Urgent Care Offers Expanded Hours for Adult and Pediatric Care

Ear infections, like the one four-year-old Dylan Zinberg (left) experienced recently, don’t always occur during normal physician office hours and can’t always wait for an appointment. That’s why Cedars-Sinai Medical Network Urgent Care hours were expanded in early February. Pediatrician Richa Lal, MD, and her colleagues are available to provide treatment for non-emergency illness and injury for adults and children, seven days a week from 12 to 9 p.m. weekdays and 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. weekends.

(See page 2 for further information.)

My CS-Link Brings Your Medical Care Management Home

Access to personal information online: it’s all about convenience. Have it your way, where you want it, when you want it.

You do your banking in front of the TV, pay utility bills while making dinner, buy and send birthday gifts when the kids are asleep, order flowers and access your retirement account in the night when you can’t sleep. So why not request doctor appointments or prescription renewals when you have the time and motivation, from any computer anywhere?

For Cedars-Sinai Medical Group patients, all of that is now possible—and more. The Medical Group has taken the lead in providing online access to secure, personal medical information through My CS-Link™, and after many months of testing, personal access is available to patients of nearly all Medical Group physicians.

My CS-Link is a patient portal that centralizes your medical information and offers you immediate access to it. It’s an easy-to-use format for interacting with your physician and his or her staff—every member of your care team. It takes the concept of your physician’s office as a “medical home” and brings it right into your home, or anywhere you have an Internet connection. Your personal pages allow you to get more actively involved in management of your own health care, with no telephone queues and no hold messages standing in your way.

continued on page 4
Access Improves.
Caring Commitment Remains.

As you read this issue of Well-Being, you will see that much is changing at Cedars-Sinai Medical Group, and much is not.

• Your Medical Group is changing. We are adapting to meet your needs and your evolving lifestyles. We are improving your access to us in the office and on the Internet, making our services more convenient and your connection to your health information easier. We are committed to providing leading edge advantages for our patients.

• Your Medical Group is not changing. We remain your partners in good health, committed to providing caring, compassionate, quality care. While electronic connections simplify all our lives, they are never a substitute for our personal relationship with our patients.

We believe the key to achieving our future vision—maintaining responsive, quality care that is constantly evolving and improving—lies in listening to the needs of our patients and harnessing the abilities of all our personnel to meet them.

Our industry is changing and challenging, but we have an attitude of optimism about our ability to address those challenges. We are making improvements to our service right now, like expanding our Urgent Care hours and offering you online access to your health information. We are committed to doing what is necessary to respond to your needs and find the best methods to connect with you in our ever-evolving world.

That is our history, as well as our vision for the future. Our physicians came together as a group three decades ago, sharing a passion for and dedication to their profession and their desire to provide quality medical care. Look for many changes in the months and years to come, but be confident that your good health is the solitary focus of our group.

With kindest regards,

Thomas D. Gordon
Chief Executive Officer

Help for Challenging Skin Disorders

Millions of Americans suffer from itchy, painful and sometimes disfiguring skin conditions like psoriasis, eczema, vitiligo, morphea or cutaneous T-cell lymphoma. According to Rachel Abuav, MD, a Cedars-Sinai Medical Group dermatologist, patients now have access to advanced treatment options through Narrow Band UVB and PUVA phototherapy that may help alleviate symptoms when other treatments have failed.

This state-of-the-art approach is based on the fact that the ultraviolet rays of the sun are known to reduce the symptoms of many skin disorders by acting as a potent local anti-inflammatory that has no internal effects. These new treatments allow physicians to precisely target the healing powers of ultraviolet light to the problem areas of the skin for more effective treatment.

Narrowband UVB allows the dermatologist to use only the wavelengths of ultraviolet B light that best help the particular disease. PUVA phototherapy, or photochemotherapy, uses a different band of ultraviolet light, ultraviolet A, in combination with a drug that makes skin more sensitive to light.

