

Chuckle n'Chat



HEART HEALTH

Health Watch

MONKEYPOX VS SMALLPOX

**Role of
vitamin D**

How to protect
your children from
childhood illnesses

masca ⁷⁵th
Medical Aid Society
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ANNIVERSARY

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editor's comment



Dear Readers

The Covid-19 pandemic changed life as we know it and it may have changed us individually as well, from our morning routines to our life goals and priorities. The world has changed forever.

But this coming year, if the vaccine drives down infections and variants are kept at bay, life could return to some form of normalcy. At this point, what will we learn from the past years?

Some don't like the idea of side effects of the vaccine. Some have had vaccine side effects, and some have had covid-19 side effects, but nothing compares to the actual illness.

Vaccines really are worth getting although a vaccine is not a magic vaccine but points out that scientists can't always produce one that works.

One thing that has been recognised is that when people were told to work from home, you needed to have a job that you could do in your house on a computer.

While there are still problems for which you need to see a doctor in person, the pandemic introduced a new urgency to what had been a gradual switchover to platforms like Zoom for remote patient visits.

Many of us have become aware of how much we need other people, many have managed to maintain their social

connections, even if they had to use technology to keep in touch. There's no doubt that it's not enough, but technology has helped people.

The number of mental health disorders are on the rise with people struggling with such matters as juggling work and childcare, job loss, isolation, and losing a loved one to covid-19.

We have mastered the concept of resilience, the capacity to recover quickly from difficulties; toughness, because we have this effective reservoir inherent in all of us, be it the product of evolution, or our ancestors going through catastrophes, including wars, famines, and plagues.

Scientists and nonscientists alike learned that a virus can be more powerful than they are. This was evident in the way knowledge about the virus changed over time in the past year as scientific investigation of it evolved. We are learning as time goes. Take precautions and stay at home, only venturing out when necessary, while hand sanitising, maintaining the minimum social distancing guidelines. Sending one person to the supermarket for groceries, instead of shopping together. The least contact with others outside the home as possible is the best practice.

Save a life

Don't risk a life, wear your mask

Until next time Bye Bye *Maria*

PLEASE NOTE!!

WHILE EVERY REASONABLE PRECAUTION HAS BEEN TAKEN TO ENSURE THE ACCURACY OF THE ADVICE AND INFORMATION GIVEN TO READERS, NEITHER THE EDITOR, MASCA OR THE PUBLISHERS CAN ACCEPT ANY RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE ARTICLES THAT HAVE BEEN SUBMITTED FOR PUBLICATION.



HEART HEALTH

The question is “Why can’t people take care of their own hearts?” The answer might be, they don’t really know how to prevent heart disease.

But here’s the secret: the medical system is geared toward treating people who are sick. They are only now starting to figure out how much better it is to prevent people from getting sick.

People have become much more proactive about prevention in the world of cancer, diligently planning their mammograms, colonoscopies and skin screenings. Yet people are far less proactive about heart health.

According to Research we now spend more a year just to treat women who are at a greater risk for heart disease. But we know 80% of heart disease is preventable, if only we could teach you to take care of your own hearts through prevention.

Imagine what we could do with a fraction of that invested in preventing heart disease in the first place?

In the simplest terms, you can’t change what you don’t know. The biggest risks, “Life’s Simple 7,” which are seven factors that, when optimised, are generally considered to prevent 80% of heart disease cases. These seven factors to prevent heart disease are:

- Cholesterol level
- Blood pressure
- Blood sugar level
- Body mass index (your weight)
- Whether you exercise
- What you eat
- Whether you smoke

Let’s focus on the Big Three:

- **Sugars**
- **Blood Pressure, also known as the silent killer**



- **Cholesterol levels**

Get these three in line and you are so ahead of the curve to health and wellness!

Go get a physical. Your doctor is probably going to talk to you about these major risk factors of heart disease.

Because the biggest risk factors for heart disease are all bundled in these 3 risks, here is the amazing thing, these are mostly due to our lifestyle choices. If you have a strong family history, these might not be elevated due to that, but 80% of the time, it is in our control, so let's start with that totally empowering fact. It is up to us!

