For Medical Group Patients, It’s All in the Family

Melissa Nosce’s close relationship with her Cedars-Sinai Medical Group internist, Amy Rutman, MD, goes back 20 years. Beyond the physician/patient bond, they’ve developed a friendship based on a sharing of their lives, including pregnancies, raising children and now, sending their kids off to college.

Nicholas Nosce, Melissa’s son, was a patient of Medical Group pediatrician Jeffrey Brown, MD, whom Nicholas describes as “part of the family.” When it was time for 19-year-old Nicholas to move on to adult primary care last year, Dr. Brown recommended one of the Group’s new internists, Ehsan Ali, MD, which eased the transition for Nicholas.

Romarico Nosce, Nicholas’ father, just became a patient of Dr. Ali last year, so Cedars-Sinai Medical Group now serves as a medical home for the entire family.

Home Sweet Medical Home

“Patient-centered medical home” is relatively new healthcare terminology for a practice that Cedars-Sinai Medical Group has been refining over several years. It’s a concept in which the patient’s primary care physician oversees a coordinated team approach that provides seamless continuity of medical care for all stages of life and levels of care—and all members of the family.

“A patient’s relationship with his or her primary care physician is very important to feeling safe and secure, knowing that someone understands you as a whole person, cares about and is watching over you,” Dr. Ali explains. The care provided is based on individual need and extends to patient access to specialized professionals like clinical pharmacists, dietitians, social workers, nurse practitioners, physician assistants and a wide array of physician specialists. Even home or nursing home visits by care managers are provided when needed.

Health Insurance Coverage Options Are Available

Like so many Americans, Romarico Nosce lost his job and his health insurance as a result of the recession. Because he suffers from chronic blood pressure issues—a pre-existing condition—he couldn’t get insurance and hadn’t had a primary care doctor for some time. That changed when he brought son Nicholas in to see Ehsan Ali, MD.

“I liked Dr. Ali, so I asked him to check me out. Now I feel more comfortable about my health,” Romarico says. “I had been switching between mobile clinics and urgent cares. It’s critical for me to stay with Dr. Ali because he knows all my history.”

With the launch of the Affordable Care Act, health insurance options are now available to Romarico and others who have been uninsured, regardless of pre-existing conditions. If you need an individual policy for yourself or your family, you can purchase a plan through either the Covered California health benefit exchange or an insurance company or agent outside of the health exchange. Please choose your plan carefully—only a few provide full coverage for care from Cedars-Sinai physicians and the Medical Center, including Health Net in Covered California and Health Net and Assurant Health off the exchange.

For the most up-to-date information and guidance, please call, email or visit us online. The deadline for individual plan enrollment is March 31, 2014.

Phone: 800-213-3586
Email: insurance@cshs.org
Website: cedars-sinai.edu/insurance
A Message from the CEO

Thomas D. Gordon
Chief Executive Officer

Our Commitment to Quality Never Wavers

One of the most defining characteristics of Cedars-Sinai Medical Group is our close relationships and collaboration—with one another and with our patients. We consider ourselves a “family,” providing a comfortable medical home for our patients, like that enjoyed by the Nosce family, featured in this issue of Well-Being.

As we grow to meet your needs and the challenges of healthcare reform, we’re expanding our family rapidly, but selectively. We screen potential new members very closely, requiring not only outstanding credentials, but also the intangible personal characteristics we value. We look for the deep commitment to care and caring, the respect for people and relationships, that defines top caregivers.

Healthcare is transforming in positive ways to allow greater access to better care. We are evolving too, but our dedication to high standards of clinical care and service for our patients remains steadfast. We have for many consecutive years been recognized among the state’s elite, a top-performing medical group, and we are committed to maintaining that level of care.

What’s evolving most rapidly in our organization is the evolution of care and technology. Two prime examples are My CS-Link and our medical home approach. We continue to expand our online communication and physician office access for patients, most recently providing parents the convenience of My CS-Link for their children. Our patient-centered care extends well beyond the physician office, allowing us to provide a wide array of support and services for our patients in urgent care, the hospital, patient homes and care facilities.

There is always more change to come, but at Cedars-Sinai Medical Group, our mantra is partnering with our patients for your good health. We are united in that commitment.

