

Nurses' Notes November 2011

November 6

When you think about it, many cultural and religious holidays overlap with cold and flu season – to help prevent illness, increase the number of times you wash your hands – especially after greeting others by shaking hands. Use a paper towel to turn off the faucet and open the restroom door before tossing it away. Have dry cracked skin or hangnails, use a liquid bandage to prevent germs from entering your system.

November 13

2.5 million Americans carry MRSA, a deadly, antibiotic resistant strain of bacteria, in their nasal passages – without showing symptoms. People who drink coffee or tea are 50% less vulnerable to the bug, according to a study published in *Annals of Family Medicine*. The protection probably stems from coffee and tea's antimicrobial properties. But be aware – the benefits are found only in hot beverages, not iced.

November 20

Low-fat Pumpkin Pie

Ingredients:

- 1 (15 ounce) can solid pack pumpkin
- 1 (14 ounce) can fat free sweetened condensed milk
- 1/2 cup egg substitute
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1/2 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- 1/2 teaspoon ground nutmeg
- 1/2 teaspoon ground ginger
- 1 (9 inch) unbaked pastry shell

Directions

In a large mixing bowl, combine the first seven ingredients; beat just until smooth. Pour into pastry shell. Bake at 425 degrees F for 15 minutes. Reduce heat to 350 degrees F; bake 25-30 minutes longer or until a knife inserted near the center comes out clean. Cool on a wire rack. Store in the refrigerator.

November 27

Got left-over turkey? Try this low-fat idea for using the remainder of your turkey:

Salad: Add leftover turkey to a mix of arugula and spinach, sliced mushrooms, cranberries, shredded carrots, sliced red onions and a sprinkling of heart-healthy walnuts. Toss with your favorite low fat or fat free fruity dressing or vinaigrette.

(W)holy, (W)holy, (W)holy
Health, Healing and Wholeness Article
November 2011

“Turn to me and be gracious to me, for I am lonely and afflicted. Relieve the troubles of my heart, and bring me out of my distress. Consider my affliction and my trouble ... (Psalm 25:16-18,: NRSV)

It is a subject that is not all that easy to talk about, yet it is the subject of jokes and dozens of TV advertisements – bladder control or urinary incontinence. For some it may be a minor irritation, and for others, an embarrassing problem that forces them to stay at home. If you're one of the millions of people who struggle with the loss of bladder control, see your doctor – there are numerous ways to deal with this problem. Bladder control is not a disease, but a symptom of an underlying medical or physical problem, and your doctor can help determine the cause.

Causes of episodes of incontinence include: alcohol (acts as a bladder stimulator and diuretic), caffeine (diuretic and bladder stimulant), and bladder irritants: carbonated drinks, tea, coffee, artificial sweeteners, spicy or foods with a large amount acid (such as tomatoes or pineapple); medications for heart disease or blood pressure, sedatives, or muscle relaxants. Treatable medical conditions such as urinary tract infections or constipation (the rectum and bladder share many of the same nerves; hard compacted stool - causes these nerves to be overactive and increase urinary frequency). Compacted stool can sometimes press on the bladder, and interfere with emptying the bladder.

Chronic or persistent loss of bladder control can sometimes be the result of physical changes: pregnancy & childbirth – from the weight of the fetus on the bladder, to damage of nerves caused by the strain of delivery. Additional causes include changes related to aging, such as a decrease in the bladder's ability to store urine; and pelvic surgery, such as hysterectomy, all can damage pelvic floor muscles. In men, inflammation of the prostate; enlargement of the prostate or prostate cancer may cause urine loss. In both men and women suffering from bladder cancer, bladder obstruction or urinary stones may be to blame for urine leakage. Neurological disorders such as multiple sclerosis, Parkinson's disease, stroke, brain tumor or spinal injury can interfere with nerve signals affecting bladder control.

If you are embarrassed by having bladder control, you can manage on your own by wearing absorbent pads – carrying extra clothing, or cut back on drinking liquids. But if urine leakage has begun to affect your quality of life by limiting your activities, see your doctor. There are numerous ways to treat the condition, ranging from medication to surgical intervention.

It is not always possible to prevent the development of urine leakage problems, but several things may decrease your risk: maintaining a healthy weight, not smoking, practicing pelvic floor exercises, avoiding bladder irritants, exercising, and eating more fiber to prevent constipation may all work in your favor. However, if incontinence affects your day-to-day activities, don't hesitate to see your doctor. In some cases, simple lifestyle changes or medical treatment can ease your discomfort.

November blessings!
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