When you are carrying around too much weight, or you are not eating right, or not moving enough, the blood pressure goes up, the cholesterol goes up and the sugars become elevated.

The most amazing thing is when you figure out how to live from the heart meaning you live in a way that makes you feel as good as you can live with

vitality and total health and well-being. If you actually live from the heart, by eating right and exercising, sleeping well and paying attention to how you feel, you can figure out how to decrease these numbers and get them to the levels that are the best for you.

Even decreasing by 10 pounds can lower your blood pressure, cholesterol and sugars. It's such a direct and easy fix. Lose some weight and remove the three biggest threats! Cutting out that doughnut in the morning might make the difference in reducing the chances of getting diabetes. Cutting back on the amount of meat you eat may be just what you need to lower your cholesterol.



Cutting out on biscuits after dinner, or that midnight bowl of ice cream is not going to kill you. It might make you feel sad for a while but compared to how good you are going to feel, it is going to be worth it.

We're spending on sickness, not on heart wellness.

MIDGETS



How to protect your children from childhood illnesses

As a parent or caregiver, keeping your children fit and healthy is your number one priority. However, with countless pesky illnesses out there, it can be a challenge. We will look at 13 simple things you can do that will protect your children from childhood illnesses.



1. Treat ear infections quickly

If your child suffers from repeated ear infections, it may lead to a condition called glue ear (or otitis media with effusion). The illness is a build-up of sticky fluid in the ear, which can lead to hearing loss. Should your little one

be prone to infections, be sure to take him/her to a doctor as soon as the symptoms arise.

2. Get them the chickenpox vaccine

(Chickenpox vaccine is not available in Zimbabwe so needs to be imported)

Chickenpox is one of the most common childhood illnesses, causing an itchy, blister rash on the skin. It can be uncomfortable and lead to long-term scarring when you scratch. The easiest way to protect your children is with the vaccine. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends everyone get two doses of this vaccine.

3. Offer your child fluids when they have a fever

Fevers a temperature of more than 100°F or 38°C are a sign that your child is unwell. They may have a virus or an infection, such as a cold. Hydration is vital. When you notice that your child has a high

temperature, make sure you give them lots of fluids. If there are other signs of illness or your child has a fever for a few days, seek medical help from your doctor.



4. Keep their fingernails short and clean

Children love getting dirty when playing outside. When they are scrambling around, dirt, grime and bacteria collects under their nails. That could lead to skin infections (when they scratch themselves) or nail infections. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) suggests keeping children's nails short and clean to prevent these conditions.

5. Be aware of food intolerances

Five percent of children under the age of five have food allergies. When you're planning your child's meals, keep this fact on top of your

mind. Food intolerances can cause diarrhea in children. If you are worried, speak to your doctor. You may want to keep a food diary and avoid certain ingredients.

6. Tell your child to use the toilet often

While urinary tract infections (UTI) are not common in children under the age of five, your children may get these as they age. The infection is more common in girls than boys. To help prevent it, tell your children to urinate often, emptying their bladder completely. They should also drink plenty of water throughout the day.



7. Give them plenty of fruit and vegetables

A balanced diet is essential to your child's everyday health. Ensuring that your little ones get enough high-fibre foods, such as fruit and vegetables, will help prevent constipation. Whenever you're preparing their food, consider adding a couple of portions to the meal. Mix things up

and see which greens they like the best.



8. Ensure they wash their hands regularly

Of course, many of the most common childhood illnesses spread through touch. Ensuring that your children have a good sense of personal hygiene is a savvy place to start. Show them how to wash their hands thoroughly to avoid picking up illnesses, such as scarlet fever and viruses. Teach them this simple lesson now and it will last a lifetime.

9. Avoid contact with people who are unwell



Airborne viruses such as the common cold are spread through small droplets in the air. These illnesses

tend to impact children as they have never before come into contact with various virus strains. For that reason, you should avoid visiting family members or friends when they are unwell. Chances are, they could accidentally infect your children.

