

St. Mary of the Immaculate Conception Health Ministry Health Link



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Hello St. Mary Parishioners! This is the first of our Health Ministry Health Link newsletters. Our goal is to send you articles of interest that are related to a healthy lifestyle, disease prevention and general interest ~ for all members of the family and all ages.

We hope you enjoy these communications and will let us know what topics are of special interest to you!

So, for this newsletter we will be bringing you a variety of topics including **how coloring can be a wonderful adult relaxation tool (really!!)**, **tips for family caregivers**, **combatting that nasty old cold season that is sneaking up on us**, **senior tips for vital exams** and, **since September is Library Card Sign-up Month, an article that shows you why reading is healthy!!!**

Let's Get to IT!!

Color Me Calm -Using Adult Coloring Books as a Relaxation Technique

Follow The Cross and Trust in Jesus



10 Tips for Family Caregivers

- 1) Caregiving is a job and respite is your earned right. Reward yourself with respite breaks often.
- 2) Watch for signs of depression and don't delay in getting professional help when you need it.
- 3) When people offer help, accept the offer and suggest specific things that they can do.
- 4) Educate yourself about your loved one's condition and how to communicate effectively with doctors.
- 5) There is a difference between caring and doing. Be open to technologies and ideas that promote your loved one's independence.
- 6) Trust your instincts. Most of the time they'll lead you in the right direction.
- 7) Caregivers often do a lot of lifting, pushing, and pulling. Be good to your back!
- 8) Grieve for your losses, and then allow yourself to dream new dreams.
- 9) Seek support from other caregivers. There is great strength in knowing you are not alone.
- 10) Stand up for your rights as a caregiver and a citizen.

Information from the National Family Caregivers Assn: www.nfcacares.org

Adult coloring books are rising in popularity as stressed out folks find peace of mind inside the lines. The slow, deliberate coloring of shapes and pictures involves both logic and creativity, which in turn induces relaxation by repressing the activity of the amygdala, a part of the brain that controls stress-related emotions. Taking time to unwind creatively has the potential to reduce stress by channeling it into the colors on a page.

The trend of adult coloring books as taken off, especially in the UK and France, where the books are bestsellers. The movement is also making its way across the pond, as more and more coloring books are creeping their way up bestsellers lists. The books range from the elaborate "Secret Garden: An Inky Treasure Hunt and Coloring Book" by Johanna Basford to the whimsical "The Mindfulness Coloring Book: Anti-Stress Art Therapy for Busy People" by Emma Farrarons, to the chance to color celebrities in illustrator Mel Simone Elliot's books, "Colour Me Good".

Art therapy has often taken the form of crafts, music, or free-form drawing, but there's something to be said to coloring inside the lines. Simply speaking, the act of concentrating on coloring a design greatly reduces your focus on anything worrisome. Just think: as a kid, were you ever worried about anything while you colored? Of course not! Especially in this digital age, it's helpful to take your eyes off the screen and zone out into a beautiful lined canvas of a garden, a country scene, or even a whimsical cat, just waiting to be splashed with color. And who doesn't love to color?

Adapted from: ChurchHealth, Summer 2015, Volume 5, Number 2, page 17.

Combatting Cold & Flu Season

According to the CDC, flu outbreaks starts as early as October and lasts as late as May. Typically, flu peaks between December and February.

According to last year's CDC data, influenza for the 2014-15 season peaked earlier on the East Coast, but stayed in circulation

Senior Care Vital Tests That Could Save Your Life ~

- 1) **Blood Pressure:** Have it checked at least once a year, more often if you already have hypertension.
- 2) **Cholesterol:** At least every 2 years between the ages 60-75, then yearly. People with heart disease usually have high levels of cholesterol.
- 3) **Diabetes:** A fasting plasma glucose or oral glucose-tolerance blood test every 3 years if level is normal, every 1-2 years if it isn't.
- 4) **Dental Exam:** Twice a year, whether you have natural teeth or dentures.
- 5) **Electrocardiogram (EKG):** Have a baseline EKG by age 65. Frequency of EKGs depends on history.
- 6) **Hearing Exam:** Annually, along with your regular physical.
- 7) **Eye Exam:** Basic exam and glaucoma test annually by an ophthalmologist every 2 years for those over 65.
- 8) **Osteoporosis (Bone) Screening:** Beginning at age 60, a bone density screening test (x-ray) every 2 years can identify bone loss.
- 9) **Mammogram:** Annually after age 50. Self-exam your breasts monthly.
- 10) **Occult Blood:** Annually test for blood in the stool sample.
- 11) **Colon Exam:** A fecal-occult blood test every year, a flexible sigmoidoscopy or barium enema x-ray every 5 years, depending on personal history. Colonoscopy every 10 years.
- 12) **Prostate:** Starting at 50, digital rectal exam and PSA blood test annually.
- 13) **Testicular Exam:** Yearly. Perform a self-examination monthly.

Check With Your Physician! The First Step is to have an Annual Physical Exam!

