



## NORTHEASTERN PENNSYLVANIA HEALTH CARE QUALITY UNIT



Toll Free 1-877-315-6855  
www.theadvocacyalliance.org

# IT'S YOUR HEALTH SPRING 2009



## BRAIN AWARENESS WEEK CAMPAIGN

Brain Awareness Week (BAW) Campaign was created in 1996 to focus worldwide attention on the benefits and progress of brain research. Held in March, BAW unites the efforts of universities, hospitals, patient advocacy groups, government agencies, service organizations, professional groups and K-12 schools around the world in an annual celebration of the brain. Now entering its thirteenth year, the Brain Awareness Week campaign includes more than 2,200 partners in 76 countries.

The campaign is held annually in March, this year, from March 16<sup>th</sup> through March 22<sup>nd</sup>. The theme for 2009 is "Living with a Neurological Condition: The Impact on Families and Careers." During the campaign, partners share one thing in common: the desire to convey the wonders of the brain and nervous system and outcomes of neuroscience research to the public through exciting and innovative events.

In celebration of Brain Awareness Week, the Dana Alliance coordinates two regional Brain Bee competitions in New York City and Washington, DC. The Brain Bees are live, question-and-answer competitions that test the neuroscience knowledge of high school students. Each year, regional competitions Brain Bees are held across the US and internationally. The winners are invited to compete in the US National Brain Bee at the University of Maryland, a highlight event during Brain Awareness Week. The US National Champion will compete in the International Brain Bee Championship in Montreal, Canada, and will receive a paid summer internship with an esteemed neuroscientist, among other prizes.

### **So you think you can answer the Brain Bee questions? Give it a try! (Answers are listed below.)**

- 1) Stargazer mice are experimental models for which type of Epilepsy?
- 2) What chromosome is altered to cause Huntington's disease?
- 3) What is the leading preventable cause of mental retardation?
- 4) Name the peptide that accumulates in the senile plaques of brains of Alzheimer's patients?

[Answers: 1) Petit Mal Epilepsy; 2) 4; 3) Fetal Alcohol Syndrome; 4) Beta Amyloid]

The social impact of a scientific understanding of human behavior will surely be immense, making the exploration of the brain the principal scientific challenge of the twenty-first century. The popularity of Brain Awareness Week has succeeded in arousing in the general public the perception that neuroscience directly relates to their personal lives.

Having this additional role for modern science in mind, brain research has emerged as a particularly exciting field to test the possibility of global cooperation.



## **CHECK OUT SOME OF THE NEW HCQU WEB BASED TRAININGS AVAILABLE ON-LINE AT [WWW.THEADVOCACYALLIANCE.ORG](http://WWW.THEADVOCACYALLIANCE.ORG)**

### **Communicable Diseases and Preventable Immunizations – (Basic and Web Based)**

This training provides a general overview of Communicable Diseases. This training features:

- The role of vaccines in the prevention of diseases
- The recommended adult immunization schedule
- An overview of Communicable Diseases

### **MRSA – Methicillin Resistant Staphylococcus Aureus – (Basic and Web Based)**

This training provides an overview of MRSA, a strand of bacterium for which common antibiotics are ineffectual. This training features:

- MRSA by definition
- Evolution of MRSA into the community
- Colonization versus infection
- Universal Precautions
- Preventative measures and screening

### **Obesity – (Basic and Web Based)**

This training discusses the causes, health risks, co-morbidities, and current treatment options for Obesity in adults. The role of prevention is also discussed. This training features:

- Obesity by definition
- Common classifications of Obesity and means of determining Obesity
- Causes of Obesity in adulthood
- Co-morbidities associated with Obesity
- Current treatment/management options for Obesity

### **Understanding Sleep – (Basic and Web Based)**

This training provides an overview of sleep. This training features:

- The physiology of sleep
- The health effects of not getting enough sleep
- Activities that promote a good night's sleep

# May 6, 2009 is National Anxiety Disorders Screening Day

What do Barbara Streisand, Donny Osmond, Carly Simon, and 17 million Americans have in common? They have all suffered from an anxiety disorder, one of America's most common mental illnesses. Anxiety Disorders affect 40 million adults in the United States age 18 and older (18.1% of U.S. population).