10. Disinfect your children's toys

Your children can pick up pink eye (or conjunctivitis) by playing with bacteria-ridden things and then touching their eyes. Help them avoid this nasty problem by disinfecting all of their toys. You might want to make a habit out of this and add it to your cleaning regimen. Consider breastfeeding your baby.



11. Keep your baby's head uncovered

While how you feed your baby is an inherently personal choice, there may be some advantages to breastfeeding. Research suggests that this option lowers your child's overall risk of sudden infant death syndrome

(SIDS). You may also want to avoid sleeping next to your baby in a chair or in bed, for the same reason.



It doesn't end there. Another way to reduce the risk of sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS) is to keep your baby's head uncovered. When you wrap your child in a blanket, be sure to avoid slipping it over the top of their head. Equally, you should take extra care if you are using a baby sling to help avoid this danger.

12. Make sleep a priority

Establishing a healthy bedtime routine for your children is essential to their health. Researchers suggest that a lack of sleep can lead to snacking, weight gain, and even obesity. Ensure that your children go to bed at the same time each night



and wake up at the same time each morning. Create a calm environment for their rest.



13. Sharing isn't always caring

Have a few children? While you might think them sharing clothes, cleaning products, and towels is no big deal, think again. Chances are, when one of your children gets sick, the others will too.

That's because infectious particles can live on surfaces for up to 72 hours, which can lead to the spread of illnesses among your children.

HEALTH WATCH



Monkeypox vs smallpox: Experts on similarities and differences between the two. Several cases of monkeypox, the rare viral zoonotic disease, has been identified in various parts of the world, many European countries, United States, Canada and Australia. Ever since the first case related to the current spread was found in the United Kingdom on the 7th of May 2022, its outbreak has become a cause of concern, as earlier the virus was mainly found in Africa but is now spreading fast.

How is monkeypox similar to smallpox



Monkeypox is similar to smallpox, but is a milder form caused by the monkeypox virus, which belongs to the same group of viruses known as orthopox virus. It is normally found in Africa and the rainforests of Africa. It is milder compared to smallpox. Its symptoms are similar to smallpox like fever, headache, or rash and flu like symptoms, but it is resolving itself without treatment and is cured in around three weeks.

Difference between monkeypox and smallpox

The main difference between monkeypox and smallpox is that apart from the flu like symptoms, monkeypox causes enlargement of lymph nodes or glands, which are there in the body, and helps us differentiate between the two.

Comparing symptoms of monkeypox and smallpox

The symptoms of monkeypox are much milder as compared to smallpox and the mortality rate is around 10%. The other difference is that monkeypox is also spread from animal to person through rodents, monkeys, squirrels, through either broken skin, bites or scratches from them, or through direct contact with

an infected animal's blood, body fluids or lesions.

How monkeypox can spread?

The experts say the infection also spreads from person to person but it is less common.

It happens when you come in contact with airborne droplets when one person coughs or sneezes. It requires prolonged face to face contact, or it can also happen through body fluids.

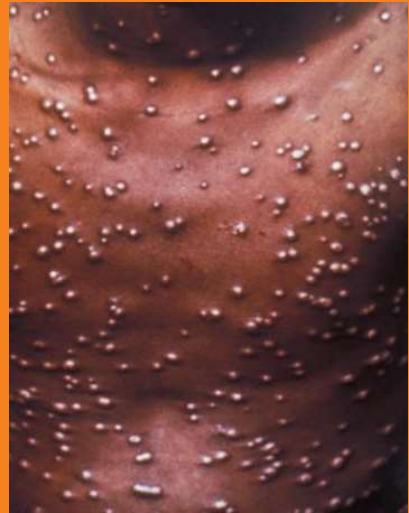
It can also come or spread by direct or indirect contact with materials contaminated with the virus, this can include clothing, bleeding, or other linens used by an infected person or animal.

Diagnosis of monkeypox



Diagnosis is by tissue samples and as far as the treatment is concerned, it mostly resolves on its own and is

cured in two to three weeks' time. It is a milder form, of smallpox and, just by symptomatic management, it can be treated.



