

# HEALTH BEAT

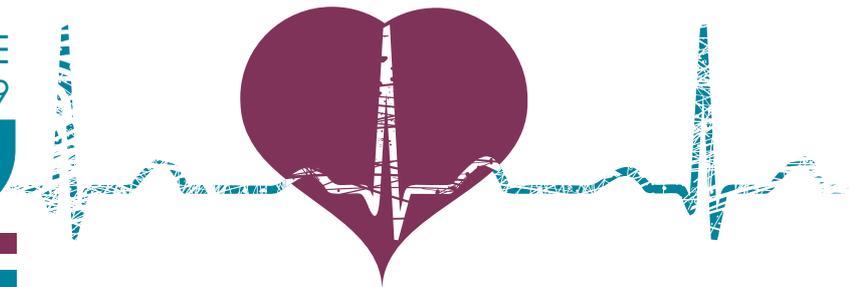
DEPARTMENT OF FAMILY MEDICINE  
KEEPING UP WITH YOUR BEAT SINCE 1979

ISSUE 3

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Our lives are dedicated to yours



## EDITORIAL NOTE

We are proud to put forward the third issue of the “Health Beat” newsletter. The release of this issue coincides with the first anniversary of moving to Wassef & Souad Sawwaf building, our new home. Let us celebrate together this special moment that marks a new era for the Department of Family Medicine: an era rich in activities, specialized services and new programs. The diversity of the topics highlighted in this issue reflects the peculiar characteristics of the family medicine specialty; it serves as a provision of holistic and continuous care to individuals within their own communities with emphasis on wellness and prevention.

**It is a New Year, New Premises, New Programs, New Services, and a New Spirit! Enjoy reading!**

## CELEBRATING A YEAR IN WASSEF AND SOUAD SAWWAF BUILDING!

Since February 17, 2014, the Department of Family Medicine and clinics have moved to the 2nd, 3rd and 4th floors of the Wassef & Souad Sawwaf building. The official opening of the new building took place on January 20, 2014 in the presence of Mr. Mutaz Sawwaf and his family, President Peter Dorman, Vice President/Dean of the Faculty of Medicine at AUB Dr. Mohamed Sayegh, Chairman of the Department of Family Medicine, Dr. Ghassan Hamadeh, in addition to AUBMC faculty members, staff and other invitees.

This four-story building hosts the family medicine private clinics, the University Health Insurance Plan (HIP) family medicine clinics, the University Health Services, the resident training clinics, the Health & Wellness Center as well as the department’s administration. In addition, the building hosts the PET/CT scanner, the private pediatric clinics, and the Inherited Metabolic Diseases Program.



# OPEN HOUSE

The Department of Family Medicine organized an Open House on June 11, 2014 where free health assessments and advice were offered to participants. During the event, AUB and AUBMC community and the community at large learned about the varied services and specialties that the Department of Family Medicine provides.

Several booths showcasing the department's services were on display for approximately 150 participants who joined on that day. These included a general health assessment booth to check blood pressure, blood sugar, height and weight, a booth for adolescent and senior health advice, another booth for travel health tips in addition to the booth which provided advice for better management of chronic diseases such as diabetes, hypertension and much more.



# ATHLETE CARDIAC SCREENING PROGRAM

*Mona Osman MD, MPH, MBA*

The Department of Family Medicine (Wellness Program & Champs Fund) and the cardiology division at AUBMC in collaboration with University Sports launched the Athlete Cardiac Screening Program for AUB students during the Academic Year 2013-2014.

This program aimed at screening all AUB students enrolled in varsity teams for undetected cardiac conditions, which might put their life at risk. As part of this screening, all athletes were examined by a family doctor, whereby a full general exam was conducted, risks for performing sports were assessed and an electrocardiogram (tracing of the heart) was done. Athletes were referred to a cardiologist at AUBMC for further assessment when needed.

The program continues to serve its mission during this academic year 2014-2015. AUB is the first university in Lebanon to make the pre-participation exam and cardiac screening mandatory for its athletes.



