of those afflicted with alcohol and substance use disorders.

Remembering Mary, LLC in collaboration with the United States Department of Health and Human Services, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), the Center for Substance Abuse Treatment (CSAT), the National Inhalant Prevention Coalition (NIPC), Faces and Voices of Recovery and numerous communities, businesses,

local and state levels of government, coalitions, public sector entities, prevention and treatment organizations and health care agencies, we engage, mobilize and facilitate within a community environment to educate the public and to access critical community resources and services to implement the best approaches, programs and intervention strategies to combat addiction as a disease. Networking and collaboration is an essential part of the recovery process because it allows us to create a health care platform and system that embraces the medical needs of every individual.

Our collective efforts includes the navigation and access to all available resources and, building capacities for local and state funds, conducting and evaluating needs assessments and outcomes; developing comprehensive health care plans that strategically meets the needs of the individual on a case-by-case basis.

Health care professionals pursue only the best evidence-based approaches, strategies, practices, programs and policies that cater to the needs of the individual and his or her family member/s. Our networking efforts affords us the opportunity to assess the efficacy of our prevention and treatment ef-

forts, methods and programs. Our goals are to strengthen the protective factors (youth resilience, school success rates, leadership, community involvement, strengthening family bonds and building social skills) and reduce the risk factors associated with alcohol abuse and addiction (violence, unemployment, poor social skills, family conflict, delinquency).

Join us in this years recovery events as you embark upon a journey of sustained recovery through self awareness, education, community-based science information approaches and the Recovery Bill of Rights (based upon the concept that everyone has the right to be free from addiction).

To search for recovery help within your community, the internet is a wonderful resource, providing a wealth of information. To find treatment and recovery resources, visit SAMHSA's Treatment Locator, SAMHSA's Access to Recovery Program and the Recovery Community Services Program at <http://www.samhsa.gov>. To search for next months recovery events within your own community, visit <http://www.recoverymonth.gov/community-events.aspx>. Together we learn, together we heal.



It's Time to Act Now:

Drink Up!

by

Denise Hinds

As we continue to watch the ongoing debate over health care reform, the need to take care of our own health becomes more evident. There are simple things we can do that offer the greatest benefits. While eating nutritious foods are important for good health, what you drink (or don't drink) is just as important.

Soda pop has become the main beverage—and a big source of sugar—in the American diet today. A can of soda contains 12 teaspoons of refined sugar—that's an excess of empty calories. Diet beverages don't contain sugar, but they contain chemicals that are added for color, flavor, preservation, etc. Some of these may irritate the lining of the stomach, and require the liver and kidneys to detoxify and dispose of them.

Studies have shown that caffeine and alcohol dehydrate the body because they work as diuretics. Diuretics not only cause loss of water from the body, but may also contribute to loss of fluid from the red blood cells (RBCs). As a result, the RBCs become less flexible and more likely to form clots. This can lead to fatigue, dry skin, indigestion, and headaches.

So what's the solution?

Drink more water!

Many adults drink more beer, coffee, and other beverages than water. These substitutes have calories that may produce extra fat, blood sugar swings, and slow down digestion. When you don't drink enough water, the body must excrete wastes in a much more concentrated form, causing body odor, bad breath, and unpleasant-smelling urine.

Water gives your body an internal shower!

Our bodies are about 70% water. The body loses 10 to 12 cups of water a day through skin, lungs, urine, and feces. Water to the body is like oil to a car engine. It's the

lubricant the body needs to function at its best.

Other benefits of water include:

- No calories.
- Helps eliminate snacking.
- Requires no digestion. It passes through, giving everything a good rinse.
- Decreases the risk of kidney stones by diluting the mineral content in the urinary system.
- Decreases the risk of urinary tract infections.
- Lowering blood pressure and complications of diabetes.
- Improves blood flow and reduces the risks of heart disease and stroke—chronic illnesses that disproportionately affect African Americans.

So how much water should you drink?

Drink water liberally—enough to keep your urine clear!

Begin the day by drinking a glass (1 cup/8 ounces) or two of water to rinse and refresh the stomach, and prepare the stomach for the digestion of breakfast. Then drink water regularly throughout the day. If you wait until you are thirsty, you are already seriously dehydrated. Limit sodas, juices, and other high-calorie beverages. They only dehydrate you more, and make you thirstier.