What is smallpox and how does it spread

Smallpox is a highly contagious and a very deadly disease caused by a variola virus. This disease is now considered eliminated. There have been no cases of smallpox since around 1977, and it was declared by the World Health Organisation to be eradicated. The smallpox virus spreads directly from person to person. It normally spreads by breathing air, which is contaminated with droplets of moisture, breathed out by an infected person. This can also spread by contact with clothing or bed linens, which are used by an infected person.



PHARMACY IN ACTION

Why you should be combining your Vitamin D with Vitamin K

The current recommendation for vitamin D is 10–20 micrograms per day



We all take vitamin D supplements with or without medical prescription. While it is essential to take vitamin D supplements along with sunlight it is vital to know that you are doing it properly.

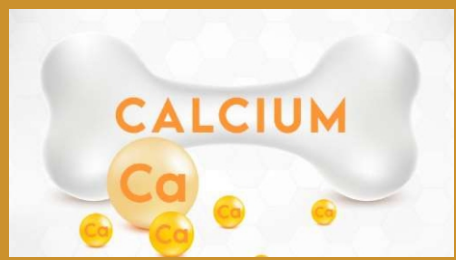
Vitamin D supplements without any co-supplement can be harmful to your body.

Role of vitamin D

Vitamin D is a fat-soluble vitamin which is found in foods like fatty fish,

dairy products, and eggs. This vitamin is mainly synthesised by the skin when the body is exposed to sunlight.

Vitamin D plays a main role in regulating calcium metabolism by increasing intestinal calcium absorption which is an explanation to why vitamin D is recommended for prevention of falls and fractures.



When sufficient amounts of calcium are not present in the body, vitamin D absorbs the reserves from the bones leading to bone loss and osteoporosis.

When is vitamin D a problem?

High vitamin D in the body leads to calcification of blood vessels which can exacerbate heart health leading to heart ailments.



The main drawback of taking vitamin supplements without a doctor's advice is that people do not know when to stop. This results in over accumulation of the vitamin inside the body which then functions in a reverse way.

Over deposition of vitamin D or vitamin D toxicity leads to hypercalcemia. Hypercalcemia is a condition characterised by excessively high levels of calcium in the blood.

Blood vessel calcification is one of the major underlying conditions of heart disease.

The daily recommended amount of vitamin D is 10–20 micrograms.

What is the solution?

Many research studies have recommended that vitamin D supplement should be taken along with vitamin K.

While vitamin D ensures calcium presence in the blood, vitamin K ensures the presence of calcium in

bones thus reducing its deposition in blood vessels.

Many health experts have linked low levels of vitamin K to higher risk of cardiovascular disease.

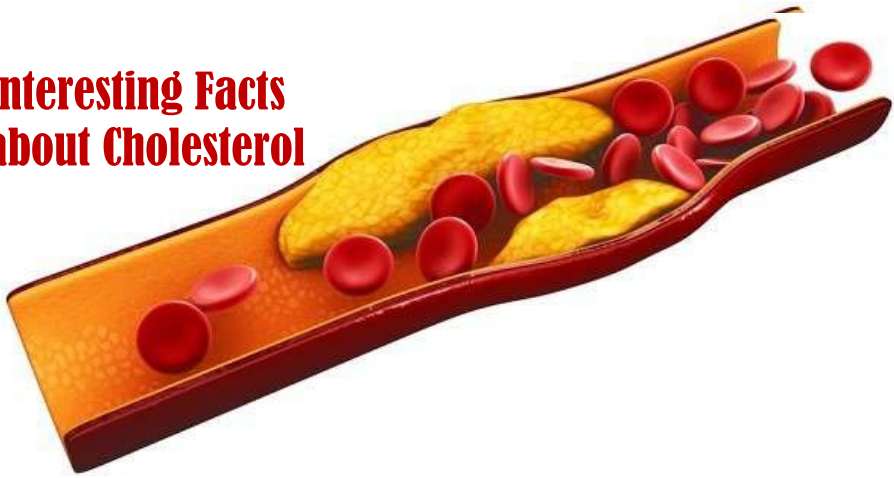


Vitamin K is another fat-soluble vitamin that exists in two forms of vitamin K: vitamin K1 (phylloquinone, mainly found in green leafy vegetables) and vitamin K2 (menaquinone, mainly found in fermented dairy and produced by lactic acid bacteria in the intestine).