# CHAMPS FUND: THE HICHAM EL HAGE PROGRAM FOR YOUNG HEARTS AND ATHLETES HEALTH

*Mona Osman MD, MPH, MBA*

Champs Fund: The Hicham El Hage Program for Young Hearts and Athletes Health is a charitable fund in the Department of Family Medicine at the American University of Beirut Medical Center. The Fund is established in memory of Hicham El Hage, a 15 year old young student athlete who collapsed on the football field while practicing with his school team on May 1, 2010 due to an undiagnosed hypertrophic cardiomyopathy. Sudden cardiac death is the number one killer in young athletes aged 12 to 35 years, with undiagnosed heart conditions being the most common cause of death.

The Fund aims at preventing sudden cardiac death in young athletes through advocating for mandatory pre-participation exam (including cardiac screening) for athletes, raising public awareness regarding cardiac risk in the young, and ensuring better preparedness and safety of the sports fields through the availability of Automated External Defibrillators (AEDs) and Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) - certified coaches.

A snapshot of the Fund's activities during the last months includes:

- **An advocacy meeting with sports leagues and clubs:** The meeting was held on August 29, 2014 to discuss the importance of mandatory pre-participation exam for all athletes (including cardiac screening) and the necessity to ensure the safety of sports fields (AEDs & CPR certified coaches). The Minister of Youth and Sports and a representative from the Ministry of Public Health attended the meeting.
- **Training of 30 doctors from different primary health centers in Lebanon:** The training covered the procedure for performing a pre-participation exam and reading electrocardiogram (EKG) for athletes.
- **Launching a "Back to School Free Heart Screening" for young school & university athlete students (aged 12-24 years):** The screening was done over the period extending from the beginning of September through the end of November 2014, and it screened more than 300 young athletes from different universities and schools in Lebanon.
- **Conducting community-based cardiac screening for athletes within the premises of their schools, universities and sports clubs:** The first screening was conducted in Collège Protestant Français in Beirut during December 2014.
- **Training of coaches on CPR and the use of AEDs in collaboration with the Life Support Center at the Nursing Services, AUBMC:** Participants received a Heartsaver certification valid for two years from the American Heart Association. Twenty five coaches and physical education teachers have received this training so far.



## CHAMPS FUND

THE HICHAM EL HAGE PROGRAM  
for Young Hearts & Athletes Health | AUBMC

Screening hearts can save young lives!



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- **Conducting cardiac screening for the 542 runners in Banque du Liban (BDL) Marathon:** Champs Fund offered cardiac screening for the first time marathon runners.
- **Participation in the BDL Marathon on November 9, 2014:** Many thanks to the 200 persons who supported Champs Fund for this event.



## AUB WELLNESS PROGRAM

*Rita Doudakian MPH, Ghina El Jammal BS Nutrition*

### **Kick It Off Right! - September 16, 2014**

Aiming to help students lead a healthy academic year, the AUB Wellness program organized the "Kick It off Right" event on September 16, 2014. On that day, our team of health care professionals provided health tips on healthy nutrition, exercise, sleeping hygiene, stress management, sexual health, and other topics of interest to our students.



### **Fit-A-Thon - October 10, 2014**

The AUB Wellness Program and in collaboration with the Nutrition Coordinated Program organized its annual "Fit-A-Thon" on Friday, October 10, 2014. Participants started with a rally which took place all the way from the green field up till AUB West Hall. Later, more than 200 persons had the chance to visit the nutrition booths prepared by the students, participate in health awareness games and activities, and win many valuable prizes.



### **World AIDS Day - December 1, 2014**

Aiming to raise awareness about AIDS and HIV, the AUB Wellness Program in collaboration with LEMSIC and the Movie Club at AUB organized a movie night on Monday, December 1, 2014 at AUB West Hall. The movie "Dallas Buyers Club" was shown to attendees who later had the chance to participate in a discussion session. Participants also subscribed for a free HIV screening test at AUBMC.