All in the Family

Continued from page 1

Electronic medical records are also a vital part of the team approach to care. Secure access to a patient’s medications, allergies and medical history enhance the ability of Medical Group practitioners, Cedars-Sinai Urgent Care and Medical Center emergency department staff to care for patients quickly, safely and effectively.

“Perhaps the most important aspect of our practice is the Medical Group’s unique culture. Our physicians are very close, very united in our mission, and we communicate well,” Dr. Rutman concludes. “We’re like family here, and I think that really supports the medical home concept. I know it makes a difference for our patients.”

Melissa Nosce agrees. “It’s very important to have our whole family in the same medical group,” she says. “All of our records are in one place and easily accessible, our doctors know each other well and communicate closely. There’s a level of trust we’ve developed as a result, and we’re comfortable here.”

Nicholas Nosce, now attending college in Massachusetts, knows firsthand the importance of that physician/patient relationship. “It was easy to express what I was feeling to Dr. Brown, my pediatrician, and that made it easier for him to diagnose me. He’s really nice, like part of the family,” Nicholas says. “It’s a real plus that Dr. Ali is in the same group and was recommended by Dr. Brown. We all trusted him right away.”

In fact, when Nicholas went to his first appointment with Dr. Ali, it was a family affair that included mom and dad. “I was happy to have them all involved. It put Nicholas at ease, made his parents more comfortable and helped me better understand Nicholas,” Dr. Ali said.

As it turned out, Nicholas’ dad, Romarico, is now Dr. Ali’s patient as well, truly keeping it all in the Cedars-Sinai family. “I hope to have a long relationship with them both and to watch Nicholas grow. That’s the best part of my work.”

Wise Choices for Lower Back Pain

Few among us make it through life without lower back pain. In fact, according to the Agency for Healthcare Research and Policy, lower back pain is the fifth most common reason for all physician visits. It can have an obvious cause, but sometimes there is no apparent reason. It just happens, and it can be excruciatingly painful and debilitating.

In our high tech world, the temptation is often to investigate the problem with an MRI, CT scan or X-ray to identify its source. However, that approach is flawed and imaging is not usually a good idea, according to the American College of Physicians and the American Pain Society, which have set guidelines that are supported by the American Board of Internal Medicine, the American Association of Family Practitioners and many others.

“Wait and see” are the bywords for lower back imaging, unless there are clear “red flags,” like serious underlying conditions. The recommended wait, based on a great deal of research, is six weeks. For most, the pain resolves itself within that period of time, with or without the imaging.

A randomized study of over 1,800 patients with acute or sub-acute lower back pain found that those who underwent routine imaging early on experienced no better outcomes than those who did not. And there is a downside. The imaging poses risks, including unnecessary exposure to radiation, which can increase cancer risk. Test results can sometimes cause unnecessary worry and can also result in costly and time consuming follow-up tests and procedures.

As with all health issues that may concern you, the best policy is to have a discussion with your primary care physician who can properly diagnose and treat your symptoms. Prescription and/or over-the-counter medications, physical therapies and self-care activities such as heat, ice, exercise and pillow placement when sleeping can help. Still, the main treatment remains time… and patience.
It’s become common for patients to do their research before a visit to their physician. Our patients today are more savvy than ever before, thanks to all the information at their fingertips, online and in the media. But information can be conflicting and confusing, and it can be difficult to separate opinion from fact.

Choosing Wisely®, an initiative of the American Board of Internal Medicine Foundation, is a campaign developed to provide physicians and patients with the right information for important conversations aimed at ensuring the right care is delivered at the right time.

Review of this information helps the patient and his or her physician determine appropriate treatment based on trusted information. It also helps them assess whether certain tests and procedures may be ineffective, unnecessary or needlessly risky, given the circumstances. It allows us to make “wise choices” together, with the greatest chance of improving outcomes and reducing costs.

We are all very enthusiastic about the Choosing Wisely campaign, and as a patient of our Medical Group, your physician will very likely share relevant information with you. We will also be including information in this newsletter on a regular basis—in this issue we have provided an article on imaging for low back pain.

We also encourage you to educate yourself. Stop by the Choosing Wisely website to research information applicable to your health status or that of your loved ones. Simply go to consumerhealthchoices.org.

The 140+ clinical care team members of Cedars-Sinai Medical Group (most pictured above) share the spotlight with over 950 clinicians and staff members, once again earning two prestigious statewide distinctions for excellence in 2013.