Vitamin K helps in carboxylation. When circulating concentrations of vitamin K are insufficient, a greater proportion of matrix Gla protein and osteocalcin remain uncarboxylated, which is associated with unfavourable outcomes such as cardiovascular disease, lower BMD (bone mineral density) and osteoporosis.

The current recommendation for vitamin K1 intake is 70 micrograms/day.

Interesting Facts about Cholesterol



Cholesterol is not an essential nutrient, but it is an important and essential part of our cell membranes, which are present in all our living cells, as they are naturally produced by our body.

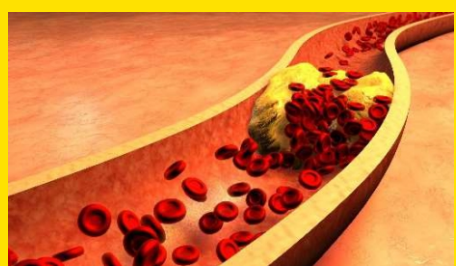


For optimum health, the level of LDL cholesterol should be closer to 2 mmol/L and between 1,3 to 1,55 mmol/L for those patients suffering from heart disease.

Liver and intestines are the two main organs, which play a significant role in controlling the LDL levels in our blood cells.

Genetic factors are the most common cause of high levels of LDL. Around 70 to 80% of the cholesterol in our body cells is due to the genes and the rest is due to our diet.

The best ways to reduce the LDL cholesterol levels is by having a balanced diet, regular exercise, maintaining a healthy BMI (Body Mass Index) and avoiding the use of tobacco and alcohol.



Cholesterol plays an important role in creating cells, hormones and in the production of Vitamin D and bile acids, which play a vital role in the human digestive system.

There are many factors behind the increase in the levels of cholesterol. The influencing factors include age and sex of an individual, weight and body mass index (BMI), genetic factors, lifestyles and certain diseases like diabetes, hypothyroidism, pancreatitis, and health disorders.



One of the best ways to lower the LDL cholesterol is by including fibre-rich food products including avocados, eggplant, green tea, apples, beans, oats, olive oil, garlic and a lot more.

LDL cholesterol is considered bad cholesterol, as it is related to an increased risk of coronary heart disease, stroke and peripheral artery disease.

Rise in the levels of blood cholesterol is a serious condition that can increase the risk of coronary heart disease and it is mainly caused by increased blood cholesterol levels, particularly the LDL (Low-density lipoprotein) cholesterol.

The main source of cholesterol is animal-based food. Both LDL and HDL are found in all animal-based foods, such as milk, milk products, eggs, etc.



Cholesterol is insoluble in blood as blood is a water-based fluid while cholesterol is an oil-based fluid.

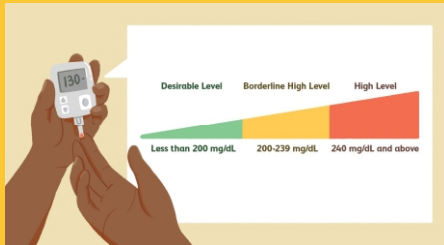
All types of cells, tissues and other body fluids contain some amount of cholesterol and plasma membrane is the only cell organelle, which consists of more than 80 to 90% of cellular cholesterol stored in it.

Too much of LDL cholesterol circulating in the blood can slowly form plaque, which blocks the blood flow and forms a clot. The formation of a clot in the blood vessels near the heart can cause a heart attack.





According to dieticians and nutritionists, we should always maintain the optimal level of LDL cholesterol to have proper blood flow and prevent other risk factors related to the heart and to other organs of our body.



The rise in the level of LDL cholesterol enters the bloodstream, coagulates into lumps and slowly forms plaque, which blocks blood flow and forms a clot, which results in stroke and other circulatory system disorders.