### **Be Your Own Doctor - December 11, 2014**

On Thursday, December 11, 2014, the AUB Wellness Program organized a session entitled "Be Your Own Doctor" to discuss the self-management of common illnesses like the flu, stress, constipation and diarrhea, and acute injuries (bites, burns, wounds). Dr. Maya Romani from the Department of Family Medicine delivered the session to a very engaged audience.



# OUTREACH ACTIVITIES: MAKING A DIFFERENCE IN THE LIVES OF OTHERS

## Mobile Clinic for Syrian Refugees

*Issam Shaarani MD*

The beginning of the crisis in Syria almost four years ago marked the fleeing of more than 1.5 million individuals to Lebanon. Since then, many of them have been living in harsh conditions within refugee camps that have limited access to basic needs. The American University of Beirut Medical Center decided to contribute to the existing efforts in the country and provide support to the Syrian refugees in Lebanon through a mobile clinic.

Over a period of six months, AUBMC brought healthcare directly to those in need and delivered through its mobile clinic (the van provided by Ajialouna), and with the help of its specialized health professionals, primary health care services to Syrian refugees living in informal tents in Bekaa and the North. In collaboration with the Ministry of Public Health and Beyond, a local non-governmental organization, AUBMC provided school health services to the children refugees enrolled in the informal schools run by Beyond in collaboration with UNICEF. Around 2,178 children were examined and treated medically during this period. Unfortunately, the mobile clinic had to stop its activities after 6 months of operation due to the sensitive security conditions of the country. Discussions are now ongoing to resume the function of the mobile clinic.

This initiative would not have been possible without the dedication and commitment of our volunteers. Faculty members and residents (mainly family medicine doctors, pediatricians, and emergency medicine doctors), nurses, pharmacists and administrative personnel answered the call of the Department of Family Medicine that led this initiative. The team spirit and the enthusiasm of all volunteers were instrumental for the success of our mission. It was a great learning experience to all volunteers and an eye opener on the vulnerable conditions of the Syrian refugee children in terms of health and access to basic needs. Not only missiles and aircraft fighters can bring death to innocent people. Death can attack infants and children living in poor conditions in their cold tents!

## TESTIMONIES FROM THE FIELD

- "You reach the site; children aged two and above are waiting for you. They welcome you with their innocent smiling eyes. They are not scared of the strange people entering their tents ... perhaps life is entering too!"
- "I remember this little girl who came into the clinic shivering because of the bitter cold, while I was wearing three layers and shivering myself! The real disease is poverty, and the situation these refugees are living in is what really sends shivers down your spine."
- "We find them in a very bad condition. Some have heaters [in their tents], some don't. Some have enough clothes, some don't. Some children come with only one layer, and you can feel the cold feeding on their little bodies."



## HEALTH TIPS

Change your lifestyle and treat your acid reflux symptoms!

*Alaa Rihan, MD*

Do you suffer from acid reflux? Do you feel a bitter acid taste in your mouth? Below are few tips to alleviate your symptoms.

- Try to lose weight if you are overweight.
- Elevate the head of your bed to around 30 degrees. This will keep your head and shoulders at a level higher than your stomach, which prevents reflux by gravity.
- Stay away from certain types of food and beverages. Mainly reduce your intake of caffeine, chocolate, alcohol, peppermint, and fatty foods.
- Quit smoking if you are a smoker; smoking exacerbates reflux symptoms.
- Avoid heavy meals; try to have five small frequent meals instead of three large ones.
- Never eat late meals; try to eat at least three hours before bedtime.
- Avoid tight clothing.
- Chew a gum; this increases saliva production, which helps in cleaning the acid in your esophagus.



## ADVICE FROM YOUR NURSE

My Kid Has Fever

*Rana Shehab BSN*

Fever is the most common medical condition that affects children. It is most often caused by infections such as flu, infections of the tonsils, ears or urinary system. Fever can also result from vaccinations, teething, and overheat due to overclothing. A child is considered to have high fever when his/ her temperature reaches 38°C or above.

In case your child has a high fever:

- Give him/her plenty of fluids to keep the child well hydrated.
- Remove any unnecessary layers of clothing.
- Keep the environment temperature cool.
- Give paracetamol or ibuprofen as prescribed by your doctor.
- Monitor his/her temperature every two to four hours.
- Check the child's temperature before giving the antipyretic. Check it again one hour after giving it to ensure the temperature has dropped.