The advantage of this equipment, Dr. Abuav explains, is that treatment plans can be individualized. Medical Group patients suffering from these diseases are closely evaluated, and then the best course of phototherapy is determined. The plan identifies the duration, type and amount of UV light to be administered.

Once the treatment plan is created, the patient’s dermatology team closely oversees each treatment visit, which may be repeated as often as two or three times a week and can range from one to 30 minutes each. The therapy is considered safe and effective for adults and children, and it is painless.

For more information or to schedule an appointment to determine if this treatment is appropriate for you, contact the Cedars-Sinai Medical Group Dermatology staff at 310-385-3300.
Urgent Care Offers New Hours, Same Quality Care

Cedars-Sinai Medical Group patients have had the security of urgent care as a backup to treatment from their primary care physicians for several years. Recent changes have expanded the availability of urgent care on weekday evenings and all day on weekends to make this service available when it’s needed and convenient.

Urgent care offers immediate medical care for non-emergency illness and injury. That may include everything from treatment for colds and flu, sore throats and ear infections, to muscle pain, sprains and strains.

The facility is staffed by Cedars-Sinai board-certified physicians, including internal medicine specialists, a pediatrician and a family practitioner, as well as physician assistants who specialize in urgent care. As part of the Cedars-Sinai Medical Network, the urgent care staff has access to Medical Group patients’ electronic medical records, which supports a strong continuity of care. They have health history, medications and other information important to treatment immediately available to them. Likewise, primary care physicians have immediate medical record access to know what treatments and medications were provided through urgent care.

The doors of Cedars-Sinai Medical Network Urgent Care are open 365 days a year, and no appointment is necessary.

Fighting Cancer Is a Team Effort for a Couple on a Difficult Journey

For Diana and Norman Cohen, the treatment plan devised by their Cedars-Sinai Medical Group clinical hematologist/oncologist, Noam Drazin, MD, made all the difference. It has helped them both beat the odds.

"When I present news to my patients, good or bad, I make sure I always have a treatment plan going forward that is in sync with their goals and values of life. Psychologically, they need to know we have a strategy to reach their goals," Dr. Drazin explains. "In Diana’s and Norman’s cases, we pushed the envelope and the results have been very good." He adds that the Cohens’ realistic but optimistic attitudes have played an important role.

An Unusual Shared Sojourn

Although the Cohens have shared a lot together over their 42-year marriage, they didn’t expect to share cancer. And doctors. But they have. Norman was diagnosed with terminal stage IV colorectal cancer in 2004, and in 2007, Diana made an amazing recovery from an unusual form of lymphoma after a stem cell transplant. Although Norman has continued to battle various forms of cancer since, he has survived and is enjoying the extra years he has received.

The Team Approach Makes the Difference

"Dr. Drazin serves as our quarterback for the team of physicians and clinical specialists that have treated us. He orchestrates everything," Diana Cohen explains. "He oversees a schedule that might be confusing for us, except that the physicians are all part of the Cedars-Sinai system and work so closely together. They’re all wonderful.”

"You don’t have to worry about the coordination," Norman explains. "Those doctors know each other, they discuss their patients, and they’re all at each other’s beck and call. It’s only by their collaboration that I have survived.”

A Caring Heart Is an Added Bonus

Although Dr. Drazin had seen the Cohens only once before, he made time to stop by the waiting room before Norman’s first surgery to check on Diana. "He didn’t really know us, but he already cared," she recalls. "He put his arms around me and said, ‘I’m here for you guys, and we’re going to work on this.’ That made such a difference.”

Living an Optimistic Reality

There’s no sugar-coating the reality of Norman’s prognosis. Dr. Drazin believes honesty is important, and so do the Cohens. "I’m their advocate in helping them and all my patients reach their goals," Dr. Drazin says. "It is an honor to be a part of their treatment team—and in some ways, of their family. Helping them is incredibly rewarding.”

