

# St. Mary of the Immaculate Conception Health Ministry Health Link



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Hello to St. Mary Parishioners! Welcome to 2016 and we are looking forward to a great New Year! We all think about how to make our health situation even better than last year.

Our goal is to send you articles of interest that are related to a healthy lifestyle, disease and general interest ~ for all members of the family and all ages. So, for this newsletter, let's talk about some health topics that can provide insights into keeping our brain power moving forward, promising research in heart disease and Alzheimer's, ADHD Tips, wrestling with wrinkles and holiday weight gain, information on supplementals that you probably didn't know and then, some notes on how we can put Mercy into our 2016 life commitments!

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

So let's get to the topics for this Newsletter. They are ~ **Resolve to be Good to Your Brain with These Easy Tips**, **New Ways to Fix a Broken Heart**, **New Alzheimer's Treatment Restores Memory**, **Tips to Help Children and Young Adults with ADHD Stay Organized and Follow Directions**, **Surprising Ways to Reduce Wrinkles**, **How to Get Back on Track After Holiday Binge Eating**, **12 Things You Don't Know About Supplements**, and then a message on our important 2016 commitment to **Spiritual, Corporal Works of Mercy**.

Let's Get to IT!!

**Follow The Cross and Trust in Jesus**



## Boost Your Brain Power With These Easy Steps!

### Step # 1: Start by controlling your stress response.

Just one high-anxiety experience can kill off cells in your brain's memory and learning center, the hippocampus. A major stressful event also can shrink another brain area that helps control emotions, as well as blood sugar and blood pressure.

**Step #2: Eat brain-power foods.** Put lots of veggies, a couple of nuts and 100 percent whole grains on your plate every day. Frequently fit in berries, beans, fish and only good fats like olive oil. Cut back on red meat, cheese, butter, stick margarine, sweets and fried foods.

### Step #3: Practice mindful meditation for 10 minutes in the morning and 10 minutes in the evening.

Find a quiet space. Close your eyes. Focus on your breathing and keep your thoughts in the present. If your mind wanders, bring your thoughts back to your breathing.

**Step #4: Move, Move, Move!** Exercise grows new brain cells and nourishes new connections between them. In a new Boston University study, older adults who logged more daily steps, walking or running, had sharper memories than those who logged more butt-in-chair time. Physical activity also might inspire you to eat better and help whittle your waistline – that helps cool off inflammation. Activity can include everything from walking to swimming, strength training, cycling or waltzing, shakin' a samba or rocking a country line dance!

**Step #5: Stimulate your little gray cells.** Take a college course or learn a new language, and yes, reading and crossword puzzles do work. If you're a longtime fan of crosswords, for example, consider math puzzles like Sudoku for mental cross-training. Challenging your brain is proven to keep thinking and memory skills stronger, faster and more flexible. That's smart!

Adapted from:

*Mehmet Oz, M.D., Mike Roizen, M. D., Two Docs, Healthy Life, The Free Lance-Star, January 3, 2015*

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# New Way to Fix a Broken Heart?

By tracking a single cell in a growing heart, scientists from Stanford University have discovered a cell type that could repair damaged arteries.

Coronary artery disease is the leading cause of death worldwide, but there is currently no effective method to regenerate new coronary arteries in diseased or injured hearts. The findings in the journal *eLife* identified a progenitor cell type that could make it possible.

The study was carried out with mice but, as the blood vessels of the human heart are similar, it could lead to new treatments for the disease or to restore blood flow after a heart attack.

“Current methods to grow new blood vessels in the heart stimulate fine blood vessels rather than re-establishing the strong supply of blood provided by the main arteries. We need arteries to restore normal function,” says senior author Kristy Red-Horse from the Department of Biological Sciences.

Current efforts in treatment also often focus on the diseased heart, while the Stanford University scientists argue that it is important to first understand how the vessels of the healthy heart are built up.

“If we want to regenerate diseased hearts, we need to first understand how the heart creates the building blocks of healthy coronary arteries,” says lead author Dr. Katharina Volz, the first PhD graduate in Stem Cell Biology and Regenerative Medicine at Stanford University.

