

# A Breath of Fresh Air

A newsletter for Reliant Medical Group COPD patients and their families

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*Edited by Margalit Lai, RN, MS, COPD Program Care Manager*

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## ***Wishing everyone in our COPD family a wonderful holiday season!***

The warmth of the holiday season is now upon us but you would not know it by listening to the news. I hope that by the time you read this newsletter, we would at least have a functioning government but I am sure we will still be overwhelmed by a lot of the recent changes in health care. In the last newsletter I talked about the Medicare changes and how in 2014, Reliant will no longer accept the Fallon Senior Plan HMO (a Medicare Advantage plan). We will accept Tufts Medicare Preferred HMO (also a Medicare Advantage plan); Original Medicare Parts A & B, any Medicare supplement plan, and NaviCare HMO/SNP. The Medicare Open Enrollment Period is happening now and goes until December 7<sup>th</sup>. This is the time to make a change to your insurance plan. We hope you'll choose a plan that your Reliant providers will accept in 2014. If you are on oxygen, don't forget to check the level of coverage for that, too. If you have questions or concerns, please call Chris Andersson or myself, as soon as possible.



Changes, of course, are usually unsettling at first – until we get used to them.

## **The Affordable Care Act and You**

You probably know by now that the Affordable Care Act (also known as “Obamacare”) is the new law that will affect your health insurance and the many choices you make relating to your health. The law is far reaching so it can be a bit confusing. Unfortunately, there are reports of scammers trying to take advantage of people by trying to get their personal information over the phone, online or through the mail. Below is some advice from the Better Business Bureau:

**How To Spot A Scam:** Scammers often pose as government workers and take advantage of the confusion surrounding new or complex policies. Here are tips for dealing with this type of scam.

**Hang up, don't press any buttons and don't call the scammer back.** We all like to have the last word, but returning the phone call may just give the con artist information he can use.

**The government typically doesn't call, text or email.** Government agencies normally communicate through the mail, so be very cautious of any unsolicited calls, text messages or emails you receive. Also, if the government is contacting you, they should already have your basic personal info, such as address and social security number.

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**Don't trust caller ID.** Scammers have technology that lets them display any number or organization name on your screen.

**Never give out personal information** such as credit card numbers, bank account numbers, dates of birth or social security numbers to unfamiliar callers.

Source: <http://www.bbb.org/blog/2013/05/scammers-use-launch-of-affordable-care-act-insurance-for-id-theft-con/>:

There are some helpful things coming out of healthcare reform, particularly around prescription coverage for people on Medicare. We can discuss this, if you're interested, at your next visit.



*Now here is some good news – we have a new and wonderful nurse practitioner – Maglenes (Meg) Paige. Please read on as Meg introduces herself and shares with you some very useful information about healthy and tasty nutrition.*

## The Importance of Eating Right

*By Maglenes Paige, NP*



I have recently joined the pulmonary team here at Reliant Medical Group as a nurse practitioner. I have been a registered nurse for 19 years and started my medical career as a respiratory therapist. My specialty has been critical care and pulmonary nursing. Most of my career has been working at Saint Vincent Hospital. I am very excited to meet you and together we can help manage your health. In this newsletter, I want to discuss the importance of proper nutrition.

In the latter years of life, the body gradually loses bone and muscle mass and then gains fat mainly due to hormones that are not as active as they once

were. Many people experience loss of appetite or change in eating habits due to a variety of reasons. Sometimes it's just too difficult to cook or get to a grocery store. Some people pick at meals or snack throughout the day. This can be convenient yet snacking on unhealthy foods is not a good idea. I am going to provide you guidance on choosing healthy snacks and foods. Remember to use as much low-salt or no-salt foods as possible for your snacks, as well as reduced sugar or no-sugar foods.

Snacks should be prepared with oils made of olives or peanuts, sunflowers, safflower, flaxseed, or soybeans. These oils do not have trans fats. Look at the product information, if the label reads "hydrogenated" AVOID it! Also, avoid coconut oil, palm oil and related palm products. And AVOID FRIED FOODS!

Use natural sugars as much as possible. Natural sugars are found in fruits and vegetables. Avoid white sugars, and use honey and fructose sparingly.

Include antioxidants in your snack selections. These foods help stop free radicals which damage our cells and can result in a range of diseases. Antioxidants help slow aging, prevent heart disease, stroke, cancer, and also reduce blood pressure. Some of the snacks with antioxidants include: blueberries, strawberries, blackberries, broccoli, tomatoes, red grapes, garlic, spinach, carrots, soy, whole grains and green tea (studies indicate black teas too).