As for Norman and Diana, they view things similarly. “You do what you do,” Norman explains. “You get up every morning, and you make the day work.” And they make it work together—with humor and optimism.
A Tool That Will Transform Your Care and Your Relationship to Your Caregivers

Manage Your Health Online

- Request appointments
- Request prescription renewals
- Communicate with your physician’s office over a secure e-mail
- View parts of your medical record, including tests, prescriptions, diagnoses and more

It’s About Better Quality Care

When did you have your last tetanus shot? Few can remember that level of detail, but with My CS-Link, there’s no need to call your physician’s office to have someone search through manila folders and hand-written physician notes. That date, and potentially a due date for your next immunization, are on My CS-Link.

There’s no reason to go from office to office to pick up test results and other information in order to see a new specialist. It’s all in one location, just a click or two away. You can show your doctor, or if your doctor is a Cedars-Sinai physician, he or she can pull the information up directly—instant access to medical history, allergies, medications and more.

Who is Eligible to Join?

- You must be a patient of a Cedars-Sinai Medical Group physician
- You must be 18 years of age or older. (Expansion to include pediatric patients is planned in the near future.)
- You must have a computer with Internet access

Sign up for Your Secure Connection

There is no charge for patients who wish to become My CS-Link participants. The Medical Group is committed to maintaining the confidentiality of your health information and provides ongoing oversight to ensure your privacy. Access to your personal information is limited through our secure site, and your pages are available only with a user ID and password selected by you.

Learn More About My CS-Link

Talk to your physician and his or her office staff or contact our Patient Services team, Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. at (800) 700-6424.

From the comfort of an easy chair, Lorenzo Gonzales now has online access to request appointments and prescription renewals, and secure communication with his health care team.

My CS-Link brings your medical care management home continued from page 1

Simple Sign-up Instructions

Follow these sign-up instructions to access your online medical record. Security is tight for your own protection, but the process is simple and the connection is convenient.

1. Visit your physician’s office to get information about sign-up. The staff will issue you a My CS-Link activation letter with a unique access code that you will use to register online.
2. After picking up your activation code from your physician’s office, go to mycslink.org. Click “My CS-Link Access.”
3. Enter the access code located on your activation letter. The code has an expiration date, so be sure to sign up before that date.
4. Enter your Social Security number and date of birth as requested on the screen. Click “Next” to continue.
5. Create your own, unique My CS-Link password based on the instructions provided. You can easily change your password at any time.
6. Enter your “Password Reset Question and Answer” as requested. This may be used for security if you ever forget your password.
7. Click “Next” and then enter your e-mail address. Your address will be used to notify you of any new information associated with My CS-Link.
8. Click “Sign In.”
9. Review the Terms and Conditions and then click “Accept.”
10. You are now signed up and your medical record will be available to you whenever you log in securely at mycslink.org.

Emergency?

My CS-Link is not for emergencies. If you have an urgent medical need, call your physician’s office directly. If it is a true medical emergency, call 911.

Just a Couple Clicks to Your Care Team

The medical professionals at Cedars-Sinai Medical Group (above) are introducing innovative options to help patients feel at home with their caregiver teams and to get more involved in their own care. The newest tool you have at your disposal around the clock is My CS-Link, which allows you the convenience of online access to your medical record, appointment requests and interactive communication with your caregiver team.
Antibiotics: A Life-Saver, But Not a Cure-all

Antibiotics are not always the answer. While they are the most effective method to combat life-threatening bacterial infections, they are not appropriate to treat many common illnesses, including viruses. In fact, improper antibiotic use and overuse can be harmful to your health. As a result, in your best interest your Cedars-Sinai Medical Group physician may not recommend an antibiotic to treat your cold, sinus infection or other illness, even if you request it.