“Our study describes step-by-step how coronary arteries develop in the embryonic mouse heart.”

It was already known that smooth muscle is formed from cells in the epicardium, the layer that covers the heart. During embryonic development, many epicardial cells travel deeper into the wall of the heart and some form smooth muscle. But the original cell type that undergoes this transition, and the signals that trigger differentiation into smooth muscle, were poorly understood.

The team can now reveal that the smooth muscle of the arteries is derived from cells called pericytes. The small capillary blood vessels throughout the developing heart are covered in pericytes. They

## How to get back on track after

### holiday binge eating!

Over-do it these past couple of months? If Thanksgiving, Christmas and New Year's left your pants feeling a little snug and your rings feeling a little tighter, you may be carrying extra water weight in addition to extra calories. Get back to feeling your best in no time at all!

#### Flush excess fluid with water!

Alcohol and added salt at the holiday table can lead to an electrolyte imbalance that results in water retention. It sounds counter-intuitive, but drinking more water helps rid the body of excess water weight and bloat. Flush excess fluid from your body by drinking 8 (or more!) cups of water daily. If pure H2O doesn't appeal to you, add lemon or orange slices or fresh mint to naturally flavor water and help you meet your fluid goal.

#### Increase probiotic consumption~

Bacteria in our gut break down food to improve digestion and reduce bloat. Help friendly gut bacteria do their job by feeding them probiotic-rich foods. The most efficient probiotics are in food rather than a supplement. Examples include kefir, a fermented, drinkable yogurt with live cultures, kombucha and sauerkraut.

#### Sip on herbal tea!

Need a mid-afternoon boost? Don't reach for the soda, which can have bloat-inducing carbonation and artificial sweeteners. Opt for herbal tea. Tea not only contributes to your fluid intake, it may provide a diuretic effect. Look for varieties like green tea, dandelion leaf tea and stinging nettle tea, which are all proven to rid the body of unnecessary fluid.

#### Choose carbs wisely~

Avoid processed grains and starches like bagels, white pasta and sugary foods. These foods are typically low in nutrients and hold on to water after digestion, which increases water retention. Choose high-fiber crackers, vegetable noodles or for a sweet treat, have one serving of berries, a small banana or an orange. All of these foods contain fiber to fill you up and help reduce water retention.

#### Start your day with fiber and protein!

Every meal and snack, particularly breakfast, should include a combination of filling fiber and lean protein. These two key nutrients keep you satiated, provide sustained energy and guarantee the lowest caloric intake with the most nutrients.

<http://www.foxnews.com/health/2015/12/01/how-to-get-back-on-track-after-holiday-binge-eating.html>

receive signals through a protein called Notch 3 to differentiate and form the smooth muscle covering needed for larger artery walls.

Pericytes are also found throughout the adult heart which suggests that they could be used to trigger a self-repair mechanism. When the main arteries become blocked and a person suffers a heart attack, small collateral vessels can form a detour around the blockage. Large collateral arteries are required to provide significant blood flow to healing tissues. Providing the right molecular signals to turn pericytes into smooth muscle cells may promote a transition from tiny blood vessels to true arteries in the healing heart.

A problem with cell or tissue transplantation can be that the cells don't integrate or they differentiate into slightly different cells types than intended. As pericytes are spread all over the heart on all the small blood vessels, they could be used as a target to stimulate artery formation without the need for transplantation.

The team is now investigating whether pericytes differentiate into smooth muscle as part of this process and whether it can be activated or sped up by introducing Notch 3 signaling molecules.

"Now that we are beginning to really understand coronary artery development, we have initiated studies to reactivate it in injury models and hope to some day use these same methods to help treat coronary artery disease," says Red-Horse.

[http://modernnurse.com/new-way-to-fix-a-broken-heart/?utm\\_source=NW+Scrubs&utm\\_campaign=ce78db206b-Modern\\_10-30\\_NWS&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_term=0\\_231ff58988-ce78db206b-14560805](http://modernnurse.com/new-way-to-fix-a-broken-heart/?utm_source=NW+Scrubs&utm_campaign=ce78db206b-Modern_10-30_NWS&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_231ff58988-ce78db206b-14560805)

## Tips to Help Children and Young Adults with ADHD Stay Organized and Follow Directions

### Schedule

If you live or work closely with the youth, keep the same routine every day, from wake-up time to bedtime. Include time for homework, outdoor play, and indoor activities. Keep the schedule on the refrigerator or on a bulletin board. Write changes on the schedule as far in advance as possible.