When to seek immediate medical advice?

The fever clears up on its own most of the time; so there is no need to worry if the child looks well and active. However, you need to consult your doctor immediately:

- If your baby is three months old or younger and has a temperature of 38°C or above.
- If your baby is between three and six months old and has a temperature of 39°C or above.
- If your baby is over six months has fever with decreased activity and drowsiness.
- If the fever persists for more than three consecutive days.



## OUR PRACTICE

### Minor Procedures in the Family Medicine Clinics

*Nisrine Makarem, MD*

In the Family Medicine clinics at AUBMC, competent family doctors not only provide ongoing primary care and comprehensive medical evaluations for patients of all ages but also perform some minor surgical procedures in a well-equipped procedure room within our clinics. Examples of these procedures are:

- Removal of sebaceous cysts and lipomas
- Removal of skin tags and lesions and taking biopsies
- Removal of ingrown toe nail
- Injections in the joints
- Suturing of wounds and removal of sutures
- Incision and drainage of abscess
- Circumcision

### Triage Nurse

*Suzan Seifeddine, BSN*

Triage, whether by phone or in person, is the first step our Family Medicine nurses perform. Triage aims at facilitating patient flow through the clinic and making sure that those who need urgent care are being attended to. Our aim is to get the right patient to the right place at the right time with the right health care provider.

When you visit or call our triage nurse, she will ask to describe your symptoms, brief your medical history, and indicate the reason for visiting the clinic. Based on the information that you provide, the triage nurse assesses the urgency of your condition and directs you accordingly.

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## CONGRATULATIONS

Congratulations to Dr. Ghassan Hamadeh for being elected as the President of the Scientific Council for Family and Community Medicine in the Arab Board for Health Specialties. We wish him best of luck, and we are sure that under his leadership, the Family Medicine Specialty will flourish both in Lebanon and the Arab world.

## NEW MEMBERS IN OUR FAMILY

### New Staff

- Registered nurses: Maher Takkoush and Wiam Younis
- Practical nurses: Hasan Kiserwani and Farah Nasser
- Clinical assistants: Manal Khatib, Aida Bazzi Farran, and Elizabeth Darazi

### New Babies

- Julia (daughter of Mrs. Iman Tarchichi), Mustafa (son of Mrs. Maha Moufti), Fersan (son of Dr. Mario Ghanem), Mustafa (son of Dr. Zeinab Toufayli), Nay (daughter of Dr. Alaa Rihan), Naya (daughter of Mrs. Farah Nasser), Dimitrie (son of Dr. Alexandra Ghadieh) and Yasmina (daughter of Mr. Mahmoud Jamal)

### New members

- Congratulations to Mrs. Sara Farhat and Mrs. Manal Khatib on getting married.
- Congratulations to Dr. Noura Kaadi on getting engaged.

**Welcome All to Our Big "Family Medicine" Family!**



# ACHIEVEMENTS

## Towards a fully paperless environment

*Mirna Mahfoud, MPH*

The Department of Family Medicine is a pioneer in using an electronic health record (EHR) at the American University of Beirut Medical Center. The idea was initiated in 1996, when Dr. Ghassan Hamadeh computerized the registration and scheduling of patients' appointments at the University Health Services (UHS). Over the next five years, Dr. Hamadeh included more novel features such as a reminder system, referrals to other services, sick leaves, and medical diagnosis in addition to several administrative tools for pre-employment and refilling of chronic medications. With more concerted efforts, the EHR became an important tool that measured physicians' performance in terms of quality whereby performance indicators such as the rate of mammography and Pap smear done for eligible women, controlled blood pressure for hypertensive persons, yearly eye referrals, and the rate of HBA1C conducted for diabetic persons, and the rate of referrals were measured periodically and compared to benchmarks. All these information were recorded by clinical assistants and nurses.

