

Road to Better Health

Twice Monthly
Health & Wellness
Newsletter Brought to you by



Located at **Pilot** 

January 15, 2015

Ask the Nurse Practitioner



Q: Is one type of blood pressure medication better than another?

A: Healthcare practitioners follow an algorithm, or a set of directions, based on a person's age, sex, race and medical history in determining the best choice of blood pressure medication. Oftentimes, it takes a little while to find the right medication. Your healthcare provider should explain any side effects and the best time to take your medication. Never stop taking high blood pressure medication abruptly. You may experience rebound high blood pressure if this occurs, meaning your blood pressure can elevate to a high level quickly. There are several classes of medications your healthcare provider can select for you.

Q: I used to have high blood pressure, but I don't have it now. Is it acceptable to check "no" on the DOT Medical Examination form before my DOT physical examination?

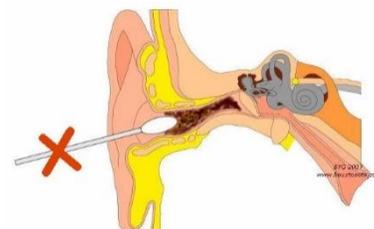
A: You must check "yes" because this section is asking you to document your history; not only active conditions but those that you have had. If it becomes necessary to request medical records, your exam could be delayed for several days. Discuss your past and present conditions with your healthcare provider.

Healthy Ear Tips for the Truck Driver

By Sheri Melot, FNP – Oklahoma City, OK

Many truck drivers suffer from ear problems due to the chronic excessive noise exposure, exposure to altitude changes, long term use of ear pieces and excessive dust exposure. If you smoke cigarettes, you put yourself at even greater risk of ear infections. Here are some tips to maintain good ear health:

1. Do not use Q-tips. If you tend to have excess wax build up, the Q-tips will push it further back into the ear canal up against the ear drum. To remove earwax, use ear drops (e.g. Debrox) to soften the wax for 4 days, then either use a home irrigation ear kit, or seek help for irrigation at a medical clinic. Once the ears are free of wax, the best way to keep the wax from building up is to run water from the shower head into your ears daily. The constant flushing will keep the wax from building up. If you are known to have a hole in your eardrum, known as a "perforated eardrum", do not put water in your ears. Talk to your health care provider about the best method for wax management.
2. Wear clean earplugs when you are going to be around excessive, repetitive noise.
3. Gently "pop" your ears several times daily when experiencing plugged ears from altitude changes. You can do this by holding your nose and gently blowing.
4. When your ears feel plugged, apply warm moist compresses to the neck on the area behind the ear. This may help the tube behind the eardrum open up.
5. Take ibuprofen, with your health care provider's approval, for plugged ears. The anti-inflammatory properties of the ibuprofen may help open up the plugged tube behind the eardrum.
6. Try to minimize use of the ear plug head-sets for your cell phones. This will decrease inflammation of the outer ear and ear canal.



Pitfalls of Unmanaged Diuretic Use

By Patricia Smith, FNP – Knoxville, TN

Diuretics, also called water pills, belong to a class of medications that are designed to increase the loss of water and salt from the body. This is done in different ways depending on the drug. There are a few different types of disorders that are treated with diuretics. They include high blood pressure, heart failure, diabetes, edema, and some types of liver and kidney disease. Even some traumatic brain injuries are treated with diuretics to remove fluid from the brain. There are several classes of diuretics that your doctor might prescribe for you. The type that will be discussed is the Loop Diuretic, a commonly prescribed and inexpensive diuretic for the treatment of hypertension, commonly referred to as high blood pressure.

High blood pressure means that the walls of the arteries are receiving too much pressure as the heart pumps blood through them. The American Heart Association defines high blood pressure as pressure greater than 120/80. The top number, or systolic, measures the pressure in the arteries when the heart contracts. The bottom number, or diastolic, measures the pressure in the arteries when the heart is at rest, or refilling with blood. Some of the dangers of high blood pressure include heart and artery damage, stroke, vision loss, erectile dysfunction and kidney damage. There are evidence-based guidelines for the management of high blood pressure. The updated Joint National Committee (JNC 8) guidelines no longer recommend only thiazide-type diuretics (HCTZ) as the initial therapy in most patients. Treatment is based on an algorithm that takes into account race, disease states and age. Nonetheless, some patients are still treated with HCTZ alone, and it is important to address sequelae that can result from improper use (borrowing this medication) or unmanaged use (long-term use with no lab tests). Diuretics can lead to loss of important electrolytes, such as potassium, that the body needs to survive. They can also lead to high levels of calcium, resulting in kidney stones.