### Organize Everyday Items

Have a place for everything. Keep everything in its place, including clothing, backpacks, books, and toys.

### Use Homework and Notebook Organizers

Use organizers for school material and supplies. Stress the importance of writing down assignments, bringing home the necessary books, and making lists or keeping an appointment book.

### Be Clear and Consistent

Children and young adults with ADHD need consistent rules and structure they can understand and follow.

### Give Praise or Rewards When Rules are Followed

Children and young adults with ADHD often receive and expect criticism. Look for good behavior and praise it.

Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, Missouri Department of Mental Health, and National Council for Community Behavioral Healthcare (2012) *Youth Mental Health First Aid USA for Adults Assisting Young People*

# Spiritual, Corporal Works of Mercy

As the Church celebrates the opening of the Year of Mercy and one of the greatest acts of mercy in salvation history ~ the birth of Christ ~ the faithful are called to consider more attentively the spiritual and corporal works of mercy. “We have to put mercy before judgment, and in every case God’s judgment will always be in the light of His mercy” said Pope Francis as he opened the jubilee year.

But what are the works of mercy, and how do we put them into practice?

## Corporal works of Mercy

1) feed the hungry 2) give drink to the thirsty 3) clothe the naked 4) shelter the homeless 5) visit the sick 6) visit the imprisoned 7) bury the dead

## Spiritual works of Mercy

1) counsel the doubtful 2) instruct the ignorant 3) admonish the sinner 4) comfort the sorrowful 5) forgive offenses willingly 6) bear wrongs patiently 7) pray for the living and the dead

The corporal works of mercy are pretty “straightforward”, says Oblate of St. Francis de Sales Father Lewis S. Fiorelli. “It is clear just by naming them as to what is called for from believers who want to translate their faith in God into concrete and loving actions.” Father Fiorelli said that addressing bodily needs, such as offering food and shelter, is often the principal way to reach people’s hearts and arouse their faith in God.

Unlike the corporal works, the spiritual works — counsel the doubtful, instruct the ignorant, admonish the sinner, comfort the sorrowful, forgive offenses willingly, bear wrongs patiently, and pray for the living and the dead — are “not so readily understood,” said Father Fiorelli. The first three can be especially confusing to put into practice.

“‘Counseling the doubtful’ often implies the buffeting of one’s faith in a good, loving and all-powerful God when personal tragedies occur,” said Father Fiorelli.

“How often did we hear the question, ‘Where was God?’ when the (twin) towers fell? How often do we hear a spouse ask, ‘Where was God?’ when their beloved dies or the same question from parents when their children suffer? Doubt here suggests a bruised and hurting faith, not its total lack,” he said. “When the tragedy or the hurt or the pain is raw, counseling the doubtful is not done so much in words as in loving presence.

“As St. Francis de Sales so wisely said, ‘Heart speaks to heart; words speak only to ears.’”

When we are asked to “instruct the ignorant,” said Father Fiorelli, “ignorance implies being uninformed or perhaps inadequately informed of the truths of our faith and in its moral imperatives. Thus, (the ignorant) need teachers who know how to win hearts by gently but persuasively presenting the truth of the Gospel and the teachings of the church.

“Jesus, ‘gentle and humble of heart,’ knew that to reach the head, one must first win the heart.”

Father Fiorelli said the directive to “admonish the sinner” especially is challenging because “all of us are acutely aware of our own sins.”

Though sinless, Jesus can be our model, he said. “While Jesus readily forgave the sinner, He never dismissed the sin. Jesus knew just how to speak to the sinner so that, while He clearly denounced the sin, He never rejected the sinner.”

Father Fiorelli pointed out that this spiritual work should not be left solely to bishops, priests and deacons. Parents have an important role to play, as do all Christians, who “ought to admonish and encourage one another.”