The 140+ clinical care team members of Cedars-Sinai Medical Group (most pictured above) share the spotlight with over 950 clinicians and staff members, once again earning two prestigious statewide distinctions for excellence in 2013.

“Top Performer” Physician Organization
This is the eighth consecutive year the Integrated Healthcare Association has named Cedars-Sinai Medical Group among the top physician groups in the state that have demonstrated best overall performance on select healthcare quality measures. Those measures include preventive care and chronic care management, patient satisfaction, and use of information technology to support safer, more effective care.

“Elite Status” Performance
For the seventh year in a row, the Medical Group has earned California Association of Physician Groups’ highest award for quality care based on the Standards of Excellence survey. The survey analyzed physician group capabilities in four areas central to providing high-quality care responsive to patient needs: care management, information technology, accountability, transparency and patient care.

The Medical Group has set rigorous goals and standards to ensure the quality of care and service provided to its patients, and these two rankings offer recognition of that effort.

“We’re very pleased to receive these high-level distinctions on an ongoing basis,” says Thomas D. Gordon, chief executive officer of the Cedars-Sinai Medical Network. “At the heart of everything we do is our dedication to providing the highest quality of care and service to our patients and to improving the health of our community. We never stop looking for better ways to achieve that.”
What’s in It for You?

Cedars-Sinai’s My CS-Link™ is a secure online tool that allows you to take a more active role in managing your health by connecting you to your personal health information from the privacy of your home any time, day or night. It also provides you convenient access to communicate with your physician’s office electronically. With My CS-Link, you can:

- Request appointments
- Request prescription renewals and learn more about your medications
- Access your test results and view comments from your physician
- Ask your physician’s office a non-urgent medical question
- View your personal health information, including medical conditions, current medications, medical history, allergies and immunization history
- View upcoming and past appointments details

Where You Want, When You Want

Managing Your Healthcare 24/7

Internal medicine specialist Jonathan Weiner, MD, is an avid supporter of My CS-Link. It’s an integral part of his day and his practice. He believes it’s not just a faster and more efficient form of communication with his patients, it’s more intimate as well.

“My patients are more open, more personal in their emails. I think I am as well,” he says. “They can be more descriptive about what they’re thinking and don’t feel pressured to get all their questions out there like they do on a phone call.”

From the physician’s point of view, Dr. Weiner says he can be more responsive, fitting his communications in between patients or early or later in the day. There are no back and forth voicemails. “My CS-Link provides my patients more access to me and their health information. It’s just part of my day. This way we’re both very respectful of one another’s time.”

Dr. Weiner estimates that around 60 percent of his patients use My CS-Link actively to make appointments, receive test results with his comments, and ask questions. Most blood and urine test results are viewable in My CS-Link, but biopsies and imaging tests are not currently available.

“My patients are in control,” he comments. “They have time to absorb the information privately, on their own time, and to talk with me when they’re ready.”

Another benefit for patients is that they don’t have to try to remember what he might have told them. It’s online and they can refresh their memories at will. “I think this really improves communication with my patients, and as a result, the care is better.” Dr. Weiner concludes.

Easy Access to Your Child’s Health History

As a parent or permanent guardian, you now have secure, online access to My CS-Link that connects you to portions of your child’s health information if your child is under the age of 12.*

Wherever you are, all you need is a computer and an Internet connection to manage prescription renewals, request appointments, view previous and upcoming appointments, and view your child’s health information, including medications, immunizations and most test results. You can also communicate with your child’s physicians.

Ask your child’s pediatrician or office staff about accessing My CS-Link at your child’s next office visit. Once you have access, you can log in to your personal My CS-Link account and get to your child’s account with the “My Family’s Records” feature.

*Providing unrestricted access to a minor’s health information through My CS-Link when the minor is between the ages of 12 and 18 is prohibited under California law, where the minor has exercised statutorily granted consent to specific care. However, you may continue to request a paper copy of a minor’s record from our Health Information department at 310-248-7057. My CS-Link accounts are not granted to minors.
Meet Our New OB/GYNs

New Medical Director for a New Era

Daniel J. Stone, MD, a member physician in the Cedars-Sinai Medical Group since 1985, took on a new challenge as medical director in July 2013. In this role, he is leading the Group’s physicians in their ever-expanding efforts to provide responsive, high quality medical care and an excellent patient experience for everyone treated by the Group.