The full implementation of an EHR began in 2007 after installing computers in the clinics. Doctors started documenting the patients' medical notes on the electronic health record upon every visit. The scanning of all archived patients' medical charts was completed and as of March 2010, each new patient in our clinics has been registered on one electronic medical record. We have successfully converted paper to electronic records! Currently, the Family Medicine Clinics can be considered as a 73% paperless clinic (During the year 2012-2013, 14,650 out of 20,151 total patients to the Family Medicine Clinics have been registered on our electronic health records).

Slowly but efficiently, we are moving towards a fully paperless operation in all the Family Medicine Clinics. The development and implementation of the electronic health records at the Family Medicine Clinics has played an important role in enhancing the continuity and the quality of medical care. It has improved the work efficiency and the patients' satisfaction by decreasing the waiting time caused by the appointment delay due to misplaced charts. It also saved space needed to store the charts to other more important operational functions.

It is worth noting that periodic back up of the EHR is being conducted by the department.

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# CONTINUING EDUCATION

## Balint Training: For a better Doctor-Patient Relationship

*Joumana Antoun MD, MS*

The Balint seminar, started by Michael Balint and Enid Balint, is used to develop and strengthen the patient doctor relationship in family medicine and other residency training programs in order to enhance the doctor's expertise. It consists of regular meetings of six to ten members led by one or two trained leaders where one member would present a case for five to ten minutes followed by a 50 minutes discussion, which emphasizes the emotional and relational aspects of the case. The leader's role is to insure safety of and trust among the group members and keep the focus on the doctor-patient relationship. The group discusses the case taking into consideration both the perspective of the doctor and that of the patient; members explore and try to understand the emotional patient-doctor relationship or circumstances and their effect on the delivery of care. Evidence proves that participating in a Balint group intensifies the participant's ability to cope with the surrounding circumstances, the patient centeredness, the job satisfaction and the overall well-being.

With the support of Dr. Ghassan Hamadeh, chairman of the Department of Family Medicine, the Balint seminar was initiated for the fourth year family medicine residents in February 2013 and was extended to the third year residents later on. The family medicine residents carry a teleconference every other week for the Balint seminar which is led by two faculty members, Drs. Clive Brock and Alan Johnson, from the Medical University of South Carolina (MUSC). Two faculty members, Drs. Jumana Antoun and Maya Romani, have attended a Balint Leadership Intensive in the United States and are currently leading the Balint activity at the department. They continue their training in Balint through continuous mentorship by the MUSC faculty after each Balint seminar.

# HEALTH AND WELLNESS CENTER

## Youth Clinic

*Beatrice Khater, MD*

### Why?

Although most youth perceive themselves as healthy, they may have significant health issues that are often ignored or underdiagnosed. Behaviors such as the use of illicit drugs, alcohol abuse, unsafe sex, smoking, and depression are prevalent in this age group.

### What (is it)?

Young people will have access to specialized services where they can get care, orientation or simply be heard by a health care professional (family physician, nurse, psychologist, dietician...) knowing that confidentiality will be preserved.

### Where?

To schedule an appointment, call 01-350000 extension 3000 at the University Health Services, Sawwaf Building.

### Next?

The youth have the chance to be active participants in the clinic by planning activities that target the youth's health, giving ideas, providing feed-back, and eventually promoting health.

## Acupuncture Clinic

We are proud to announce the launching of the Western Medical Acupuncture Clinic in the Health and Wellness Center.

### What (is it)?

Acupuncture is a technique used by health practitioners to stimulate specific locations on or under the skin named "acupoints", most often by needle pricking. This stimulates the release of endorphins and other neurotransmitters involved in pain control, thus leading to pain relief.

### When is it recommended?

Acupuncture is recommended by Western medicine for many types of chronic pain: back pain, neck pain, headache (migraine and tension headache), knee pain, fibromyalgia and others.

### Who can recommend it?

Your physician can advise you on whether you should continue with conventional treatment or use acupuncture.

For more information, please call 01/350000, extension 3000.