“On a larger level,” said Father Fiorelli, “believers need to admonish the sinfulness that is rampant in our world today, from indifference or hostility to human life, to the cheapening of human love and the denigration of the human body, as well as to the misuse and abuse of our fragile planet and its limited resources.”

According to Chad Pecknold, associate professor of systematic theology at Catholic University in Washington, all of the acts of mercy are not mere suggestions. They are a response to “the mercy that is poured out for us from God,” he said. “We, in turn, must pour out our mercy and love for others.”

Adapted from: <http://catholicherald.com/stories/What-are-the-spiritual-and-corporal-works-of-mercy,30575>

## 12 Things You Don't Know About Supplements

A 2015 investigation by New York attorney general Eric Schneiderman delved into the wild, mysterious world of supplements ~ and found that 79% of supplements that underwent DNA testing did not contain what the labels on their bottles claimed they did. This largely unregulated vitamin and dietary supplement industry has a lot of secrets most of us don't know about. Here's what every American needs to know before popping another over-the-counter pill:

**1) Vitamins and supplements are not required to show proof of safety or efficacy before they're sold.** That's not to say all supplements aren't safe – just that the companies that make them don't have to show evidence of their safety before they go to market.

**2) There's no regulatory definition for a multivitamin.** That's confusing if you're trying to compare brands while you shop.

**3) Vitamins and supplements are not the same thing.** There are only 13 vitamins (A,C,D,E,K and eight B vitamins). Supplements are any substance you ingest by mouth that's intended to supplement your diet. Vitamins are dietary supplements, but all dietary supplements are not vitamins. There is an estimated 85,000 dietary supplements in the US marketplace.

**4) Calcium supplements might not be doing your bones any good.** Two studies published in the journal BMJ add to the growing skepticism over whether older adults should increase calcium via supplements in order to prevent osteoporosis and bone fractures. The FDA has long recommended that older adults consume 1,000 to 1,200 milligrams of calcium a day. But the new papers find little evidence to support the recommendations. The worry is that the potential side effects of calcium intake, from constipation to cardiovascular issues, outweigh the small reduction in fractures.

**5) Weight loss supplements don't work for most people.** The supplements may not deserve the credit being given to them as 85% of consumers (from a Consumer Reports survey) taking weight loss supplements who lost weight also changed their diet and exercised.

**6) Supplements are involved in 23,000 ER visits a year.** In a study published in the New England Journal of Medicine, researchers used 10 years of data to estimate how often Americans went to the emergency room due to supplement use. The most common health problems associated with micronutrients, like vitamins and minerals, were allergic reactions or trouble swallowing.

**7) Most dietary supplement ingredients and vitamins are not made in America.** Sometimes the pills may be manufactured in the US, but the raw ingredients typically come from outside the country. A large percentage of the ingredients in dietary supplements come from China.

## Surprising ways to Reduce Wrinkles

### Sleep On Your Back

Sleeping in certain positions night after night leads to "sleep lines" -- wrinkles that become etched into the top layers of skin and don't fade once you're up. Sleeping on your side leads to wrinkles on cheeks and chin, while sleeping face down gives you a furrowed brow. To cut down on new wrinkles, sleep on your back!

### Eat More Fish Like Salmon

Salmon (along with other cold-water fish) is a great source of protein, one of the building blocks of great skin. It's also an awesome source of omega-3 fatty acids. Experts say that essential fatty acids nourish skin and keep it plump and youthful, helping minimize wrinkles

### Don't Squint -- Get Reading Glasses!

Making the same expressions over and over -- like squinting -- overworks facial muscles, forming a groove beneath the skin's surface. Eventually the groove becomes a wrinkle. Keep those eyes wide: Wear reading glasses if you need them. And get savvy about sunglasses, which can protect skin around the eyes from sun damage and keep you from squinting

### Don't Over-Wash Your Face

Tap water strips skin of moisture and natural oils that protect against wrinkles. Wash your face too often, and you wash away its protection. And unless your soap contains moisturizers, use a gel or cream facial cleanser instead.

