



## MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

### **FITNESS FOCUS**

#### **Laughter Is Good Medicine**

April is National Humor Month. The idea behind this feature designation is to increase public awareness of the therapeutic value of laughter. The health benefits of laughter have been noted for centuries. The short-term benefits of laughter include relief of tension and release of endorphins. Laughter has effects that are both mental and physical.

The potential long-term effects of laughter include pain relief (through endorphins), immune system improvement, and increased mood.

- Laughter and positive thoughts may release hormones that help with pain relief and immune function.
- Laughter is also helpful for connecting with others.
- Laughter is contagious and may help someone who laughs with you in the same way.
- Genuine laughter, that occurs not at the expense of others, is a healthy activity.
- It may be helpful for you to find and plan for opportunities to laugh. Examples would include reading something humorous or going to a comedy movie.

Here is to "laughter – the best medicine."

We hope you can enjoy the health benefits of laughter this month and beyond. (mdt)

The thoughts in this article were taken from this Mayo Clinic article ..

#### **Stress Relief From Laughter?**

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### HEALTH TIP

#### **ANOSMIA – I HAD COVID AND I STILL CAN'T SMELL!**

The medical term for this condition is "anosmia". Research has shown that anywhere from 41% to 70% of COVID patients experience anosmia. While studies show that 72% of people recover their sense of smell within one month of the infection, this means 28% of people are taking longer to recover their smell. Some patients are taking months to recover this important sense while some have yet to recover. Some patients are also reporting that their returned smell sense is very abnormal - such that previously pleasurable smells are described as rotten smelling (soaps, shampoos).

Currently there are no evidence-based treatments that help a patient recover their smell but here are several possibly helpful measures:

- **Smell Training** - The non-profit Fifth Sense (based in the United Kingdom) offers an interactive website [HERE](#) that anyone can access. This free website guides visitors through smell assessment, training and stimulation ideas which anyone who is experiencing a COVID-related loss of taste and smell will appreciate.
- **Vitamin A nasal drops** - I have seen several references to treatment with Vitamin A for loss of smell, including this blog post [HERE](#) by a UK physician which discusses proper dosing and application of the drops.

Research into COVID-related anosmia is still ongoing. More to come. (dwb)

### DOCTOR'S NOTE

#### **REVIEWING NOOM – DOES IT WORK?**

By Dean Bartholomew, M.D.

I have heard about the **NOOM** weight loss program over the last couple of years and have now seen it in action as a family member is using the program. I have been impressed thus far several months into the program.

Noom uses a three-pronged approach to establish healthy eating behaviors. First, the program uses a psychological approach called **cognitive behavioral therapy**. Second, there is a calorie restriction approach. Thirdly, the program encourages physical activity.

The psychological approach separates Noom from other diet plans. The program helps the user to identify psychological and emotional issues that often accompany eating and weight concerns. The program then helps to retrain the participant's thinking around eating, exercise, stress, and sleeping.

Fad diets can create initial weight loss through unrealistic calories restrictions, but the maintenance of weight loss is really the problem when the calorie and food restrictions are stopped. Noom appears to retrain the thinking around healthy eating habits...which is a lifelong skill. These articles from **Women's Health** and **WebMD** offer excellent and in-depth reviews and explanations about the program. Noom does cost around \$59/month for the expected 16-week program. This blog post **The MIND Diet: Benefits, Uses & Studies** offers an example of a specific Noom-recommended food plan which uses a combination of the Mediterranean and DASH diets.

If you are ready to put in the work...yes, it will still take work...then Noom may be the program that works for you. Please reach out to your doctor if you would like to review your particular situation and options for healthy weight reduction and/or maintenance.

**BETTER ACCESS = BETTER CARE.**

**PRACTICE NEWS**



**E-PRESCRIBING IMPLEMENTED**

Beginning January 1<sup>st</sup> per Wyoming law, all controlled-substance prescriptions must be submitted from the prescriber to the pharmacy via a secure electronic means. Controlled-substance medications include certain pain medications, anxiety medications, and stimulant medications. One of the goals in requiring electronic submission of controlled-substance prescriptions is to eliminate the opportunity for the prescription to be altered by a patient between the time the prescription leaves the doctor's office and the time it arrives at a pharmacy.