A board-certified internal medicine specialist, Dr. Stone has hands-on patient care experience. With master’s degrees in Public Health and Business Administration, he is also well-prepared to support his more than 140 Medical Group colleagues in dealing with the collective issues of healthcare and system operations in a rapidly evolving industry.

“This is an exciting time for all of us,” Dr. Stone comments. “We now have the tools, the informatics, to better coordinate and improve care. The changes taking place in healthcare today offer us the opportunity to take a more comprehensive, holistic approach to medicine, which benefits our patients and physicians.”

Dr. Stone continues to see patients even as he embraces this administrative role. “It is a privilege to be a part of a group of hard-working, dedicated professionals who always have the best interests of our patients as their priority,” he says. “I’m enthusiastic about my role and our collaborative effort, but I wouldn’t want to sacrifice providing hands-on care or the long-term relationships I enjoy with my patients. That’s what drew me to internal medicine.”

Jessica L. Schneider, MD

“I love being an OB/GYN for so many reasons,” Dr. Schneider enthusiastically explains. “It allows me the opportunity to be part of my patients’ important moments, to experience the excitement and wonder of delivering babies, and address the challenges of surgery and helping to solve problems.”

Location: 8631 W. Third St., Suite 840E
Los Angeles, CA 90048
310-423-6600

Board Certification: Obstetrics and Gynecology

Medical Education: MD, University of Southern California
Internship and residency, obstetrics/gynecology, Kaiser Permanente, Los Angeles

Scott P. Serden, MD

Dr. Serden chose OB/GYN because it allows him to have long-term relationships with his patients and share some of the happiest times with them. “I’ve delivered many of their kids, and I’m now taking care of them for the rest of their lives,” he says. “I get to work at 6 a.m. every day because I love what I do and being part of the Medical Group family.”

Location: 8631 W. Third St., Suite 840E
Los Angeles, CA 90048
310-423-6600

Board Certification: Obstetrics and Gynecology

Medical Education: MD, New York Medical College, Valhalla
Internship and residency, obstetrics/gynecology, Cedars-Sinai

In the Spotlight

Cedars-Sinai Health System President’s Award Winner

Dean Varga

Director of Human Resources, Cedars-Sinai Medical Network

Dean Varga’s “temporary” assignment with Cedars-Sinai has lasted 30 “short” years. The time has flown by, Dean says, because he continues to enjoy a passion for his work and his workplace.

“Every day is something new and exciting,” Dean explains. “My staff and I get to positively impact the quality of patient care by supporting management in hiring, developing and retaining exceptional physicians and staff—the people who directly touch the lives of our patients. And we get to work with some of the best and brightest in healthcare. I consider myself very lucky.”

Dean’s career began in 1983 in the Cedars-Sinai Medical Center Human Resources department, where he put his bachelor’s and master’s degrees into action, working with nearly every department of the Medical Center. In 1996, Dean was assigned to help the newly established Cedars-Sinai Medical Care Foundation, today known as the Cedars-Sinai Medical Network.

The journey from that point to present has been action packed by Human Resource department standards, as the number of physicians and staff has more than tripled over the years. “That’s exceptional growth in such a short period. There’s much more to come, and lucky for me, I have a very capable, dedicated and experienced HR team to get the job done well,” he concludes.

In his personal life, Dean exhibits the same positive energy. He, his life partner of 22 years, and their four cats enjoy their eclectic taste in music, traveling and tending the garden.

Did You Know...

You Should Be Prepared for the Unexpected

Be sure to ask your doctor for a copy of Cedars-Sinai’s guide on Advance Healthcare Directives during your next visit. It will provide you and your loved ones with information to help you in considering your options in the event you are unable to communicate your healthcare wishes yourself. The guide is also available online at cedars-sinai.edu.
Meet Our New Physicians

Richard Altman, MD
Urgent Care
Dr. Altman’s goal is to help people live the lives they envision. “It’s my job to find out what they want for themselves and give them the advice and care that enables them to reach their goals,” he says. “As physicians, we’re lucky to be doing what we do, to be in a position to help people, to calm their fears and treat their illnesses.”