There Are Consequences to Improper Antibiotic Use

According to Cedars-Sinai Medical Network Chief Medical Officer Stephen Deutsch, MD, improper use of antibiotics has led to an increase in drug-resistant bacteria, one of the most pressing worldwide health concerns.

“Antibiotics are very strong, and every time you take one, it kills sensitive bacteria. That’s a good thing if it’s fighting an appropriate infection. The problem is, it also leaves behind resistant bacteria that can become stronger,” says Dr. Deutsch. “The more you use antibiotics inappropriately, the less effective they will be in the future when your life might depend on it.”

The same holds true for antibiotics that are not taken according to physician directions. Taking only a portion of a prescription definitely does more harm than good, according to Dr. Deutsch. The consequences of inappropriate use of these very important medications include longer-lasting illnesses, more doctor visits, extended hospital stays, and the need for more expensive and toxic medications to combat resistant bacteria.

Talk With Your Doctor First

To help ensure antibiotics will benefit you when you need them, talk with your Cedars-Sinai physician first about the best treatment options for you. He or she will prescribe antibiotics only if they can be helpful, and will provide you with the dosage and specific directions to make the prescription most effective. Never self-diagnose and take part of a leftover prescription or someone else’s prescription, and always take all the medication as prescribed.

Vitamin E Supplements are Linked to Prostate Cancer

Vitamin E supplements were once thought to prevent prostate cancer, but a National Institutes of Health-funded study and an updated review of those results show that the vitamin actually increased prostate cancer risk. According to the study, which looked at more than 35,000 men over age 50, there were 17 percent more prostate cancers in men taking the supplement compared to those taking a placebo. Other health risks associated with vitamin E supplements have been identified in recent years, so if you have been taking vitamin E, be sure to talk with your physician.

Stephen Deutsch, MD
Chief Medical Officer
Cedars-Sinai Medical Network

Did You Know...

Your Mouth Says a Lot About Your Health

Recent studies show that your dentist may actually help to identify more than periodontal issues and that good periodontal care can lessen some disease symptoms. There is growing evidence linking inflammation of the mouth with inflammation of the body. One can have a negative effect on the other. Many diseases, such as diabetes, cancer, immune disorders and hormone imbalances, can show up in the gums, teeth and tongue before other symptoms are present.

One of the most distinctive problems a dentist can identify is diabetes, a condition that goes undiagnosed in as many as six million Americans. According to the criteria established by the American Diabetes Association, many people who develop periodontal disease are at risk for diabetes and vice versa. Inflammation from infected gums makes it more difficult for people with diabetes to control their blood-sugar level. High blood sugar likewise speeds tooth decay and gum disease.

Make sure to visit your dentist for regular annual exams and discuss concerns such as bleeding gums and persistent mouth sores.

From Your Care and Your Relationship to Your Caregivers

you manage your information, ensures you are following your care plan appropriately and doing what’s needed to prevent future health issues.

At Cedars-Sinai Medical Group, we have worked diligently for the last several years to achieve a true patient-centered approach to care, providing a medical home where you can talk with your personal team of specialists to get advice. Those personal relationships are still the core of how we deliver care, but our patients now have a tool that helps you be more involved and interactive with your team. It makes it easy to access information and gives you time to think it through, analyze it and really understand your unique health profile at a time and place of your choosing. You can even securely email questions to your caregivers.

We urge you to use this new tool to get more involved in your own health. All you need is a computer and a password. It’s easy to sign up and even easier to navigate, and the end result will be better quality care for you. Be sure to visit your physician’s office soon to get the personal code you need to sign up online.

Antibiotics—Yes or No?

A general guideline, but always discuss with your physician.

**YES** Bacterial Infections:
Examples include strep throat, some sinus infections and some pneumonia.

**NO** Viruses:
Examples include cold, flu, most sore throats, acute bronchitis and many sinus or ear infections. Antibiotics will not be effective.
Meet Our New Physicians

Cedars-Sinai Medical Group continues to expand to provide services responsive to the needs of our patients. Some exceptional individuals have joined our care team, and we’d like to introduce them to you.

