

# NFP Realities

## Sharing the Good News

Summer 2006 Volume 11:2

Published by the Wisconsin Dioceses of La Crosse and Madison

### COORDINATORS MESSAGE

#### E-Communication

The transition to an electronic only newsletter distribution continues with this issue of NFP Realities. If you were one of the individuals who submitted your email address to us you are reading this on your computer. (Approximately 45% of individuals in our database have responded to our request for email addresses. Thank you!) If you haven't submitted an email address, then you are receiving this newsletter in the mail.

*We intend to reserve postal delivery of the newsletter to those who do not have email addresses through the remainder of 2006.* In order to make this change, WE NEED YOUR EMAIL ADDRESS. If you have not done so, please contact your local NFP Coordinator and have your email address added to the newsletter list. In the La Crosse Diocese send Alice and Jeff your information at [nfp@dioceseoflacrosse.com](mailto:nfp@dioceseoflacrosse.com). In the Madison diocese contact Gloria at [gbrockman@straphael.org](mailto:gbrockman@straphael.org) or use the phone numbers listed on the last page of the newsletter. This just takes a minute. Please do it now so you will not miss any future issues of NFP REALITIES. **Take the time, right now, to send us your email address. This will ensure that the next issue of NFP REALITIES will make it to you.**

### NFP INSIGHTS

#### NFP Instructor Training 2006

The NFP instructor training for the Northwest Family Services method will be held in Green Bay, WI on September 28-30. This training is open to any individuals or couples who are interested in teaching a sympto-thermal method of natural family planning.

For more information about this seminar and details of certification with Northwest Family Services, please contact your diocesan NFP coordinator. (For those in the Madison diocese, please contact Julie Krause at [jwkrause@execpc.com](mailto:jwkrause@execpc.com) and for those in the La Crosse diocese, please contact Alice Heinzen at [nfp@dioceseoflacrosse.com](mailto:nfp@dioceseoflacrosse.com). The Northwest Family Services NFP method is fully endorsed by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops – Diocesan Development Program for Natural Family Planning.

### FAMILY NEWS

#### Vaccine to Prevent Human Papilloma Virus

In June, the Center for Disease Control (CDC) voted to recommend routine administration of a vaccine designed to protect against Human Papilloma Virus (HPV) to all girls ages 11 or 12. HPV is a leading cause of cervical cancer that is typically transmitted through sexual activity. This vaccine would be given in three doses and is most effective when administered before a female becomes sexually active.

Immediately after the release of this recommendation from the CDC, the media began spinning opinions on making this a mandatory vaccine to which all families must agree. This in turn provoked numerous opinions from various groups – both secular and religious.

The National Catholic Bioethics Center (NCBC) in Philadelphia, PA is an organization that addresses ethical issues that impact life. While the group recognizes that "the most effective way to avoid contracting HPV is to abstain from sexual relations before marriage and to remain faithful within marriage" it does consider HPV vaccination a morally acceptable method of protecting against this disease. However, the Center asks "that civil authorities leave this decision to parents and not make such immunization mandatory".

The NCBC states that "the prevalence of HPV in the reproductive age population makes exposure to the virus possible, even in a monogamous marriage, due to the possibility of a spouse's exposure prior to marriage. Furthermore, we live in a society where non-consensual sex remains a threat to young women who deserve to be protected from the effects of exposure to HPV."

The arrival of this vaccine into our culture is telling. The ravages of infidelity and sexual activity outside of marriage have left a lasting mark on the health and well-being of each of us. We strongly encourage all parents to research the prevalence of HPV and the effectiveness of this vaccine so that they can make an intelligent and moral decision regarding the administration of this vaccine.

## **RESEARCH UPDATES**

### Church Attendance and Life Expectancy

In a recent edition of the Journal of the American Board of Family Medicine, a study of previous research conducted on the impact of religious practices on life expectancy showed that weekly attendance at religious services accounts for an additional 2 to 3 life-years compared with 3 to 5 life-years for physical exercise and 2.5 to 3.5 life-years for statin-type agents (cholesterol lowering drugs). The article states that "the real-world, practical significance of regular religious attendance is comparable to commonly recommended medical therapies, and rough estimates even suggest that religious attendance may be more cost-effective than statins."

J Am Board Fam Med 19(2) 2006

### Soy Consumption Impacts Cognitive Performance, Mood and Bone Health

Soybeans are packed full of various phytochemicals which are quickly gaining attention in the medical community. In recent years medical institutes have begun extensive research into the benefits of phytochemicals with regard to human health. Soybeans are the single richest source of a type of phytochemical termed isoflavones, also known as phytoestrogens.

