



WELLCAP

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Franciscan Forum Denver



Dying as a Franciscan was the topic of the Franciscan Forum this year. The Forum was attended by several members of the province and included a presentation by Bob Udulutsch on Sister Death and the experience of building his own coffin.

“Do Franciscans die differently?”

This was a question posed at the forum. It seems that we have all been deeply influenced by the culture we live in and the pressures of a medical establishment that says anything is possible.

Daniel Sulmasy OFM, MD, PhD, Spoke about medical ethics and end of life decisions. He said that life is always a gift and we need to be

good stewards of our body. He spoke about instances of medical futility where the burden of treatment outweighed the benefit to the patient. He said,

The Goals of Medicine should be:

- To cure sometimes
- To relieve often
- To comfort always

All of the speakers emphasized the importance of supporting and

honoring the wishes of the dying for **we are carrying them to the edge of mystery**. To honor their wishes we must listen to what is important to them at this stage of their life and how they want to spend their last days. St. Francis saw death as giving birth to a new life. Transitus offers all of us an opportunity to reflect on our death and how Francis died.



SCULPTURE THE LIFE OF ST. FRANCIS - A DEATH AND BURIAL OF ST. FRANCIS - GHIARDINO
 (1270-1275) - BRUNO Zevi, Rome, in Museo Caprizio, Florence, Italy

Giotto Fresco depicts the dying Francis being cared for and mourned by his brothers who are gathered around him during the final days of his life.

DVDs from the Franciscan Forum will be posted soon on the [sjpcommunications web site](http://sjpcommunications.com) and the printed transcript from the conference will be available in January of 2011 thru the Franciscan Institute.

Herbs and your Health

Because it is natural you may think that it is somehow safer or better than prescribed medications. Not necessarily true.

Some herbs may thin your blood and decrease or increase the effects of prescription medications. If your are on heart medications you should **avoid the four G's—Garlic, Ginkgo, Ginseng, and Ginger. They can have devastating effects on heart patients.**

It is very important that you inform your doctor of any and all herbal medications and vitamins you are taking.

Getting enough Vitamin D

Vitamin D is naturally produced in the skin in response to sunlight and is also present in cold water fish and fortified milk and cereals.

Those of us who live in northern climates where we get less sunshine especially in the winter months are often deficient in this vitamin. Up to 50% of healthy adults in developed countries may have a vitamin D deficiency. This can be determined by a blood test.

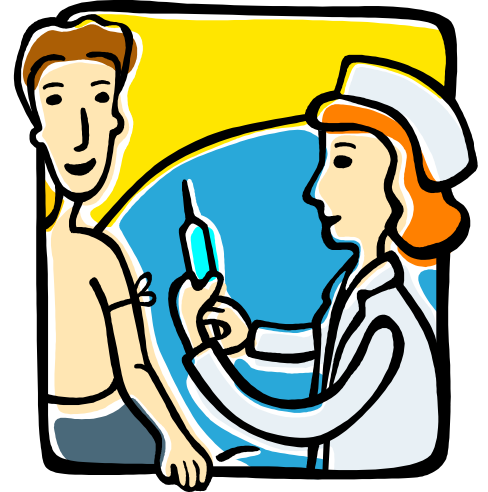
Vitamin D regulates the absorption of calcium and phosphorus and is very important for bone health. Vitamin D reduces the chance of bone fracture and may reduce muscle and joint pain. Higher blood levels of vitamin D may also reduce the risk of colds and flu.

The recommended dose of **Vitamin D 3 is 400-1000 units daily.** As with any supplement or over the counter medication be sure that your doctor knows you are taking it.

Reduce your Fall Risk

If you're older and have balance problems, **don't go barefoot or stocking-foot at home.** In a recent study, half of all falls occurred in those going barefoot or wearing just socks or slippers. People who fell when not wearing shoes were also more likely to experience serious injuries.

Do use your cane or walker in your room and prevent a fall.



Time for your Flu Shot

By getting vaccinated you can protect yourself from influenza and also avoid spreading influenza to others.

Each year thousands of people die from seasonal flu and even more require hospitalization. One study showed an increased risk of heart attacks in people after the had the flu.

The 2010-2011 vaccine provides protection against A/H1N1 influenza and two other flu viruses. Each year scientists try to match the viruses in the vaccine to those most likely to cause flu that year.

If you are 65 or older or suffer from any chronic illness you should also get a **pneumonia shot.** You do not need this vaccine yearly. Most doctors believe that it protects you from bacterial pneumonia for about ten years.

Remember your best defense against colds and flu is frequent hand washing!



Are you a Healthy Weight?

Use these suggestions to find out.

- Calculate your body mass index using the calculator provided by the National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute at : www.nhbsupport.com/bmi/
- Assess abdominal fat by measuring your waist at the navel and your hips at the widest point. Then divide your waist size by your hip size to come up with a ratio. A ratio of 1.0 or above in men is linked to increased health problems.
- Check your waist circumference. A waist size of over 40 inches in men is associated with increased health risks.

Obesity may increase the risk of brain atrophy.