Snacks to have on hand should be easy to grab and readily available. Favorite snacks include: bags of pre-cut veggies, such as broccoli, cauliflower and baby carrots. Baby spinach leaves are also good placed in sandwiches. Olives, preferably kalamata or nicoise and avocados are also a good snack choice since they are high in minerals, vitamins and lutein, which might prevent macular degeneration.

Need more choices for snacking? How about hummus, dried apples, dried cranberries, raw nuts, 100% natural fruit juice, unsweetened Greek yogurt, low salt, and low- or no-butter popcorn, and low-fat string cheese sticks.

Desserts? Try all natural frozen desserts made from rice milk instead of milk or cream. These products have the texture of ice cream and come in many flavors.

People with lung disease expend more energy to breathe so they require more calories to meet their energy needs. Eating small, frequent meals with proportionately more fat and protein and less

carbohydrates would be beneficial. Have on hand meals that require little preparation such as liquid supplements or microwaveable dishes. Resting before meals will allow you to finish your meals. Adding a daily multivitamin would supplement vitamins you might be missing.

Let's talk about hydration! Thirst sensation decreases as you get older which can result in dehydration. So be sure to drink plenty of water and/or low-fat milk, decaffeinated coffee and tea, as well as fruits, vegetable and soups.

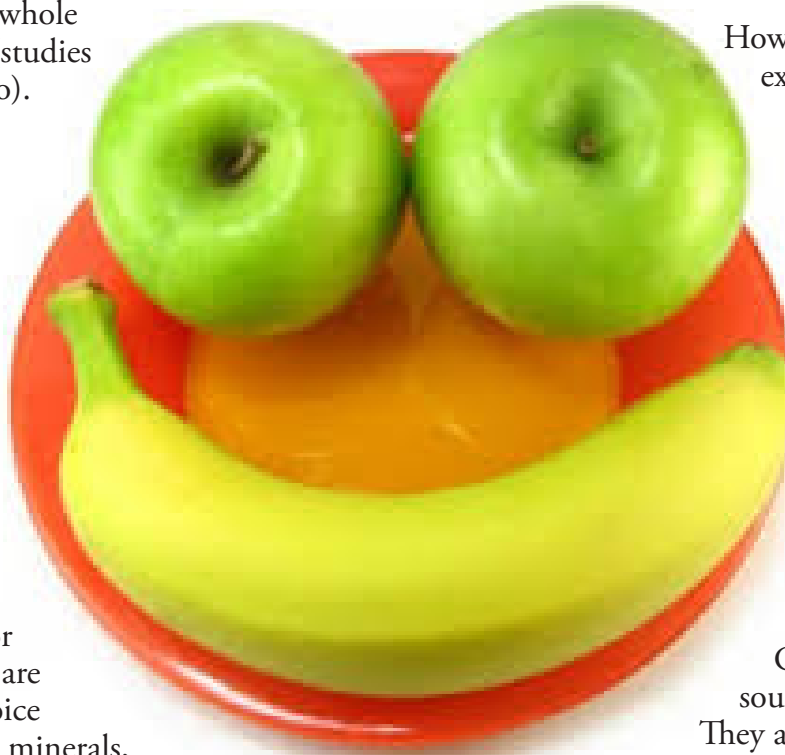
How about exercise? Regular exercise has been shown to both improve the effectiveness of nutritional therapy and stimulate your appetite.

As we get older, nutrition becomes more important to support a healthy immune system and prevent wasting of our muscles. Eat high quality protein foods such as eggs, lean meats, poultry and fish.

Carbohydrates are the main source of energy for the body.

They are found in cereals, pasta and breads. Choose whole-grain products, and stay away from "white" breads. A diet that is high in fiber and water will also help prevent constipation. Iron is important as well. Good iron sources are lean red meats and breakfast cereals. Calcium is very important for bone health. A recommended amount of 1500 mg of calcium a day may be achieved with yogurt, low fat cheese and broccoli. Meat, poultry, and fish would meet your daily intake of zinc.

Proper nutrition and exercise will help boost your immune system! Together they fight off diseases and help you feel better. ***Most of all...enjoy your life and just breathe!***



## Patients' Contribution



\* **Barbara** recently quit smoking with Chantix but continued to have cravings. She went for walks which helped her but says that green tea gum was even more helpful. She chews on two peppermint Chiclets and one green tea gum and finds it controls her cravings. Hope that those of you who still struggle with quitting, will give it a try.



“Do not let what you cannot do interfere with what you can do.”

– *John Wooden*

## Here's how to reach us

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