# WHY SHOULD YOU HAVE A FAMILY DOCTOR?

## Role of family doctors in caring for patients with chronic diseases

*Saria Al Hachem, MD*

Family doctors are trained to diagnose and treat a broad spectrum of chronic conditions such as diabetes mellitus, obesity, hypertension, dyslipidemia, heart disease, asthma, depression, migraines and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease. They work with patients to optimize their health through appropriate testing, treatment and referral. There are good reasons why family doctors play a crucial role in the management of chronic diseases. Here are a few of these reasons.

- **Continuity of care:** Family doctors work with patients who have chronic diseases from prevention to rehabilitation.
- **Prevention:** Family doctors play an important role in screening for the presence of the disease, counseling, provision of immunizations against infectious agents, educating the public, and promoting healthy lifestyles and awareness about chronic diseases.
- **Application of a comprehensive approach:** Family doctors treat their patients taking into consideration the different perspectives that affect the disease itself and the treatment (psychosocial approach, affordable treatment, and rehabilitation that lead to minimizing the complications caused by the disease). Moreover, family doctors are trained to handle other co-morbidities that can be associated with chronic diseases.
- **Health education:** Treatment of chronic diseases is often complicated, and it requires patients and families to make crucial lifestyle changes. Family doctors help patients understand more about their diseases and motivate them to comply better with the lifestyle changes.
- **Coordination:** Management of chronic diseases requires a multidisciplinary approach with the involvement of professionals from different specialties. Family doctors refer to other specialties when needed and play an instrumental role in coordinating among different specialties involved. This results in more effective treatment and less duplication and fragmentation of care.



# OCCUPATIONAL CORNER

Welcome to our occupational corner, through which we will provide you with tips that create a positive working environment and decrease the risk of health problems such as back, neck, and wrist pain. A different topic will be highlighted in each issue. In this issue, read about the characteristics of a healthy office setting.

## Healthy office setting

*Rita Doudakian, MPH- Diana Rahme, MD*

- **Chair:** Adjust the height of your chair so that your feet rest comfortably on the floor and your knees are about level with your hips. If your chair doesn't offer lumbar support, place a cushion between the curve in your lower back and the back of the chair.
- **Footrest:** If your chair is too high for you to rest your feet flat on the floor, consider using a footrest to prop your feet up. Various types of footrests are available. You can also get creative and make your own (Try a small stool or a stack of non-used old books).
- **Desk dimensions:** Generally, the desk should be at least 48 centimeters deep, 76 centimeters wide and, depending on your height, up to 86 centimeters high. Make sure that there's enough space under the desk for your legs, knees and thighs. Don't use space under the desk for storage.

## Few tips

- Place key objects on your desk — such as your telephone, stapler or printed materials — close to your body to prevent excessive stretching. Stand up to reach for anything that can't be comfortably reached while sitting.
- Maintain a healthy posture. Sit up straight keeping your thighs horizontal with your knees at about the same level as your hips. Keep your body tilted up slightly.
- Place your computer monitor directly in front of you, about an arm's length — generally 46 to 71 centimeters — away. Your gaze should be aimed at the center of your computer screen. If glare resulting from fluorescent lighting or sunlight is a problem, dim some or all of the overhead lights or close the window shades. Place your monitor so that the brightest light source is to the side.



# NUTRITION CORNER



This is a new corner in our newsletter, which will shed light in each issue about an important aspect of our nutrition. Beneficial medical advice and healthy recipes will be included in each issue.