Make water your first drink of choice. If you don't like the flat taste, give it some zest by adding a squeeze of fresh lemon, and get your drink on!

Here's to your good health! Here's to your survival! Here's to long life!

Denise Hinds is a doctor of public health (DrPH) candidate at Loma Linda University School of Public Health. She is a Community Health Educator for the African American Health Institute of San Bernardino County (AAHI-SBC). You may contact Denise at (909) 880-2600 for follow-up regarding this article.

AAHI-SBC is a collaboration of diverse local stakeholders proactive in working on the health needs of African Americans, as well as other underrepresented ethnic minorities. Please visit the African American Health Institute of San Bernardino County web site at www.AAHI-SBC.org to see what the African American community is doing to address critical health issues. All are welcomed to join us.

Why am I Always Sick?

Doctor Reveals What Might Be Causing Headaches, Stomach Problems and Heartburn in Millions of Americans

Staff Reports

Millions of Americans suffer from headaches, stomach problems and other ailments like shortness of breath, abdominal pain, or even more long-term ailments like eczema and hypoglycemia. What's worse, these ailments go untreated and undiagnosed because the cause is unclear.

The answer for many of these patients could likely be a simple food allergy, but it is difficult to detect, according to Dr. Stephen Wangen, author of *Healthier Without Wheat* from Innate Health Publishing (www.healthierwithoutwheat.com). "The number of people who react to wheat and gluten, and the profound difference seen in their lives when they stop eating them, never ceases to amaze me," Dr. Wangen said. "People need to arm themselves with the facts, and they need to change the way they think about their health so they can address diagnosis and potential treatment with their physicians. With the HMO's attention to the over-utilization of healthcare services, many doctors and clinics are pressured to move patients through the system quickly, without addressing the patients' needs more creatively. This is why so many people are still sick even after they see their doctor."

Because wheat gluten is such a common ingredient in foods we eat every day – including bread, pizza, pasta and others – it's affects can

sometimes go undiagnosed by many people, who just chalk their symptoms up to stress, over-eating or general fatigue.

Dr. Wangen offered some tips for patients seeking answers to their undiagnosed health issues:

Don't self-diagnose because of TV drug ads – Many pharmaceutical advertisements may describe symptoms similar to yours, but don't be fooled by them and simply ask your doctor for the prescription du jour. If traditional treatments haven't worked, then ask your doctor to test for food allergies. Ask for Gliadin IgA testing (available from most major labs), Total IgA plus tissue Transglutaminase IgA (tTgA) test pair (available from most major labs), ELISA (enzyme-linked immunosorbent assay) method IgG and IgE testing for gluten or the entire grain (wheat, barley, spelt, kamut, rye, etc.) Some of these tests may not be readily available. If your doctor cannot perform them, find one who will.

Change your philosophy on health – People's default position should be one of being healthy. Too many people walk around suffering unhealthy symptoms, but don't feel it's important enough to seek a doctor's care for them. They are just "the way I am." In the absence of an identifiable cause, people should generally feel good and be healthy.

(continued in next column)

Why am I Always Sick?continued

If you suffer symptoms, make it a point to find out why, and seek out treatment to correct the problem.

Wellness Visit – Too many people allow the "sicker-quicker" phenomenon to happen to them. Because of the poor economy, many people are working two jobs, and cannot afford to miss work to see their doctor for a wellness visit in order to seek answers to their minor symptoms. What invariably happens is that they wind up getting sicker, and then wind up taking a week off of work to get better. Moreover, the healthcare system moves them through quicker, because of managed care pressures, meaning that many treatments wind up being ineffective, anyway.

About Dr. Stephen Wangen
Dr. Stephen Wangen is a nationally recognized expert in the field of gluten intolerance, a gluten-intolerant physician and co-founder of the IBS Treatment Center.

Addressing Mental Health Disparities Among African-Americans

Gloria Sims, Brookhaven Retreat Alumna Says You Are Not Alone

(BLACK PR WIRE) (August 19, 2009) SEYMOUR, Tenn.— (BUSINESS WIRE)— According to the Surgeon General, only one-third of Americans with a mental health problem seek treatment; the percentage of African Americans getting help is only half that of non-Hispanic whites.

The National Alliance on Mental Health reports that African Americans are disproportionately more likely to experience social circumstances that increase their chances of developing a mental illness and are less likely to receive diagnoses and treatments for their mental illnesses than Caucasian Americans.