### Wear Your Vitamin C

Some studies have found that creams with vitamin C can raise collagen production, protect against damage from UVA and UVB rays, help reduce dark spots and uneven skin tone, and reduce redness. You have to use a skin product with the right type of vitamin C, though. L-ascorbic acid may be the best for wrinkle relief. You may also see a vitamin C ingredient listed as ascorbyl palmitate.

### Soy for Skin Care

Soy may improve the appearance of your skin and may even protect it, too. Studies suggest soy applied to the skin or taken as a supplement may help protect against or even heal some of the sun's damage. And it has also been shown to improve skin's structure and firmness, and to even out skin tone

### Trade Coffee for Cocoa

Try a wrinkle-reducing drink. In one study, researchers found that cocoa with high levels of two antioxidants (epicatechin and catechin) protected skin from sun damage, improved blood flow to skin cells, helped hydration, and made the skin look and feel smoother. Delicious!

### Practice Good Skin Care Basics

If you really want to keep your skin looking young, start with the essentials. You've probably heard this advice before, but it's important: Avoid the sun/Wear a broad spectrum sunscreen/Wear sun protective clothing/Don't smoke/Use moisturizer

<http://www.webmd.com/beauty/wrinkles/ss/slideshow-reducing-wrinkles>

**8) It's difficult to tell if a supplement is of good quality.** Due to the state of regulation this is very difficult. There are two independent verification programs called the United States Pharmacopeia and NSF International.

**9) You probably ingest supplements even if you don't realize it.** There is so much fortification in our food supply that, for most people, you are probably getting a multivitamin just from the food you are eating. Supplements for some people and all should follow their physician recommendations.

**10) Dietary supplements can be spiked with prescription drugs.** The three biggest categories in which this can happen are weight loss, and intimate enhancement.

**11) More is not better.** Taking more vitamins or supplements does not provide extra benefit and could cause harm. Be sure to tell your doctor what you are taking, since supplements can negatively interact with your other medications, and respect the upper-limit does suggested on the bottle.

**12) Weight-loss supplements can contain amphetamine-like substances.** Several supplements for weight loss contain ingredients that are similar to the stimulant amphetamine and have not been tested for safety in humans, according to recent research published in the journal *Drug Testing and Analysis*. The chemical BMPEA, labeled *Acacia rigidula*, is one. It was discovered in a handful of dietary supplements analyzed by the FDA in 2013. The names of the specific supplements were not released by the FDA, but in the new study, researchers found that BMPEA has not been removed and is still present in several products on the market.

Adapted from:

*Alexandra Sifferln, 12 Things You Don't Know About Supplements, TIME/ 100 New Health Discoveries, TIME INC.SPECIALS, 2015*

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## New Alzheimer's treatment fully restores memory function

Australian researchers have come up with a non-invasive ultrasound technology that clears the brain of neurotoxic amyloid plaques - structures that are responsible for memory loss and a decline in cognitive function in Alzheimer's patients.

If a person has Alzheimer's disease, it's usually the result of a build-up of two types of lesions - amyloid plaques, and neurofibrillary tangles. **Amyloid plaques** sit between the neurons and end up as dense clusters of beta-amyloid molecules, a sticky type of protein that clumps together and forms plaques.

**Neurofibrillary tangles** are found inside the neurons of the brain, and they're caused by defective tau proteins that clump up into a thick, insoluble mass. This causes tiny filaments called microtubules to get all twisted, which disrupts the transportation of essential materials such as nutrients and organelles along them, just like when you twist up the vacuum cleaner tube.

As we don't have any kind of vaccine or preventative measure for Alzheimer's - a disease that affects 343,000 people in Australia, and 50 million worldwide - it's been a race to figure out how best to treat it, starting with how to clear the build-up of defective beta-amyloid and tau proteins from a patient's brain. Now a team from the Queensland Brain Institute (QBI) at the University of Queensland have come up with a pretty promising solution for removing the former.