## Nuts

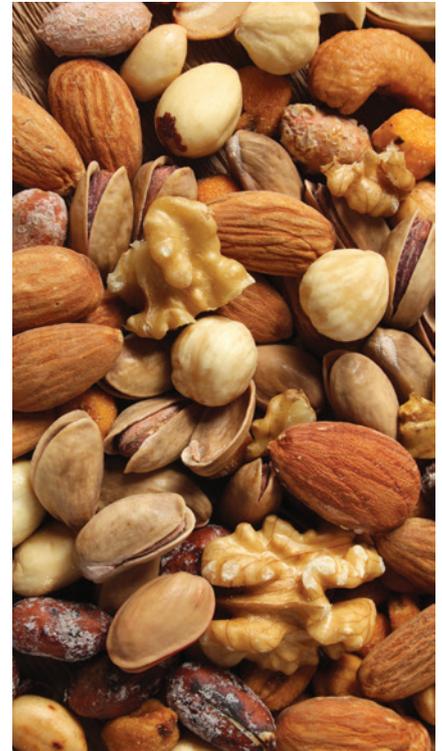
*Ghina Al Jammal, BS Nutrition (LD)*

Nuts have different nutritional values and offer various health benefits. A golf-ball sized portion (about 30g) of unsalted nuts is a vitality boosting snack which contributes to a mix of valuable vitamins and minerals. Nuts are considered healthy for several reasons.

- Nuts are rich in energy and nutrients.
- They are an excellent source of monounsaturated fatty acids (MUFA) which help in lowering LDL cholesterol (bad cholesterol) and increasing HDL cholesterol (good cholesterol).
- Nuts contain important Omega-3 essential fatty acids which help in lowering the risk of coronary artery disease and stroke by their anti-inflammatory action.
- Nuts contain good levels of vitamin E, a powerful lipid soluble antioxidant which helps in maintaining the integrity of the mucus membranes and skin.
- Nuts are a rich source of minerals like calcium, iron, magnesium, zinc, fluoride and selenium.

Nuts belong to the fats and oils' food group. One exchange of fat contains 5 grams of fat and 45 kcals. The below table summarizes the equivalent of 1 fat exchange for each type of nut.

Type	Amount
walnuts	4 halves (7g)
almonds	6 nuts (7g)
cashew	6 nuts (8g)
peanuts	10 nuts (10g)



# HEALTHY RECIPE

*Manal Smaili MD*

## Fruit & Pecan Granola Bars

makes 8 bars (200 Kcal per bar)

### Ingredients

- 2.5 cups of oats
- 1/4 cup peanut butter
- 1 cup of chopped pecans
- 1/3 cup of chopped apricots
- 1 large mashed banana
- 1/3 cup of raisins (black and green)
- 2/3 cup of maple syrup (sugar free or reduced sugar)
- 1 teaspoon of cinnamon

### Preparation Method

In a big bowl, mix the wet ingredients first along with the mashed banana, and then add the rest of the ingredients to the mix. If you wish the bars to be crispy, decrease the amount of syrup.

Preheat the oven to 160 degrees Celsius. Pour the mixture into a pan, and bake for 25 minutes!

# PEACE

## What is interpersonal violence?

*Jinan Usta MD, MPH*

Interpersonal violence refers to violence and abuse performed by one person in an attempt to maintain control over another. It may occur in any setting: at home, work, in school or in the streets. It occurs between any two individuals namely lovers, siblings, spouses, parent- children, employer-employee, etc.. It might take place in every country, in every neighborhood, among people of all races, cultures, religions, education and income levels. The shift in power can either happen very slowly or over a period of time, so that the other person cannot even remember when it first started. It can also happen very quickly after there has been some sort of commitment or change in the level of intimacy or closeness. Many people find it difficult to identify what they are passing through and label it as violence especially if they were never hit before. Physical abuse is probably what most people think of when they consider violence, but it is just one of the many ways that might be tried to gain power and control.

Abuse is not always physical. Ways a person might try to gain power and control over you include:

- Isolation - making it hard for you to see your friends and family; telling you that your friends and family cause problems in the relationship or are trying to "come between you."
- Economic abuse - having complete control over the money; making you account for every penny you spend; and keeping your money out of your reach.
- Verbal, emotional, psychological abuse - calling you names; putting you down or embarrassing you in front of other people; criticizing your abilities as a spouse, parent, worker or employee.
- Intimidation - making you afraid with a look, action, or gesture; getting you to do something by reminding you about "what happened last time."
- Coercion and threats - showing you a weapon and threatening to use it on you; threatening to "out" you to family, friends, or employers; threatening to harm your family, friends, or anyone you might go to for help.
- Physical abuse - pushing, grabbing, hitting, slapping, punching, or kicking you.
- Sexual abuse - forcing you to have sex when you don't want to; making you engage in sexual acts that make you uncomfortable.
- Minimizing, denying, blaming - making you think the abuse is your fault; saying the abuse was caused by stress, alcohol, or problems at work; denying that the abuse happened at all.
- Using children - undermining your authority with your children; threatening to take the children away from you; "pumping" your children for information about you.

