



the hartford area
association of parish nurses

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haapnings

A Parish Nurse Newsletter

WALKING IN THE WAY

The Faith Community Nurses at First Church of Christ, UCC, in Glastonbury sponsored an exercise program beginning February 28, to run through the Lenten Season. The program was entitled, **WALKING IN THE WAY: a Walking Program for Whole Person Health** by Ronnette Sailors. This Material is easy to use and comes with a "walker's and leader's guide". The material can be copied and adapted for your individual church.

It is a walking program, in our case, from Glastonbury, CT to Jerusalem, Israel a total of 3,336 miles. We had members of our faith community sign-up, sign a waiver against injury and gave them each an inexpensive pedometer that we ordered on-line. The pedometers measured steps taken (2000 steps equaled 1 mile). We had 25 sign-up and gave them printed material to explain the program, and sheets to record their progress. We communicated about group walks, followed by a time of fellowship and the group's progress by e-mail. One of our nurse's keep track of miles walked for the group of 25. If people wanted to bike, jog or play tennis, there is a conversion table to miles. We totaled the group's miles "walked" every two weeks. We recorded our progress on a large world map.

We handed out incentive socks and gave Bulletin recognition to those who had walked 100 miles at the beginning of our journey. In the end, we extended the time beyond Lent because we had not completed our goal. This activity was fun, created an interest in exercising in the winter months and promoted health as well as Faith Community Nursing in our parish. For more information contact First Church of Christ at 860-633-4641 and leave a message for us, Charlene Dann, RN, Charlotte Mowry, RN or Margie Kreitler, RN.

Greetings from Amy:

Hope all of you are having a great summer! May God's blessings be with you all.

We have had elections and the officers are as follows: Lynne G. for Coordinator, Stacy D. for Treasurer, Ann M. for Secretary, Amy B. for Program Director and Margie K., Marcia P. and Lorraine J. are Members at Large. Shannon J. gives her time to do the newsletter and maintain the website and we are ever so grateful for her for doing this. Donna R. has also spent tremendous energy and countless hours this year helping the Executive Committee. Thank you all so much.

Though attendance has been slim this year, I think we have had some excellent programs. One of the efforts was to have programs at different churches to enhance participation, but this did not seem to help. So, going forward, we will begin having all meetings at St. Francis hospital on the 4th Wednesday of the following months: September, November, January, March and May. Each meeting will run from 6:30 - 8 p.m. and are education sessions for parish nurses to enhance programs you may already have at your churches. These meetings are also a time to support one another in our quest as parish nurses. One program is no better than another; they all meet the needs of the particular church and the parish nurses who devote their time. I will send out a reminder to all before each meeting on the months that we have programs. On the months we do not have a program offered, the Executive Committee will meet to plan further events, except in April, when CCPNC (Ct. Council of Parish Nurse Coordinators) hold their annual meeting and program. It was an excellent event that CCPNC put on this year; if you missed it, it was fantastic!

I would like to take any and all suggestions as to how to improve attendance and membership to HAAPN. Dues are due now. Applications and the address are on the website as to where to send it. Thank you in advance for your support. If you have any suggestions for the website or newsletter, let us know. Also, we will be starting some educational information for the newsletter. If you have anything that you would like to submit (about your particular church and the programs you offer) it would be greatly appreciated. Please let us know.

During this last year, we decided not to become incorporated and also to give up the office at St. Mary's Home and the telephone number we had. The telephone was an added expense and we got no calls on the number. Also, the office was a great offer, but was not utilized. If you would like to see a program or event offered this next year, please call me at 860 302-8272.

In Him,
Amy Borkowski

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What About Blood Pressure?

Check your pressure!

What is blood pressure?

Blood pressure is the force of blood against the walls of the blood vessels.

120/80: What do the numbers mean?

The top number or the systolic number is the maximum amount of pressure on the arteries during the contraction of the heart. The bottom number also known as the diastolic number is the resting pressure that the blood constantly exerts between each contraction of the heart.

What causes high blood pressure?

High blood pressure is also called hypertension. Occasionally, high blood pressure is caused from a disease. Most people with high blood pressure have primary or essential hypertension. The cause is unknown.

Why should I care about my blood pressure?

Most people do not have any symptoms to warn them that their blood pressure is high. Uncontrolled high blood pressure is also known as the "silent killer." The effects of uncontrolled high blood pressure can be very damaging.

What can happen?

Eye Damage : The arteries in the eyes can harden and narrow causing eye hemorrhages

Blood Vessels : Walls of the arteries become damaged due to high pressure, the arteries can harden, and blood flow is decreased

Heart Damage : Heart can become damaged from working so hard to pump blood against a higher pressure

Brain Damage : Arteries in the brain can rupture causing a stroke

Kidney damage : Kidneys help regulate blood pressure, damage to the blood vessels in the kidneys can cause blood pressure to go even higher

Are my Numbers Normal?

	Top#	Bottom #
Normal	<120	<80
Prehypertension	120-139	80-89
Stage 1	140-159	90-99
Stage 2	>160	>100

What Can I do About my Blood Pressure?

- 1 Check with you doctor to make sure it is safe for you to get moving, try walking or biking. If you haven't exercised in a while, start slow with 10 minutes a day; slowly build up.
- 2 Work with you doctor to control your blood pressure
- 3 Lose weight - even a few pounds lost can affect your blood pressure
- 4 Decrease salt intake - try other seasonings instead of salt
- 5 If you take any prescribed medications, DON'T STOP taking your medication without talking to your doctor

You May be at Risk if:

- 1 You have a family history of high blood pressure
- 2 You are African American
- 3 You are obese
- 4 You live a sedentary lifestyle
- 5 You have diabetes

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A, B,C'S of skin cancer?

What are the layers of skin?

Epidermis : Uppermost layer contains basal cells

Dermis/Corneum : Produces collagen, gives skin strength

Melanocytes : Produce melanin

What does the skin do?

- 1 Protects the body from injury
- 2 Maintains temperature
- 3 Contains nerves, produces Vitamin D, stores water and fat

What causes skin cancer?

Exposure to UV light

Aging Skin : as skin ages, the top layer of skin, epidermis thins and flattens; changes in skin and hair color from decreased production of melanin

Am I at risk for skin cancer?

- 1 Do I get exposed to a lot of sunlight?
Do I work outdoors?
Do I burn easily?
- 2 Am I taking medications that increase photosensitivity and make me burn more easily? Some blood pressure medicines and antibiotics can make you burn more easily.
- 3 Read your medication labels
- 4 Do I have a pre-malignant status? Did my doctor tell me to "keep an eye" on a mole?

A, B, C, D's of skin cancer

A Asymmetry : Is there a change in height of a mole

B Border : Have the edges of a mole changed, are the edges/border irregular

C Color : Is the mole one color, has the color changed

D Diameter : Has the size changed, become larger, is it tender, is there itching or burning of a mole or freckle

SEE YOUR DOCTOR IF YOU NOTICE ANY CHANGES

What Can I do to Protect Myself?

- 1 Check your skin monthly for moles, new freckles. Note any changes
- 2 Minimize sun exposure
- 3 Wear sunglasses that meet UV requirements
- 4 Use sunscreen and sunblock of at least SPF (sun protection factor) 15
- 5 Reapply sunscreen/sunblock every 2-3 hours during prolonged exposure