Factors that may be associated with negative effects on the brain include:

Insulin Resistance:

Excess abdominal fat has been shown to put people at increased risk for multiple health problems. Excessive weight can impair the

response of cells to insulin, causing a condition called insulin resistance. This causes glucose levels to continue to rise in the bloodstream while cells become starved of fuel, leading to cell injury or death. High levels of blood sugar have a direct impact on the hippocampus, a key brain center for memory and learning. Eventually, type 2 diabetes may develop.

Inflammation:

Fat—especially abdominal fat—produces proteins called cytokines that promote inflammation. Inflammation has been linked to the generation of unstable oxygen molecules called free radicals that can damage neurons and increase the risk for dementias such as Alzheimer's disease.

Vascular disease:

A high BMI is a risk factor for cardiovascular disease, which can affect the blood vessels to your heart and brain clogging them with “bad” LDL Cholesterol that impedes the circulation of oxygen and nutrients to brain cells. Diabetes and high blood pressure linked to excess weight can also damage cerebral blood vessels, which increases your risk of a stroke or heart attack.

Lower levels of leptin:

Obesity disrupts the action of the hormone leptin, which regulates appetite and is thought to influence learning and memory.

The good news is that a recent study indicates that **strenuous exercise appears to counter some of these negative effects.**

No time to exercise? Try the 10-10-10 Plan

In spite of your good intentions, finding an extra hour three times a week to get to the gym may not be happening for you. If you are looking for a way to fit fitness into your busy life, try what I call the 10-10-10 plan. Finding 10 minutes three times a day adds up to 30 minutes more exercise than you are getting now. How about 10 minutes before breakfast lunch and dinner? Studies have shown that this is enough to garner you some health full benefit.

10 Ways to Exercise at Home or at Work in 10 Minutes

- Resistance training with hand weights, rubber bands, or your own body weight (Push ups or crunches etc.)
- Stretch
- Yoga or Pilates
- Run or walk (in place, on a treadmill, around the block)
- Jump rope
- Dance
- Wii Fit (strength training or cardio)
- Elliptical trainer or bike
- Climb Stairs or speed walk
- Exercise videos

The trick is to use whatever time you have to your best advantage. Walk more often, take the stairs, get up from your desk and move around.

The key to burning calories during short workouts is to crank up the intensity.



A Nutty Test

1. People who eat nuts regularly
 - (a) have lower blood cholesterol
 - (b) Are at lower risk of heart of heart disease, or
 - (c) Are less likely to develop diabetes

(Answer)All of the Above

Studies have consistently linked all kinds of nuts to a reduced risk of heart disease. Nuts have a favorable effect on blood cholesterol and may also help keep blood vessels healthy.

People who eat nuts regularly tend to weigh less than those who don't. Studies have found benefits in people eating 1 to 3 ounces of unsalted raw nuts a day. A handful of nuts is about an ounce.

Nuts are high in calories but contain healthy unsaturated fat and are high in fiber so you feel full longer.

Five Causes of Rapid Aging

- **Poor Diet**
- **Unhappiness**
- **Lack of Exercise**
- **Stress**
- **Lack of Sleep**



Falling Asleep at your Desk may point to Sleep Apnea

People who fall asleep during the day and snore at night should be tested for sleep apnea.

Without realizing it people with sleep apnea briefly stop breathing or breath very shallowly during the night. In obstructive sleep apnea the muscles that support the soft tissues in your throat, such as your tongue and soft palate, temporarily relax. When the muscles relax, your airway is narrowed or closed, and breathing is momentarily cut off. This may happen 100 or more times a night. The consequences include bad sleep which leave them feeling groggy when they wake up. They may also have difficulty concentrating suffer from depression and since they are less alert during the day they have a higher accident rate.

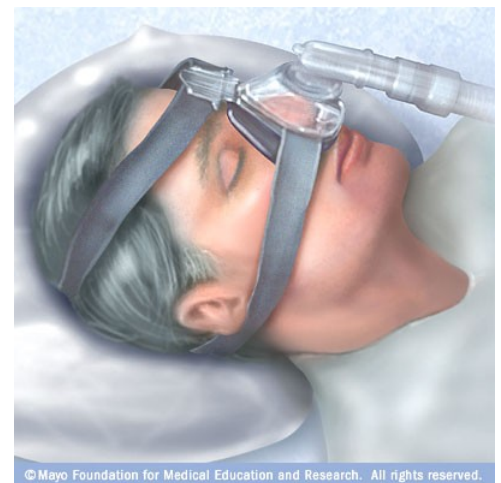
Numerous studies have linked sleep apnea to various cardiovascular problems including high blood

pressure, stroke and heart arrhythmias.

Proper diagnosis of sleep apnea requires an overnight stay in a sleep lab and being hooked up to machines that measure brain, breathing and heart activity.

If excess weight and extra fat tissue in the neck are the cause of obstructive sleep apnea, then losing weight can ease sleep apnea and it may even go away. For some people, sleeping on their sides instead of their backs can make a difference. There are also some dental devices that can open the back of throat by moving the lower jaw and tongue forward.

The main treatment for problematic sleep apnea is a CPAP (continuous positive airway pressure) machine. Extra air from the pump opens the airway by applying pressure to the floppy tissue, and essentially, pushing it out of the way.



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SWEET DREAMS