## Symptoms

- Overwhelming feelings of panic and fear
- Uncontrollable obsessive thoughts
- Painful, intrusive memories
- Recurring nightmares
- Physical symptoms such as feeling sick to your stomach, heart pounding and muscle tension
- Anxiety symptoms and anxiety disorders are common in all types and levels of intellectual/developmental disabilities
- The individual may describe the inner sensation of jitteriness and being on edge, whereas a nonverbal individual may exhibit irritability, restlessness and agitation

## Types

- **Panic Disorder** – The core symptom of panic disorder is the panic attack, an overwhelming combination of physical and psychological distress.
- **Phobias** – A persistent fear of a specific object, situation or activity.
- **Obsessive Compulsive Disorder (OCD)** – Obsessions are upsetting and irrational thoughts which keep reoccurring. They cause great anxiety, which cannot be controlled through reasoning. To minimize these obsessions, many individuals with OCD engage in repeated behavior, or compulsions.
- **Posttraumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)** – PTSD occurs in individuals who have survived a severe or terrifying physical or emotional event. Individuals with PTSD may have recurrent nightmares, intrusive memories, or even have flashbacks.
- **Generalized Anxiety Disorder (GAD)** – Individuals with GAD have ongoing, severe tension that interferes with daily functioning.

## Causes

The causes of Anxiety Disorder are currently unknown, although research has provided several clues. Areas of the brain that control fear responses may have a role in some anxiety disorders. Anxiety Disorders can run in families, suggesting that a combination of genes and environmental stresses can produce the disorders. The role of brain chemistry is also being investigated.

## Treatment

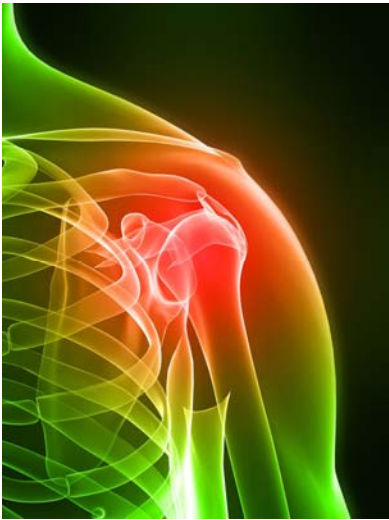
The appearance of anxiety symptoms individuals with an intellectual/developmental disability may differ from symptoms in the general population. The physician should conduct an evaluation to rule out any medical problems and to understand the cause of change. Although each anxiety disorder has its own unique characteristics, most respond well to two types of treatment: psychotherapy and medications. These treatments can be given alone or in combination. Treatment can give significant relief from symptoms, but not always a complete cure.

For more information on anxiety and Anxiety Disorders:

<http://www.adaa.org/>

<http://mentalhealth.samhsa.gov/publications/allpubs/ken98-0045/default.asp>

<http://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/publications/anxiety-disorders/complete-publication.shtml>



# May is National Arthritis Awareness Month

## What is Arthritis?

Arthritis is a disorder of the joints of the body. Joints are where two or more bones meet. Smooth tissue called cartilage covers and cushions the ends of the bones, allowing them to move easily without friction or rubbing together. In arthritis, which means “inflammation of a joint,” this cartilage is damaged.

Arthritis can affect any joint in the body. Some forms of arthritis cause severe pain and swelling while other forms may be less bothersome but may slowly damage the joint.

Nearly 43 million Americans have arthritis. It is the most common cause of disability in the US.

## Types of Arthritis

Although there are over 100 types of arthritis, there are two major categories; those caused by “wear and tear” and those caused by an inflammatory process.

### Osteoarthritis (OA)

OA is the most common type of arthritis. It starts when cartilage begins to become ragged and wears away. When this padding wears away, the bones rub against each other causing pain, stiffness and inflammation. The most common joints affected are in the hands, spine, knees and hips. OA is caused by lifelong wear and tear, trauma or degeneration of the cartilage that occurs with aging.



### Rheumatoid Arthritis (RA)

RA is a long lasting disease that affects women 3 times more frequently than men.

The body’s immune system, which normally protects the body, begins to produce substances that attack the body. These substances attack and destroy the joint surface causing inflammation, pain, joint deformities, fever and fatigue. This type of arthritis can also attack body organs such as the heart, muscles, eyes and nervous system.



Arthritis is diagnosed by careful evaluation of symptoms and physical examination. X-rays can show the extent of joint damage and blood tests may help to determine the type of arthritis.

## Treatment



Although there is no cure for arthritis, there are various treatments as well as lifestyle changes that can improve symptoms.

A doctor can choose a prescription medication or suggest an over-the-counter medication based on the type of arthritis, the severity of the symptoms and the person's overall health. These medications can reduce pain and swelling, improve function and protect the joints.



Cortisone, which reduces inflammation, and substances that lubricate, can be injected into the joint.

In some cases, surgery to replace a joint, fuse a joint or remove the damaged joint lining may be necessary.

## Long Term Management

Arthritis can be managed by a variety of health care professionals, including a rheumatologist, primary care provider, occupational and physical therapists and surgeon.

In most cases, people with arthritis can continue to perform normal activities of daily living. Good lifestyle habits including maintaining a healthy weight and exercising can be of great benefit by reducing stress on the joints, keeping joints moving and keeping muscles around the joints strong.