Many African Americans, especially women, don't seek treatment. It's a tragedy that asking for help is looked down upon, said Jacqueline Dawes, owner and founder of Brookhaven Retreat. Beginning your path to sobriety actually demonstrates a great deal of strength, not weakness.

Gloria Sims was 18 when she started drinking. What started as a nightcap turned into brandy with her daily tea. I'd say the breaking point was at my high school reunion when I tripped and fell and sprained my ankle. It wasn't the high heels - I blamed the concrete it was because I was drunk.

Gloria will be featured in an upcoming episode of A&E's *Intervention* during which her path to recovery at Brookhaven Retreat is documented.

I had never been to therapy before so I was pretty scared. Black women and the whole culture you just take care of your own problems, said Sims.

According to the 2008 National Healthcare Disparities Report, 8.3 percent of non-Hispanic black women under the age of 18 received mental health treatment in 2006, compared to 20 percent of non-Hispanic white women. In 1999, The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration stated that 67.9% of black women reported ever using alcohol, while 45.1% reported use that year and 32.3% reported using alcohol in the past month.

I have a lot of support from my family and friends, but it was mainly Brookhaven. I gave everyone a hard time for the first 30 days, admitted Sims. I was in denial. Who wants to admit all that?

Today however, after 90 days of comprehensive treatment at Brookhaven Retreat, Gloria, 54, is a recovering alcoholic.

Says Gloria to African American women, Don't be scared to get help; you're not alone.

Gloria's intervention episode will air Monday, Aug. 24 on A&E. For more information on Brookhaven Retreat and the importance of seeking treatment, visit www.brookhavenretreat.com or call 877-817-3422.



Time for School, Time to Immunize

For free and low cost clinics in your area, please call First 5



(909) 386-7706 www.first5sanbernardino.org



Don't Wait to Vaccinate: A Parent's Guide to Immunizations

Karen Scott, Executive Director
First 5 San Bernardino County

Vaccinations offer your children numerous benefits. From boosting their immune systems to protecting them from serious infections and diseases, immunizations are particularly important for young children as their growing bodies are most vulnerable.

Plus, research shows immunizations work. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 13 diseases prevented by childhood vaccinations were at their lowest rates in the United States last year.

However, even with all of these benefits, more than one in four children is not up-to-date with his or her vaccination schedules. To help parents through the immunization process, First 5 San Bernardino County provides the following answers to frequently asked questions about vaccinations.

When should my child be immunized?

Children need to begin immunizations when they are just a few months old. Health care providers will give different vaccines at different stages in your child's development.

Your health care provider can provide you with an immunization schedule and help you set up appointments to follow it. Even if your child begins his or her immunization schedule late, your health

care provider can help you get back on track.

Why does my child need certain vaccinations before kindergarten?

The California School Immunization Law requires that children are current with their immunizations before they enter school and, in some cases, child care. Classrooms and playgrounds often increase your child's risk of illness due to interaction with more children and their germs. Up-to-date immunizations help protect your child from disease as much as possible.

Where do I take my child to be vaccinated? Various health providers, including nurses and physicians, can give your child his or her vaccinations. Visit your doctor's office or local health clinic to schedule your child's immunizations. For low cost clinics in San Bernardino County, you may contact the San Bernardino County Department of Public Health at 1-800-722-4777.

How much do vaccines cost? Vaccines are available to all children, regardless of family income. For children without health insurance or whose insurance plans do not cover immunizations, the federal Vaccines for Children program provides free immunizations. Through this program, most health care providers can administer vaccines for the cost of an office visit.

For children with health insurance

that covers vaccinations, the costs for immunizations vary depending on the insurance plan. Ask your insurance company for more information.

Are vaccines safe? The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends vaccines as a safe way to protect your child from disease. However, like any medicine, vaccines can have minor side effects including temporary sore muscles or fever. Talk to your health care provider if you have concerns about giving your child immunizations.

First 5 San Bernardino County encourages all parents to schedule their children's vaccinations and help protect them from disease. For more information, call (909) 386-7706 or visit www.first5sanbernardino.org. About First 5 XX County

Research shows that a child's brain develops most dramatically in the first five years and what parents and caregivers do during these years to support their child's growth will have a meaningful impact throughout life. Based on this research, California voters passed Proposition 10 in 1998, adding a 50 cents-per-pack tax on cigarettes to support programs for expectant parents and children ages 0 to 5.