Adapted from the National Safety Council's "Senior Safe", Jackson, MI, #5718

with high rates for a longer duration on the West Coast. Large cities on both coasts were hit the hardest, and the population density made the disease spread faster. The Midwest had the highest rates of influenza overall and actually peaked first. So what does this mean? Depending upon where you live, how much you travel or work with those who travel, the timeframe of the virus' arrival in your community varies significantly. Knowing the virus will arrive in your neighborhood sometime soon, what can you do?

First and foremost, get your flu vaccination. It's recommended getting the vaccine no later than October. It takes 2 weeks for antibodies to begin protecting from the flu. This year, several strains have been added into the vaccine, including H1N1.

Adapted from: <http://nursing.advanceweb.com/Population-Health/Features/Articles/Combating-Cold-Flu-Season.aspx>
(right click on a blue link to read the original article)

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September is Library Card Sign-Up Month!!

Showing Why Reading is Healthy!

Reading isn't only fun, it's good for you. And reading for pleasure is something that not enough people take the time out to do.

If you're a book worm, no tablet can take the place of the wonderful tactile experience of reading a good book. Whether you like novels or history books, books on great leaders or nutrition, **reading is an extremely healthy habit**. Sadly, however, many people don't appreciate it, with a poll [showing last year](#) that of 1,000 participants, 28 percent of those surveyed hadn't read a book in over a year. **Below are just 5 studies showing how beneficial reading can really be for your health.**

It's not too late to get back into reading. The best part about reading into adulthood—you don't have to write a report or be prepared for a discussion, you can just do it for fun.

1. Improved Social Skills - One recent study, published in the journal [Science](#), found that **reading could improve your ability to read the thoughts and feelings of others**. In this way, reading books can affect your social abilities. The researchers found those who read more literary books were better able to read the emotions of people by looking at their faces.

"I think it's a really interesting paper," says psychology researcher Raymond Mar. "It seems to be largely consistent with this growing body of work showing that what we read and our exposure to narrative has a very interesting impact on our social abilities and our ability to understand what other people are thinking and feeling."

2. Protection Against Alzheimer's - Several years ago, [scientists said](#) those who read **may be less likely to suffer from Alzheimer's in old age**. Initially published in the *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* in 2001, the study found older adults who kept their brains engaged with activities like reading and playing games were less likely to suffer from the degenerative brain disorder.

3. Reducing Depression - Some books even have the power to reduce depression. This year in [PLOS One](#), a study was published indicating patients who combined support sessions with reading self-help books showed lower level of depression than patients who only received traditional treatments.

4. Combating Stress - Reading can also reduce stress levels. Researchers with the University of Sussex found that reading was the “most effective way to overcome stress,” according to [Huffington Post](#), more effective than listening to music, having a cup of tea, or even going for a walk.

5. Staving Off Mental Decline - Finally, reading can keep you sharp. It isn't only because you might be loading up on new knowledge in your books, but elderly people who read experienced slower mental decline than those who didn't. Those who engaged in *infrequent* mental activity exhibited mental decline 48% faster than the control group, however.

Reading isn't only fun, it's good for you. And reading for pleasure is something that not enough people take the time out to do. Add this to your health regimen and experience the benefits yourself.

Adapted from: <http://www.nationofchange.org/5-studies-showing-why-reading-healthy-1387124316>

A Message from Vera~

I closed my eyes in the shower to rinse my hair and had to hold on to the rail to steady myself. Most of us probably know that the main center for body balance is in the inner ear but no matter how well the inner ears work, if you try to cross a narrow bridge in the dark, or with your eyes closed, you will be quickly aware that eye-sight is also essential for balance.

It is interesting to apply that observation to our emotional and spiritual life. Whatever we listen to and whatever we look at will influence the moral balance that God has programmed into us. So much of what we take in is carefully crafted with fear, trivia, or perceived stress, to distract the attention needed to maintain our sense of moral balance. It includes what we hear and/or see on TV, computers, movies, books, magazines, and radio, or listen to in casual conversations and gossip. This week, may we intentionally control what we look at and listen to, so that we choose the things of God that strengthen and keep us well balanced by His standards. Blessings, Vera

Cerré los ojos en la regadera para enjuagarme el pelo, y tuve que detenerme del riel para guardar el equilibrio. La mayoría de nosotros sabemos que el centro principal para el balance del cuerpo, esta en el oído medio; pero no importa que tan bien funcione el oído medio si tratas de cruzar un puente estrecho en la obscuridad o con los ojos cerrados, y te darás cuenta rápidamente que también la vista es esencial para el buen balance.

Es interesante aplicar esta observación a nuestra vida emocional y espiritual. Cualquier cosa que oigamos o veamos , influenciara el balance moral que Dios ha programado en nosotros. Mucho de lo que percibimos hoy en día, esta manipulado con el miedo, la trivialidad y el estrés, para distraer la atención que es necesaria para mantener nuestro sentido de balance moral. Esto incluye lo que vemos y oímos en la television, computadora, radio, cine libros, revistas y chismes que oímos en conversaciones casuales. Esta semana, controlemos intencionalmente lo que vemos y oimos, de tal manera, que escojamos las cosas de Dios, que refuerzan y aseguran el buen balance, de acuerdo a Sus estándares. Bendiciones, Vera