If you have high blood pressure, take these steps to ensure good health:

- Have your blood pressure checked to make sure it is controlled on medication that is best suited for you.
- Don't run out of blood pressure medication.
- Don't borrow anyone's medication.
- Have regular eye exams.
- Avoid foods high in sodium.
- Don't wait until you experience a "bad headache" to seek treatment for high blood pressure.

Ask a health care provider to check your blood pressure and help you manage it. With regular care, you can avoid visits to an emergency department for blood pressure crises.

We Want to Hear From You

Road to Better Health is a new publication designed to provide you with relevant health and wellness information. We seek your input and comments to improve the newsletter.

- What questions would you like answered by our Nurse Practitioners?
- What recipes or other food information would you like to share with the readership?
- What topic would you like to see discussed more thoroughly in an article?

Please send an e-mail to services@urgentcaretravel.com with your feedback, suggestions, input, etc.

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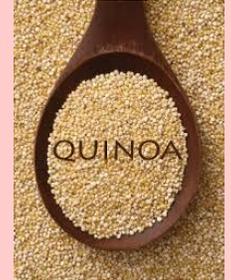
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I-40, Exit 140 (standalone building at Pilot Travel Center)

The Wellness Corner: Quinoa

Quinoa (“keen-wah”) and other grains such as amaranth, barley and farro are rapidly growing in popularity due to its wide array of health benefits, including its remarkable nutrient density as compared many grains, specifically in terms of protein, fat, and mineral content. Quinoa, though commonly referred to as a grain, is actually in the same family as beets, Swiss chard, and spinach. It is a pseudo-cereal (a non-grassy plant used in much the same way as cereals and grains with a similar nutritional profile). The seeds of pseudo-cereals can be milled and ground into flour just as other grains and cereals.

Quinoa is an impressive plant-based complete protein - complete proteins or “high-quality proteins” are those that provide all of the essential amino acids needed by the body. Nutritionally, quinoa is considered a whole grain. Whole grains include the entire grain seed without removing any of its parts. In contrast, when grains are milled or refined like white breads, white rice, and white pasta, they have been processed to create a finer, lighter texture. Unfortunately, most of the fiber and important nutrients are also removed during this process.



Quinoa is naturally gluten-free and is packed with many vitamins and minerals including:

- Heart-healthy monounsaturated fat (oleic acid) and omega-3 fatty acid (alpha-linolenic acid)
- Antioxidant phytonutrients called flavonoids
- Essential minerals including manganese, magnesium, iron, phosphorus, potassium, calcium, zinc, copper and selenium
- Vitamins: B1, B2, B3, B6, B9 and E
- Soluble and insoluble fiber

There are several health benefits associated with Quinoa:

1. **Reducing Diabetes Risk:** The unusually high ratio of protein to carbohydrate helps explain quinoa’s ability to help regulate blood sugar. Quinoa is also a great source of soluble fiber that helps control blood sugar and slow the breakdown of carbohydrates to glucose. The anti-inflammatory nutrients, including phenolic acids, vitamin E compounds, and cell wall polysaccharides, all help reduce unwanted inflammation associated with type 2 diabetes risk.
2. **Lowering Cholesterol:** The high fiber content of quinoa may help reduce cholesterol. Soluble fiber combines with bile acids to be excreted by the body and in turn, reduce total cholesterol and levels of “bad” LDL cholesterol. Quinoa serves as a healthy alternative to animal-based protein.
3. **Controlling Blood Pressure:** Quinoa has the highest potassium levels of all grains, a mineral essential for balancing sodium blood levels and maintaining lower blood pressure. Quinoa is also a rich source of magnesium, a vasodilator that helps to lower blood pressure.
4. **Supports Weight Loss and Maintenance of Weight:** Quinoa’s high fiber and protein content protein keeps you feeling full longer, and can help curb your appetite. White pastas, white rice and white breads provide us with simple carbohydrates that are quickly digested but little else in the way of nutrition. Balanced blood sugar levels associated with quinoa intake may help reduce cravings. Fiber helps food move through the intestines and promotes gastrointestinal regularity.

About UrgentCareTravel

UrgentCareTravel (UCT), in partnership with Pilot Flying J, addresses one of the trucking industry’s biggest challenges of offering easily accessible and affordable healthcare services for truck drivers. Located at Pilot Flying J Travel Centers, UCT Healthcare Centers offer DOT/non-DOT physicals, minor illness & injuries services, chronic disease screening and management, sleep apnea screening and drug screens.

UrgentCareTravel’s affordable **Healthcare Membership** programs include physicals, primary care visits, access to onsite fitness centers (where available) and 24x7 Telemedicine (phone consultations) with a licensed medical professional. With health insurance plans costing more, providing less medical coverage and requiring higher deductible payments, UrgentCareTravel’s **Healthcare Membership** program is a cost-effective option to address the healthcare needs of drivers, local businesses and communities.