It is important to recognize violence because it affects your health and wellbeing and also affects people around you. If you think you are abused, seek help. You are not alone. Millions of people are abused every year. But it is important to know that resources are available now more than ever before to help you. Let us know.

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## STRANGE BUT TRUE!

### You can love food but not gain weight!

*Rim Taleb MD*

This is strange, but it is true. This is called "Gourmand syndrome". People with this syndrome are preoccupied with eating, but they only tend to enjoy fine cuisine and good stuff. They surprisingly don't get obese or even overweight! This is because they choose the quality of food rather than the quantity. What is really weird about this benign syndrome is that it was found to be associated with right frontal brain lesions like strokes, tumors, or traumas!

Strange but true! Although it exists, it is rare. Although it is rare, it does exist!

# FLOWER OF THE SEASON

## The Lotus

*Fadila Naji MD*

A symbol of spirituality and wisdom, the Lotus flower is viewed as a sacred flower by Buddhists, Hindus and ancient Egyptians. The legend says that a lotus flower bloomed under the feet of Buddha wherever he stepped. This is why Buddha is very often pictured sitting on a giant lotus blossom.

The Lotus symbolizes purification and enlightenment. It is one of the rare flowers which rise from muddy water and blooms beautifully above the murk, shining brightly in the sunlight. This special pattern of growth symbolizes the progress of the soul from the mud of materialism and evils through the waters of experience, and then into the purity of the mind and spirit.

The lotus has generally eight petals corresponding to the noble eightfold path of the "Good" law. The lotus flower teaches us to preserve our strength, glamor, purity and beauty even in the worst conditions. Blooming everyday with supreme beauty from the surrounding mud, the Lotus flower teaches us that purity and beauty never wither.

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# QUOTE OF THE SEASON

**"Always laugh when you can, it is cheap medicine."**

*Noura Kaadi MD*

George Gordon Byron (1788-1824), a British poet, once said "always laugh when you can, it is cheap medicine." Science later proved that this is a true and valid statement.

- Laughter might attenuate stress hormones like Cortisol, Epinephrine and Dopamine by 39%, 70% and 38% respectively.
- It also increases the level of health-enhancing hormones like endorphins by 27% and human growth hormone by 87%. Such an increase leads to the production of more antibodies and the activation of T-cells especially natural killer cells. Eventually the activity of tumor cells stops.
- Repetitive joyful laughter elevates your mood, lowers bad cholesterol and systolic blood pressure, and raises good cholesterol (HDL). The effect is similar to that of repetitive moderate-intensity physical exercise.

Laughter connects us with others, and it can be contagious.

Do you know that children laugh a great deal more than adults: an average baby laughs 300-400 times a day compared to an average adult who laughs only 15-20 times a day.



## WHAT IF?

Mrs. Nadine Chaya is a registered nurse in the Department of Family Medicine. She is a mother to two children, twin boys. Get to know Nadine better!

**Q: If you were to be a kid again for one day, how would you spend your day?**

**A:** Having fun by playing games with my friends until I get tired; then I'd go have dinner and watch TV with my family.

**Q: If you could chose to stay at a certain age forever, what age would it be?**

**A:** Childhood, for sure.

**Q: If you could witness any past, present, or future event, what would it be?**

**A:** It would be my parent's wedding.

**Q: If you had to work on only one project for next year, what would it be?**

**A:** Redecorating my house.

**Q: If you could meet anyone, alive or dead, who would you meet?**

**A:** My grandparents, who died when I was too young. When they were around, life was different. Just thinking that I might see them again makes me go back to that place once more, feeling peace and love.

**Q: If you win the lottery, what is the first thing you would do?**

**A:** Fulfilling my dream in establishing a health spa, where people can have a healthy environment, exercise, eat healthy food, and re-boost their energy.



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