For more information on Arthritis:

"Arthritis Advice"

<http://www.nia.nih.gov/HealthInformation/Publications/arthritis.htm>

"Arthritis"

<http://www.cdc.gov/arthritis>

"Arthritis: An Overview"

<http://orthoinfo.aaos.org/>

## Warning Signs of Arthritis

- Swelling in one or more joints
- Stiffness in a joint lasting more than one hour in the morning
- Constant or recurring pain in a joint
- Difficulty in using or moving a joint normally
- Warmth and redness over a joint



## Emergency Preparedness is Every Citizen's Responsibility

The threat of flooding, winter storms, outbreak of widespread communicable disease and biological and chemical threats are a very real and present concern for every United States citizen. Emergency preparedness is a responsibility that each citizen must take seriously. Being prepared for likely events can reduce the fear, anxiety and losses that unfortunately accompany disaster. Preparedness can reduce the impact of these disasters or can avoid the danger completely.

Disasters and other emergencies disrupt thousands of lives every year. These events have long-lasting effects on people and property. Local emergency responders may not be able to reach everyone immediately, so each one of us should be ready to survive on our own for 3 or more days. This includes shelter, first aid, food, water and sanitation.

**All citizens have the responsibility to protect themselves and their family by knowing what to do before, during and after an event. Some activities would include:**

### **Before:**

- ✓ **Know the risks and danger in your area.**
- ✓ **Have flood insurance and homeowner's or renter's insurance.**
- ✓ **Develop an emergency plan.**
- ✓ **Assemble a disaster kit.**

### **During:**

- ✓ Put your plan into action.

### **After:**

- ✓ Repair damaged property.
- ✓ Take steps to prevent or reduce further loss.

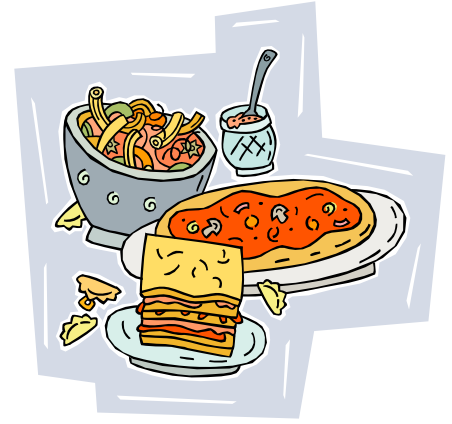
Both the Federal Emergency Management Agency and Homeland Security have websites with extensive information to help everyone prepare for emergencies. There is information about assembling a disaster kit, learning about risks in your area, and a wealth of other important resources. Go to [www.fema.gov/areyouready.htm](http://www.fema.gov/areyouready.htm) or <http://www.ready.gov/america/index.html> to access this information. In addition, the Health Care Quality Unit offers a training program, "Consumer Emergency Preparedness." Please contact the HCQU to schedule this program.



# Zucchini Lasagna

1/2 lb Lasagna noodles, cooked in unsalted water  
2 tsp Basil, dried  
2 tsp Oregano, dried  
3/4 c Mozzarella cheese, part- skim, grated  
1/4 c Onion, chopped  
1 clove Garlic  
1½ c Fat Free Cottage Cheese\*  
1/8 tsp Black Pepper  
1/4 c Parmesan Cheese, grated  
1½ c Raw zucchini, sliced  
2 ½ c No Salt added Tomato Sauce

\*Use unsalted cottage cheese to reduce the sodium content. New sodium content for each serving is 196 mg.



Preheat oven to 350° F. Lightly spray 9-by 13-inch baking dish with vegetable oil spray. In small bowl, combine 1/8 cup mozzarella and 1 tablespoon Parmesan cheese. Set aside.

In medium bowl, combine remaining mozzarella and Parmesan cheese with all of the cottage cheese. Mix well and set aside.

Combine tomato sauce with remaining ingredients. Spread thin layer of tomato sauce in bottom of baking dish. Add a third of noodles in single layer. Spread half of cottage cheese mixture on top. Add layer of zucchini. Repeat layering. Add thin coating of sauce. Top with noodles, sauce and reserved cheese mixture. Cover with aluminum foil.

Bake for 30-40 minutes. Cool for 10-15 minutes. Cut into 6 portions. Yield: 6 servings



**Check out these websites mentioned in this edition of “It’s Your Health”.**

<http://www.adaa.org/>

<http://mentalhealth.samhsa.gov/publications/allpubs/ken98-0045/default.asp>

<http://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/publications/anxiety-disorders/complete-publication.shtml>

[www.fema.gov/areyouready.htm](http://www.fema.gov/areyouready.htm)

<http://www.ready.gov/america/index.html>

<http://www.nia.nih.gov/HealthInformation/Publications/arthritis.htm>

<http://www.cdc.gov/arthritis>

<http://orthoinfo.aaos.org/>

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## IDEAS FOR OUR NEWSLETTER?

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