Valentina Dalili, MD
Internist
Dr. Dalili’s career choice had its roots in her family tree. Her father is a pediatrician, but her inspiration for the direction of her career path in internal medicine came from a close family member whom she watched go through the end stages of diabetes. It triggered her interest in chronic medical conditions and her research in genetics and diabetes. To this day, she brings that care and compassion to her practice and treats her patients like she would a family member.

**Location:** 8501 Wilmshire Blvd., Suite 220
Beverly Hills, CA 90211
(310) 248-7120

**Medical Degree:** Universidad Autonoma de Guadalajara, Jalisco, Mexico

Suketu Vaishnav, MD
Orthopaedic Surgeon
Medical solutions must be individualized to each patient’s unique medical condition and personal needs, Dr. Vaishnav believes. “My goal is to get my patients back to leading a pain-free, healthy and active lifestyle.” Dr. Vaishnav focuses on the surgical and non-surgical treatment of sports injuries. He has a particular interest in complex shoulder disorders, including shoulder replacement and rotator cuff surgery.

**Location:** 200 N. Robertson Blvd., Suite 205
Beverly Hills, CA 90211
(310) 385-6017

**Medical Degree:** University of Southern California, Los Angeles, California

Bringing the Stone to Life

Robert C. Klapper, MD, is an artist who brings his creative spirit to all facets of his life. First and foremost, he is a board-certified orthopaedic surgeon at Cedars-Sinai Medical Group and co-director of the Joint Replacement Program at the Cedars-Sinai Orthopaedic Center. He is also an inventor with nine patents on surgical instruments, and he is an accomplished sculptor who attempts to “transform stone into emotion.”

Recently, Dr. Klapper donated his creation, “The Spirit Coming to Death,” to Tom Gordon, chief executive officer of the Cedars-Sinai Medical Network, in honor of his lifelong dedication to physicians and surgeons. The two sculptures represent the cycle of life and were created in memorial to WWII Veteran Abraham Klapper, Dr. Klapper’s father, who instilled in him an appreciation for “the fragility of life.” The Carrara marble sculptures were initially made for an exhibit called “Wounded in Action,” and travelled for a year across the country commemorating American war veterans.

Cassandra Walls-Ward, MSW
Ambulatory Case Manager/Medical Social Worker

Cassandra Walls-Ward works collaboratively with patients and their families to provide support to help them navigate the health care system. That’s her job as an ambulatory case manager and medical social worker for Cedars-Sinai Medical Network. However, it’s her dedication and compassion as a patient advocate that distinguish her and earned her the Cedars-Sinai President’s Award in November, 2011.

When Walls-Ward joined the Medical Network over three years ago, she brought with her more than 21 years of experience in the field of medical social work. Utilizing this extensive background, she works every day to address the unique needs and concerns of her patients. Whether helping to explain health care resources and policies to patients or planning for their post-hospital care, she does whatever it takes to ensure a seamless continuity of care for them.

“My goal is to make sure that patients and their families do not feel alone in dealing with the challenges of managing their care,” Walls-Ward explains. That means she will not end her day until each of her patients’ needs have been identified and a plan is in place to address them.

In addition to her daily work with patients, Walls-Ward was a member of the team that developed and refined the Cedars-Sinai Medical Network Medical Home pilot program. Her extensive background with other successful health care pilot programs made her a great resource for the team. “This is proactive, preventive medicine,” she explains, “It’s all about using the expertise of the health care team to get the best care to our patients in the most efficient and effective way.”

For Walls-Ward, being a strong patient advocate has been the realization of her life’s passion. “I had actually set out to be an attorney and then decided that social work allowed me to better help others as a humanitarian,” she concluded. “It’s my passion, and it’s such fulfilling work.”