Location: 8501 W. Third St., Suite 960W
Los Angeles, CA 90048
310-652-8037
Board Certification: Internal Medicine
Medical Education: MD, University of Pittsburgh
Internship and residency, internal medicine, Mount Sinai Hospital, New York

Esther Baik, MD
Internal Medicine
As a high school student, Dr. Baik was visiting Cambodia on a mission trip when it first occurred to her she might want to be a physician. “I met an elderly woman who was very ill but couldn’t afford medical care,” she recalls. “I was heartbroken that I couldn’t do much. That motivated me to become a physician and provide help to people in their most vulnerable moments.”

Location: 200 N. Robertson Blvd., Suite 303
Beverly Hills, CA 90211
310-385-3466
Board Certification: Internal Medicine
Medical Education: MD, Wayne State University, Detroit
Residency, internal medicine, Georgetown University Hospital, Washington, D.C.

Robert T. Coles, MD
Pediatrics
“It’s all about the children,” says Dr. Coles when asked why he became a pediatrician. “They are so honest and forgiving and much more resilient than people think. I enjoy seeing them grow, thrive and excel in life, as well as health. Every day I’m sure I made the right decision, with my specialty and the Medical Group—it’s like a family.”

Location: 8501 Wilshire Blvd., Suite 201
Beverly Hills, CA 90211
310-385-3345
Board Certification: Pediatrics
Medical Education: MD, McGill University, Montreal
Residency, pediatrics, Cedars-Sinai

Edward J. Feldman, MD
Gastroenterology
A teacher and a practitioner with a wealth of expertise in the field of inflammatory bowel disease, Dr. Feldman’s clinical approach addresses the mind/body connection. “It’s not just about treating disease. It’s about treating people,” he says. “Background, culture, stressors, lifestyle, personal fears—all have a strong influence on physical health.”

Location: 8635 W. Third St., Suite 960W
Los Angeles, CA 90048
310-652-8037
Board Certification: Internal Medicine and Pediatrics
Medical Education: MD, Indiana University
Internship, Veterans Administration Hospital, West Los Angeles Residency, internal medicine, Harbor General Hospital, Torrance, California
Research fellowship, gastroenterology, Hammersmith Hospital (Royal Postgraduate Medical School), London
Clinical fellowship, University of California, Los Angeles

Christopher Fitzgerald, MD
Internal Medicine and Pediatrics
Dr. Fitzgerald is a strong proponent of the team-based approach to care for his patients. “Working together, we can maximize prevention, promote longevity, and improve and even reverse chronic disease,” he says. The results are very rewarding for Dr. Fitzgerald and his patients. “I learn just as much from my patients as they learn from me.”

Location: 8501 Wilshire Blvd., Suite 220
Beverly Hills, CA 90211
310-248-7002
Board Certification: Internal Medicine and Pediatrics
Medical Education: MD, University of Missouri-Kansas City
Residency, internal medicine and pediatrics, University of Missouri-Kansas City at Truman Medical Centers, St. Luke’s Hospital and Children’s Mercy Hospital

Susan Lee, DO
Neurology
A childhood illness and many positive hospital experiences drew Dr. Lee to her career in medicine. “I didn’t realize how sick I was because all the caregivers made me feel well,” she recalls. “I wanted and got a career that feels meaningful like that, where I work collaboratively with patients, helping them understand and take ownership of their care.”

Location: 250 N. Robertson Blvd., Suite 505
Beverly Hills, CA 90211
310-385-6016
Board Certification: Neurology
Medical Education: DO, University of California, Los Angeles
Internship, St. Joseph’s Hospital and Medical Center, Phoenix
Residency, neurology, Barrow Neurological Institute, Phoenix

Meet Our New Care Team Members

Ching Chow, RPh, PharmD
Clinical Pharmacy
Ching Chow loves working directly with patients, helping find medications that work well for them and teaching them how to best manage their chronic conditions. “I’ve found patients take better care of themselves when they understand their disease and how the medications help,” she says. “It makes a difference.”

Location: 250 N. Robertson Blvd., Suite 601
Beverly Hills, CA 90211
310-385-3534
Credentials: Registered Pharmacist
Medical Education: PharmD, University of Washington

Kristin Harris, PA-C
Physician Assistant, Urgent Care
With physicians in her family, Kristin Harris’s choice of a medical career was a natural one. “I like dealing with people when they really need you, so working in urgent care is fascinating. It’s a perfect fit for me,” she says. “You have to walk in, make your patient comfortable, then assess the issue quickly. I like that kind of medicine.”