Soy Isoflavones are known for acting similarly to natural estrogens as well as performing protective functions within our bodies. When estrogen levels are low, isoflavones and other phyto-estrogens bring the body to a state of equilibrium. This balanced state reduces the effect of estrogen on our bodies' cells and therefore reduces the risk of estrogen linked cancers. Isoflavones are not only known for their benefits with regard to estrogen, they have additionally been linked to prevention of various other types of cancers and diseases.

The April Issue of Fertility and Sterility reported a small study done in Italy showed that postmenopausal women who took a 60 mg tablet of isoflavones daily for 6 months showed improvement in both their cognitive functioning as well as

their mood. This study confirmed results from previous studies that showed the positive impact of isoflavones on learning and anxiety reduction.

Isoflavones also referred to as phytoestrogens have long been studied for their estrogen-like effects on mammals. The most common source of isoflavones is soy.

Fertil Steril 2006;85:972-978

A study reported in the European Journal of Nutrition outlined a dosage dependent link between soy isoflavones and their impact on bone density. Ninety women who had been menopausal for an average of 2.5 years were given various dosages of soy isoflavones to see if the amount ingested changed the results of bone density at two sites: the lumbar spine and femoral neck. The researchers found that after 6 months of treatment, those individuals taking 126mg of soy isoflavones daily had bone density improvement at both the lower spine and the top of the femur. Those women whose treatment included a dosage of 84mg did not report any improvement.

The study results suggest that there is a causal link between the dosage limit of soy isoflavones and their ability to improve bone health.

Eur J Nutr. Published online June 8, 2006

#### Cup of Jo May Prevent Cardiovascular Disease

Many people may not be aware that coffee is a source of antioxidants which prevent cardiovascular disease (CVD). Because CVD is a major health risk in postmenopausal women and generally in men, this study is of interest.

The American Journal of Clinical Nutrition covered an analysis done by the Iowa Women's Health Study of the impact of coffee on CVD risk. The investigation showed that there was a relationship between the amount of coffee consumed and mortality.

"Consumption of coffee, a major source of dietary antioxidants, may inhibit inflammation and thereby reduce the risk of cardiovascular and other inflammatory diseases in postmenopausal women," the authors write.

"Our results are consistent with a protective effect of intake of 1 - 3 (8 oz) cups of coffee per day on total death and death from cardiovascular and other inflammatory diseases in a group of postmenopausal women," the authors conclude. "If our observation is reproduced in other studies and proves to be causal, the implications are considerable, being that coffee is the second most widely consumed drink worldwide."

*Am J Clin Nutr.* 2006;83:1039-1046

#### **ASK THE EXPERTS**

Q: I am 45 years old and would like to know more about premenopause. What are the common symptoms that women experience? How quickly does this impact my fertility?

A: Premenopause (also known as perimenopause) covers the last 60 menstrual cycles that a woman would experience. There is no clear indicator of when this time begins. However, around the age of 40 to 45 many women will begin to see irregularities begin in their cycles. Common indicators that signal the "beginning of the end" are variations in cycle length (shorter or longer), altered menstrual and mucus patterns, shallower temperature shifts, and shorter post-adulatory phases.

These changes in fertility markers are caused by fluctuations in hormonal patterns. As the hormones ebb and tide, the external indicators that a woman typically sees begin to change. One common concern for women at this stage of

reproductive life is that unusual bleeding may be associated with cancer. While this is possible, unusual bleeds are not uncommon during premenopause.

The greatest concern that most women have is how these changes impact fertility. In general, premenopause is a state of lower overall fertility. According to a study published in Aging and Reproduction (1986), from 45-49, age alone is 97.5% effective for the avoidance of pregnancy – without any charting or deliberate abstinence. Additionally, once you reach the age of 50, the number of natural pregnancies reported is so small that they appear as single cases in demographic reports. That being said, *all women are encouraged to keep track of their external indicators of fertility until the complete cessation of cycles or until a professionally trained NFP instructor deems it unnecessary to continue charting.*

**Interested in NFP Instruction? Call the number listed in your area to access current class information.  
Home study options are available in all areas.**

Arcadia - 800-255-6226	Madison Area - 608-273-2236	Sparta - 800-255-6226
Chippewa Falls – 800-255-6226	Marshfield – 800-255-6226	Stanley - 800-255-6226
Eau Claire - 800-255-6226	Menomonie - 800-255-6226	Stevens Point - 800-255-6226
La Crosse - 800-255-6226	Milwaukee Area - 414-291-1750	Wausau - 800-255-6226

For general NFP information please call the number listed in your area. Or email: [nfp@dioceseoflacrosse.com](mailto:nfp@dioceseoflacrosse.com)

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