Medical Group Physician: Excellence Honored

Cedars-Sinai Medical Group board-certified oncolgist Marina Vaysburd, MD, was recognized by the Israel Cancer Research Fund for her contribution to science. She was one of three women to receive the annual Women of Action award, presented in November 2011. Dr. Vaysburd was recognized for her passion and dedication to the field of oncology and for her outstanding contributions to cancer research. She serves as an attending physician at the Samuel Oschin Cancer Center and is a member of the Saul and Joyce Brandman Center—A Project of the Women’s Guild and the Thyroid Cancer Center at Cedars-Sinai’s Samuel Oschin Comprehensive Cancer Institute.
Cedars-Sinai Medical Group: One Network for All Your Health Care Needs

Since our inception in 1985, Cedars-Sinai Medical Group has focused on providing a full range of quality health care and disease prevention services for the entire family.

As a patient in our medical network, you benefit from convenient access to over 100 primary and specialty care physicians and seamless coordination of your care between them. While each doctor manages particular aspects of your care, they all work together as a team to deliver a comprehensive treatment plan.

The physicians and staff of Cedars-Sinai Medical Group are your partners in quality health care. We are part of the nationally renowned Cedars-Sinai Health System, so should you need to be hospitalized, you have access to Cedars-Sinai Medical Center which is consistently recognized as one of the finest hospitals in the country.

Same-Day Care for Your Urgent Needs

Cedars-Sinai Medical Network Urgent Care is designed to help you meet your unexpected medical needs when your primary care doctor or pediatrician is not available. The Center’s internal medicine and family practice physicians, pediatricians and urgent care-trained physician assistants are members of the Cedars-Sinai Medical Group and provide the same standard of excellence in patient care to diagnose and treat your flu, cold, fever or any illness that needs immediate attention.

Same-day and after-hours care are available at the Center, in Suite 150 at 8501 Wilshire Boulevard in Beverly Hills, Monday through Friday, 12 to 9 p.m. and Saturday through Sunday, 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. Of course, if you have a serious health problem, call 911 or go to the Cedars-Sinai Medical Center emergency department.

Voice of the Customer Program: WE CARE

Our goal is to provide you with high-quality medical care, excellent customer service and a strong mix of programs and services responsive to your needs. Our team of physicians, caregivers and support staff are all focused on serving you.

In order to achieve our quality care and service goals, we need to hear from you. Your concerns, suggestions and general feedback about the quality of care and services you receive will help to make us even better at what we do.

Should you have any issues at any time, our care team meets bi-weekly to investigate and resolve your concerns and to fine-tune our policies and procedures to better serve you.

Please call our Patient Services Department at (800) 700-6424 Monday through Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 5:30 p.m., with any issues you may wish to discuss.

Learn More About Us

At Cedars-Sinai Medical Group, your good health is our first priority. We view ourselves as your partner, there to support you in your wellness and preventive efforts, as well as to treat and care for you when illness or injury occurs.

To learn more about any of our Cedars-Sinai Medical Group physicians, specialty services, wellness classes, physician office locations and phone numbers, please visit our website at www.Cedars-SinaiMedicalGroup.org. Or, call our Patient Services Department at (800) 700-6424, Monday through Friday from 8:00 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.

Phone Directory

Patient & Provider Services (800) 700-6424
Monday–Friday, 8:00 a.m.–5:30 p.m.

Urgent Care (310) 248-7000
8501 Wilshire Blvd., Suite 150
Beverly Hills, CA 90211
Monday–Friday, 12:00 p.m.–9:00 p.m.
Saturday–Sunday, 9:00 a.m.–6:00 p.m.