In the latter half of 2020, 307Health made the transition from the traditional written paper prescription to a digital prescription submission platform through our electronic medical record (EMR) system. This update has made two noticeable changes to the prescribing experience.

- Electronic submission of pharmacy-filled medication orders now flow computer-to-computer – this change simplifies work-flow for both sides of the transaction.
- In-person office pick-up of a signed paper prescription with identification verification for controlled-substance medications is no longer needed.(dwb)

**KEEPING PERSPECTIVE – DPC IN A CHANGING LANDSCAPE**

Like viewing a landscape from the lens of a drone, it can be helpful to take a step back from the day-to-day and think about direct primary care (DPC) in the bigger picture. Tracking healthcare provider options in the Big Horn Basin and beyond can be like trying to map the locations of sand dunes in a windstorm – the dunes slowly and steadily move and shift until the landscape looks completely different.

Understanding the healthcare system gets even more complicated when insurance co-pays, deductibles and restrictions are added to the provider mix.

The direct-pay DPC model is like a stable rock amid the shifting dunes. (krt)



**MEMBER SERVICES FOCUS**

**UPDATE ON COVID-19 VARIANTS** (...continued from COVID column)

...more serious illnesses or may have resistance to some COVID-19 treatment options.

"Knowing these variants have been circulating in Wyoming doesn't change our primary recommendations for the public," Harrist said. "The best way for people to protect themselves from getting sick is to get a COVID-19 vaccine, which are available to the general public now throughout Wyoming. We still also recommend staying home when you are sick, avoiding large gatherings and wearing masks in most public settings.

"Because the variants can affect the success of certain treatment options, we have shared updated information with healthcare providers across the state to help them help their patients," she said.

**VACCINATION INFORMATION**

Information about getting a COVID-19 vaccine in Wyoming can be found on the Wyoming Department of Health website **HERE** . Local vaccination sites include..

- Park County Public Health – Scheduled clinics in Cody & Powell
- Osco Pharmacy: Albertsons
- Walmart Pharmacy
- Walgreens Pharmacy
- Medical Center Pharmacy
- Billings Clinic: Cody
- Heritage Health: Powell

**FREE COVID-19 TESTING INFORMATION**

Wyoming offers free at-home COVID-19 testing. More information can be found on the Wyoming Department of Health website **HERE** .

**COVID INFORMATION And RESOURCES**

**PARK COUNTY VACCINE STATS\***

as of April 5, 2021

- 12,545 = 1<sup>st</sup> Doses Received
- 9,015 = 1<sup>st</sup> Doses Administered
- 9,900 = 2<sup>nd</sup> Doses Received
- 6,461 = 2<sup>nd</sup> Doses Administered

\*Source: Wyoming Dept of Health

**COVID-19 VARIANTS UPDATE**

04/06/2021 Wyoming Dept of Health

Follow up analysis of positive samples has shown four different COVID-19 variants recognized by national and international experts as "variants of concern" have been found in Wyoming over the past several months, according to the Wyoming Department of Health (WDH).

The Wyoming Public Health Laboratory recently analyzed genetic sequencing from a large batch of positive samples collected from residents since November. The new analysis, combined with previously reported results, showed at least 40 cases have involved the United Kingdom variant (B.1.1.7), more than 40 cases combined of two California variants (B.1.427 and B.1.429) and one with the South Africa variant (B.1.351).

Dr. Alexia Harrist, state health officer and state epidemiologist with WDH, said it is likely all four of these variants have represented some of the COVID-19 transmission in Wyoming over the past several months. "Because this is far from a comprehensive review of all positive patient samples, the true number and geographical spread of variants of concern in Wyoming is likely greater than what has been identified," she said.

Harrist indicated the variants are "of concern" because they each have been shown to transmit more easily between people, may lead to

... (see continued article in the MEMBER SERVICES column at left.)