Congratulations. You are all pros now at knowing how to manage your congestive heart failure. You know the importance of taking your medicines to keep your blood pressure under control and to protect the heart from further injury. You know all the tricks about sticking to a low salt diet and a low cholesterol diet if you have coronary artery disease. You know the importance of working with your health care team in monitoring your health status and making adjustments in your medications as time goes on. This is what we have been hoping to achieve.

Now is the time to take the next step in treating congestive heart failure. As pros you are the best ones to do this. Most congestive heart failure is preventable. Treating hypertension before heart failure occurs is critical. Modifying your risk factors such as cholesterol and smoking to prevent coronary artery disease is key.

Controlling your diabetes as best as possible is another critical component. Look around you. Are your associates, friends, and family following these good health habits? If not, encourage them to become healthier. Treating these factors before you have congestive heart failure is the best approach. As a cardiologist, I am convinced that the future of cardiology is in preventing heart disease. Please help me in this mission.

The next step: Preventing Heart Failure

Heart Failure Education & Support Group

Wednesday, Nov. 12
2:00 – 3:30 p.m.
Registration at 1:45
Mercy Cafeteria Conference Rooms 1A & 1B
Presentation by Dr. Yasyn Lee
“Depression: It’s a Matter of Heart”

Call 589-9612 to register
Family and friends are invited to attend.

Be Aware... Scam Alert

Recently, an acquaintance of mine was taken advantage of on the phone. The caller informed my friend that her grandson was involved in a car accident and needed money immediately. The caller pronounced her grandson’s name correctly and knew where he lived. My friend felt the person who called on the phone knew her grandson. The caller requested money to be sent to get the grandson out of trouble (the reason why it was important to send money immediately). My friend did this without hesitation. Later that day, when the grandson called, my friend found out the whole incident was a scam and he was not in an accident. It saddens me that this nice person was taken advantage of. I would like to take this opportunity to remind you scams happen, and don’t let yourself get caught in one.

I did some research on some advice that may help you determine whether you are being “scammed.” Here are some suggestions that I found:

1. Take your time before committing to anything. If you have to make a hasty decision immediately, please don’t!
2. Talk with family or friends to see if they feel/know it is a scam. Their input may help you see clearer.
3. Never send money especially out of state/country unless you talk to a family member first.
4. If you can think of a way to verify the information, please do so. One suggestion was to ask a question of the caller only the family member would know.
5. See if others know anything about what the person on the phone said is true.
6. One rule would be that if you would not reveal certain information to a stranger on the street, then you should also not reveal it on the telephone. This applies to the internet as well.
Tips for Keeping your Holidays Jolly

Morgan Sayler, PharmD

If you have heart failure, the holiday season can present itself with some difficulties. Traveling, overeating, and the flu bug can wreak havoc on your health. Here are a couple tips to make your holidays happier and healthier.

1. **Take your medications everyday.** It is easy to say you don’t want to take your medicine especially your diuretic (water pill) while traveling. If you are sitting during long trips the fluid can collect in your legs making it a more painful and unhealthy situation.

   - **Allow time for bathroom breaks.** Give yourself a little more time to get from place to place to allow time for necessary stops.

   - **Break up your dose.** Most people take their dose of diuretic in the morning and it is not great timing if you are leaving on a trip. Try taking only half of your dose early in the day and other half at noon-time. This may help to cut back on the amount of stops you have to make.

   - **Bring a pillbox for your daily doses.** If you are going to see family and do not want to carry all your pill bottles with you while you travel, find a smaller pill box that you can easily take with you. Many pharmacies have single compartment pillboxes. Talk to your pharmacist about the choices!

2. **Get your Flu shot.** With busy holiday schedules and the predicted cold winter ahead, it is good to get your flu shot. The flu is a virus that can be hard on the body, leaving you achy and tired for up to a couple weeks.

   - **Building up your defense.** The average person takes about two weeks to be fully protected from the flu virus after getting a flu shot. Give your body some time to build up a defense by getting the shot before it is too close to the holidays.

   - **Watch out for live flu virus.** All of the flu vaccines given by injection are “dead” viruses, which stimulate your immune system to protect you from the flu, without allowing you to “catch” the flu from your shot. The nasal mist (Flumist®) vaccine is a live virus and is not recommended in heart failure patients and other people with heart disease.

A Matter of Taste

Mary Hampton R.D.
L.D. C.N.S.D.

Humans were born with a preference for sweet tastes. Yet overtime, our taste buds have learned to prefer salty foods. If you gradually decrease the sodium and salt in your diet, you can retrain your taste buds and reduce your desire for salt.

Food companies use both salt and sodium to enhance the flavor and preserve the food. Check food labels for some of these common sodium sources:

- Sodium Nitrate – Curing agent for ham and sausage
- Monosodium Glutamate (MSG)- flavor enhancer
- Sodium saccharin – artificial sweetener
- Sodium Bicarbonate- leavening agent
- Sodium Benzoate – preservative
- Soda or Brine – salty liquid.

**Food Label Terms**

- **Sodium Free** – contains 5 mg or less
- **Very Low sodium** – contains 35 mg or less
- **Low Sodium**- contains 140 mg or less
- **Reduced Sodium** – at least 25% less sodium than usual
- **No Salt Added** – no salt was added during processing, but may still contain sodium by nature.

**Fat Free – not Salt Free**

When food manufactures reduce the fats in food they often add more salt and sugar to enhance the flavor. You may want to use the regular versions of the product instead of the “fat free.” Just use a smaller amount.