Location: 8501 Wilshire Blvd., Suite 150
Beverly Hills, CA 90211
310-248-7000
Credentials: Physician Assistant-Certified
Medical Education: Master of Physician Assistant Practice, University of Southern California

Ghazal Vessal, RPh, PharmD
Clinical Pharmacy
With a passion for both science and helping others, clinical pharmacy was a perfect career path for Ghazal Vessal. Her journey began in research and teaching, but soon moved to direct patient care. “My goal is to help my patients have a better quality of life,” she explains. “Seeing positive results gives me a sense of joy and fulfillment.”

Location: 250 N. Robertson Blvd., Suite 601
Beverly Hills, CA 90211
310-385-3534
Credentials: Registered Pharmacist
Medical Education: PharmD, Shiraz University of Medical Sciences, Shiraz, Iran
PhD, clinical pharmacy, Tehran University of Medical Sciences, Iran
Research fellowship, University of Maryland School of Pharmacy
Residency, ambulatory care clinical pharmacy, Cedars-Sinai Medical Network
Same-Day Care for Your Urgent Needs

Cedars-Sinai Urgent Care is designed to help you meet your unexpected medical needs when your primary care doctor or pediatrician is not available. Urgent Care'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 urgent care, 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 biweekly 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 cedars-sinai.edu/medicalgroup. Or, call our Patient Services Department at 800-700-6424, Monday through Friday from 8:00 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.
What’s in Store…
In this issue of Well-Being, get the latest from your partners in good health.

Kindred Connections
The Medical Group’s family of caregivers offers a medical home.
See page 1

Testing Trade-offs
MRI, CT or X-ray imaging for lower back pain has its downside.
See page 2

Highest Honors Highlighted
Cedars-Sinai Medical Group is recognized among the state’s top performers.
See page 3

Computer Connection
Get online health information for adults and kids with My CS-Link.
See page 4

Cedars-Sinai Medical Group Wants You to Know...

Fido’s Role Is Recognized
We know dogs and other highly trained animals support individuals with disabilities and even serve as psychiatric service animals to help children with autism engage in social interaction. But Fido is finally getting his due, recognized for contributing to his human’s emotional and physical well-being just by being there, helping to lower blood pressure and heart rate and reduce anxiety. A treat is in order.

Balance the Screen Time
The glowing lights of screens have invaded our lives and that’s not good for kids. The American Academy of Pediatrics suggests limiting that exposure to make room for family time, schoolwork, outdoor activities and other healthy habits. Parents should set up no-device family rules during mealtimes and after bedtime. Kids should limit screen time for entertainment to two hours per day, and those under age 2 shouldn’t have any TV or Internet exposure.

Avoid the Cold Turkey Danger
It’s a good idea to monitor your need for prescription medications. However, if it turns out you no longer need a drug, never stop cold turkey. Consult your physician, who will often suggest gradually weaning off the medication. It’s a smarter option to avoid potentially dangerous withdrawal symptoms.

Read the Labels to Save Your Heart
In November 2013, the Food & Drug Administration declared artificial trans fats in the U.S. food supply unsafe, in a first step to all but eliminate these artery-clogging, partially hydrogenated oils from the American diet. Be sure to read your labels. Even small amounts of trans fats daily can add up to raise bad cholesterol and lower the levels of good cholesterol.

Ease the Temper, Save the Heart
For those whose excitement or anger can come on like a flash, it’s time to find your Zen. The risk for heart attack or stroke in the two hours following a pneumonia vaccination, you’d be wise to do so. And if you’re over 65, ask your doctor about the shingles immunization as well.

Is Sugar Addictive?
If you love it, it seems like it. It’s not the root of evil, but a little sugar makes you want more, and too much of a sweet tooth can get you in trouble. The best way to stop is cold turkey. You’ll feel the withdrawal for a few days, so you might warn those you love that you’ll be grouchy. But your taste buds and temperament will adjust, your need will subside and your waistline should shrink.

Don’t Forget the Other Shots
Hopefully you got your flu shot this year, but are you immunized against pneumonia and the shingles virus? If you are over 65 or have pneumonia risk factors and have never gotten a pneumonia vaccination, you’d be wise to do so. And if you’re 60+, ask your doctor about the shingles immunization as well.

Is Sugar Addictive?

Fido’s Role Is Recognized

Avoid the Cold Turkey Danger

Read the Labels to Save Your Heart

Ease the Temper, Save the Heart

Don’t Forget the Other Shots