About 80% of the total body cholesterol is oxidised by the liver

and another 20% of cholesterol is secreted from the digestive tract.

HDL, high-density lipoprotein is considered as good cholesterol and it protects against heart attacks and strokes. The level of HDL cholesterol ranges from 0,8 1,1 mmol/L and more.

The total cholesterol level in the blood is measured in millimoles (1,1 mmol/L) of cholesterol per litre of blood.

An average level of cholesterol ranges from 5,2 to 7,76 mmol/L. The level of HDL or good cholesterol ranges from 0,8 to 1,1 mmol/L or more and the level of LDL or bad cholesterol should be less than 2,60 mmol/L.



QUERY THOSE MEDICAL BILLS

Querying your medical bills can be an important way to save money and preserve one's drug benefits so they last the full year.

1. Drugs

Request generic rather than the more expensive branded medication.

Generic medicines are those where the patent period on the branded drug has expired.

The ingredients of the generic drug are almost identical to the original brand. The original branded drug comes in fancy colourful packages which cost a lot of money whereas the generic packages are mainly in simple plastic or cardboard containers or normal glass bottles which are cheaper. Faced with a hefty pharmaceutical bill, a patient should consider asking the General Practitioner if there are cheaper alternatives like a generic drug.

2. Members can also keep costs down by considering which minor ailments they can safely deal with by themselves at home. If in doubt, consult your General Practitioner.

3. Ask your doctor if the follow up treatment can be done by a nurse.

4. Carefully, check hospital accounts, especially dates, drugs and disposables.

Remember that the Medical Aid Society is conscientiously looking after moneys paid in by you.
Spend your money Wisely!

Doctors should not be visited unnecessarily for minor illnesses that can be treated at home with bed rest but it is advisable to consult a doctor when you or your family experience any of the following:-

- Unconsciousness, vomiting or headaches after an accident or poisoning.
 - Bleeding in the sputum, urine or stools.
 - Unusual lumps in the body.
 - A sudden increase or loss of weight.
 - Constant or sudden chest pains.
- Constant shortness of breath and tiredness.
 - Diarrhoea.
 - Any abnormal discharges.
 - Fainting and dizziness.
 - Sores that do not heal.
 - Fevers.
- Heavy periods (menstration) and/or clotting.
 - Unusual severe internal pains.

If in doubt, consult your Doctor!



CHUCKLES

The Church lights are lowered, and the choir comes down the aisle carrying lighted candles.

All is quiet until the little girl starts to sing in a loud voice, "Happy birthday to you, Happy birthday to you ..."

KICK THE HABIT

A couple of hours into a family holiday picnic, a woman notices her husband hasn't once lit up a cigarette. "Are you trying to kick the habit?" she asks.

"No," he replies. "I have a cold and I've decided I won't smoke when I'm not feeling well."

"You know", she observes, "you'd probably live longer if you were sick more often."

CHURCH CANDLES

A mother takes her three-year-old daughter to church for the first time. She tells the little girl to be good and not to make a noise.

They sit in the pew and wait patiently with the rest of the congregation for the priest to arrive.

ANTIQUES

The owner of a highly valuable antiques collection allows a museum to exhibit his beloved treasures. The movers pack the vases and other valuables as the collector hovers over them.

"Do be careful," he cautions one muscular mover.

"That vase is nearly 2000 years old."

"Don't worry", the movers says. "I'll treat it like it's still brand new."

What did east say to west? You mustn't go north when things are going south!

Tried to organise a quiz to cheer up everyone in the hospital ward but the doctor said, "don't test my patients".

If money doesn't grow on Trees, how come Banks have Branches?

Question: How do you prevent a summer cold?

Answer: Catch it in the winter.

**REGISTER YOUR BABY NOW
AND AVOID HAVING TO PAY
UNNECESSARY MEDICAL
EXPENSES.**



A baby must be registered within six weeks of birth.

During the six weeks period any claims for the baby will be adjudicated against the mother's membership provided contributions have been paid in full.

Claims will be suspended if the new baby has not been registered within six weeks.



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