Publishing in *Science Translational Medicine*, the team describes the technique as using a particular type of ultrasound called a focused therapeutic ultrasound, which non-invasively beams sound waves into the brain tissue. By oscillating super-fast, these sound waves are able to gently open up the blood-brain barrier, which is a layer that protects the brain against bacteria, and stimulate the brain's microglial cells to activate. Microglia cells are basically waste-removal cells, so they're able to clear out the toxic beta-amyloid clumps that are responsible for the worst symptoms of Alzheimer's.

The team reports **fully restoring the memory function of 75 percent** of the mice they tested it on, with zero damage to the surrounding brain tissue. They found that the treated mice displayed improved performance in three memory tasks - a maze, a test to get them to recognise new objects, and one to get them to remember the places they should avoid. "We're extremely excited by this innovation of treating Alzheimer's without using drug therapeutics," one of the team, Jürgen Götz, **said in a press release**. "The word 'breakthrough' is often misused, but in this case I think this really does fundamentally change our understanding of how to treat this disease, and I foresee a great future for this approach." The team says they're planning on starting trials with higher animal models, such as sheep, and hope to get their human trials underway in 2017.

[http://www.sciencealert.com/new-alzheimer-s-treatment-fully-restores-memory-function?utm\\_content=buffer2f92&utm\\_medium=social&utm\\_source=facebook.com&utm\\_campaign=buffer](http://www.sciencealert.com/new-alzheimer-s-treatment-fully-restores-memory-function?utm_content=buffer2f92&utm_medium=social&utm_source=facebook.com&utm_campaign=buffer)

# The Gift of Health

*"Health is God's great gift, and we must spend it entirely for Him. Our eyes should see only for God, our feet walk only for Him, our hands labor for Him alone; in short, our entire body should serve God while we still have the time. Then, when He shall take our health and we shall near our last day, our conscience will not reproach us for having misused it."*

— St. John Bosco

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## A Message from Vera~

I had a box to be picked up by UPS and wanted to let the driver on my route know to look for it when he came by my house. When I called the number in the phone book, they told me that my local office did not have a direct line and instructed me to call the "800" number. The bad thing about the automated system was that the computer menu dealt only with routine things, and it could not address my specific need. I hung up, searched through an old card file and found an old number for my local office. The call was answered by a friendly driver, who immediately found paper and pen, took my information, and assured me he would let my driver know. Late that afternoon, when I got home, the box had been picked up by the UPS driver.

It made me think about how often, when we have a personal need, we assume that we cannot reach God, so we go first to friends or counselors who listen and advise but don't always understand the real need. The ability to talk to God about it (prayer and Bible study) has been around since antiquity. HE understands all our needs and knows how best to meet them.

This week, when you have a need, may your first call be to God's direct line rather than the human "800" number. Let Prayer, Patience and Presence lead to Peace with God's Answers.

Blessings, Vera

Tenia yo una caja que deseaba mandar por UPS, y quería comunicarme con el chofer de la ruta para explicarle donde dejaría la caja. Cuando llame al numero de UPS del directorio telefónico, me dijeron que la oficina local de mi area no tenia linea directa y que llamara al numero 800. Lo malo de los sistemas automatizados, es que la computadora solo tiene opciones de rutina y no pudo dar solución a mi problema particular. Colgué el teléfono y busque una tarjeta que tenia con el numero viejo de la oficina local. La llamada fue contestada por un amable chofer, que rápidamente tomo papel y lápiz, escribió mi información y me aseguro que le daría las instrucciones al chofer indicado. Esa misma tarde, cuando llegue a casa, la caja ya había sido recogida por UPS.

Esto me hizo pensar que muy seguido, cuando tenemos una necesidad personal, asumimos que Dios es inalcanzable, y acudimos con amigos o terapeutas que nos escuchan y nos dan consejos, pero que a menudo no entienden totalmente nuestras necesidades. La habilidad de hablar con Dios (rezando y estudiando la Biblia) ha existido desde la antigüedad. El entiende todas nuestros problemas y sabe cuales son las soluciones.

Esta semana, cuando tengas algún problema, llama primero a la linea directa con Dios, en lugar del numero 800, que es el de los humanos. Deja que la Oración, la Paciencia y la Presencia te lleven a la Paz con las respuestas de Dios.

Bendiciones, Vera