General Information www.Cedars-SinaiMedicalGroup.org

Medical Specialties

Cardiology (800) 700-6424
(310) 385-3300

Dermatology (800) 700-6424
(310) 248-8200

Endocrinology (310) 243-5900

Gastroenterology (800) 700-6424
(310) 423-8661

General Surgery (310) 385-3380
(310) 385-3345

Hand Surgery (310) 423-5900
(310) 385-3345

Hematology/Oncology (800) 700-6424
(310) 423-8661

Internal Medicine (310) 423-5900

Nephrology (800) 700-6424
(310) 385-3380

Neurology (310) 423-8661
(310) 385-3345

Obstetrics and Gynecology (800) 700-6424
(310) 385-3345

Optometry, Ophthalmology and LASIK Vision Correction (310) 423-2374

Orthopaedic Surgery (310) 385-3380
(310) 385-3345

Otolaryngology (310) 385-6090

Pediatric Medicine (800) 700-6424
(310) 243-1220

Pediatric Reconstructive Surgery (800) 700-6424
(310) 243-1220

Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery (310) 423-5900

Pulmonology (800) 700-6424

Rheumatology (310) 385-3298

Urology (800) 700-6424

Programs

Cosmetic Dermatology (310) 385-3300

Drug Therapy Management (310) 385-3534
option 3

Executive Medical Services (310) 423-2374

Injection Center (310) 385 3534
option 4

Nutrition Services (310) 385-3385

Travel Medicine (310) 385-3385
option 3

Vision Center (310) 385-3450
What’s in Store…
In this issue of Well-Being, get the latest from your partners in good health.

Connected Convenience
Manage your health care at your computer 24/7 with My CS-Link.
See page 1

Radiating Raves
New technology harnesses the power of the sun’s rays to heal the skin.
See page 2

Added Access
Cedars-Sinai Medical Network Urgent Care hours have changed to meet expanded needs.
See page 3

Antibiotic Antibodies
Antibiotics are not a cure-all. Practice restraint because overuse makes bacteria resistant.
See page 5

Cedars-Sinai Medical Group Wants You to Know…

A Home for Healthier Kids
Pediatric offices should offer a “medical home” for kids, according to new study published in Pediatrics. Those children who have a primary care physician office that offers easily accessible, family-centered, coordinated care services had fewer physician visits for illness and fewer trips to the emergency department. They also practiced healthier overall lifestyles. Many Cedars-Sinai Medical Group offices are designed as medical homes.

Choose Wisely
Aggressive medical care can lead to more pain, with no gain. Consumer Reports has joined Choosing Wisely™, a campaign designed by ABIM Foundation and nine leading medical specialty societies, to provide resources for patients and physicians to talk about the overuse or misuse of medical tests and procedures. For more information, visit consumerhealthchoices.org/campaigns/choosing-wisely/.

Save on Prescriptions
The Online First issue of the Archives of Internal Medicine in October 2011 published a study showing costs of $6.7 billion for unnecessary tests or medications in primary care in one year. Of that, $5.8 billion was for brand name statins to treat high cholesterol when effective generic versions were available. Speak with your doctor about brand name versus generic for all your prescriptions.

Sick of Flying?
The increased risk of catching a cold during air travel comes from sitting close to someone who is sick, standing in security lines, at baggage checks, and during boarding, deplaning or sitting on the ground when the plane’s air filters are turned off. To protect yourself, stay hydrated, wash hands frequently, disinfect tray tables, open your air vent, and avoid seat back pockets, pillows and blankets.

Spice it up!
Add a bit of hot mustard, horseradish, fennel, anise or sage to your food when possible. They act as natural decongestants to stave off allergy symptoms by stimulating the cilia (hairs in the nose) that serve as a guard to pollen and dust.

Walnuts, for Good Health and Good Flavor
Add walnuts to salads or munch on them as a snack. They are especially good for the heart, reducing inflammation and Good Flavor. Walnuts have a high amount of polyphenols and potent antioxidant benefits. Polyphenols are believed to benefit health by reducing inflammation linked to heart disease, improving blood flow and lowering blood cholesterol.

Information in this newsletter does not constitute medical advice, nor does it substitute for a medical opinion from your doctor.