

June 2009



# The Mortar & Pestle

*Long Term Care Newsletter*



Shelly's Medication Services - 1504 Grundy's Lane - Unit #8 - Bristol, Pa. 19007

## Immunizations in the Elderly

Studies have shown that immunizations in adults aged 65 years and older reduce outpatient visits, hospitalizations, and deaths. Despite this, these immunizations continue to be underutilized. The National Foundation for Infectious Diseases reports that each year, 50,000 U.S. adults die from vaccine-preventable diseases or complications. Influenza kills approximately 36,000 people annually, with 90% of deaths occurring in those over the age of 65. Pneumonia accounts for 11,000 to 14,000 deaths each year. The National Center for Health Statistics reports that combined, these two are the eighth leading cause of death in the US.

There are other vaccinations that older adults should receive (see accompanying table). These include one dose of zoster after age 60 and a tetanus/diphtheria booster every 10 years. It is imperative to recognize the importance of immunizations in all populations because, without widespread coverage, preventable infections could take more lives and the diseases we have worked so hard to eradicate could return.

| Vaccines Available for Elderly Patients |                            |                       |  |
|---|----------------------------|-----------------------|--|
| Vaccine                                 | When to Receive            | Frequency             | Contraindications  |
| Pneumococcal                            | On/after 65th birthday*    | Max twice in lifetime | Prior severe immediate hypersensitivity reaction                           |
| Influenza                               | Beginning around September | Yearly                | Egg allergy; history of GBS  |
| Herpes zoster                           | On/after 60th birthday     | Once                  | Severe reaction to gelatin or neomycin; pregnancy; immunocompromised state |
| Tetanus and diphtheria                  | When needed                | Every 10 years        | Prior severe immediate hypersensitivity reaction                           |

### Laughter - the Best Prescription

While on a car trip, an elderly couple stopped at a roadside restaurant for lunch. After finishing their meal, the woman left her glasses on the table, but she didn't miss them until they were back on the highway.

By then, they had to travel quite a distance before they could find a place to turn around. The husband fussed and complained all the way back to the restaurant. He called his wife every bad name he could think of.

When they finally arrived at the restaurant, as the woman got out of the car to retrieve her glasses, the man yelled to her, "While you're in there, you might as well get my hat, too."

## GOING GREEN

It's not easy going green, and so our GO GREEN campaign continues this month. First response has been encouraging, but we need more help to make this effort a success. We can save energy and resources if you'll allow us to send you the *Mortar and Pestle* by eMail instead of by "snail-mail." Paper, ink and energy to make and deliver copies could all be saved.



just send an eMail to BarryP@SMSLTC.COM. Use Newsletter as the subject and put your name, job title and facility name as the message. Starting with the next month, your issues will be sent electronically. Kermit and I both thank you.

*Words of Wisdom continues with "Food for Thought" - Verse 2*

I've prayed many prayers when no answer came,  
Though I waited patient and long;  
But answers have come to enough of my prayers,  
To make me keep praying on.

... A author U nknown



### Prescription Descriptions

#### FDA Amends Ban on Unapproved Opioids

It was reported in *U.S. Pharmacist* that the FDA amended its action of warning manufacturers to stop production and distribution of certain unapproved prescription opioids. It will now allow, on an interim basis, the continued marketing and distribution of a high-concentration morphine sulfate oral solution, a product that is widely used to alleviate pain in terminally ill patients. Based on responses from concerned patients and health care professionals in the palliative care community, the agency determined that 20 mg/mL morphine sulfate oral solution was medically necessary and should remain on the market until an approved alternative becomes available. The FDA's decision only affects high-concentrate morphine sulfate solution and not the other unapproved prescription opioids mentioned in a March 30th warning letter sent to manufacturers. These include unapproved immediate-release tablets containing morphine sulfate, hydromorphone, and oxycodone that have not met the FDA's standards for safety, efficacy, and quality.

#### SIX THINGS YOU DO NOT WANT TO HEAR DURING SURGERY:

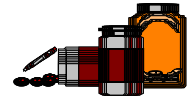
1. Better save that. We'll need it for the autopsy.
2. Someone call the janitor--we're going to need a mop.
3. I wish I hadn't forgotten my glasses.
4. Wait a minute. If this is his spleen, what's that?
5. Hand me that... uh... that uh... thingie.
6. Damn! Page 47 of the manual is missing.



Quick drug info on the Web

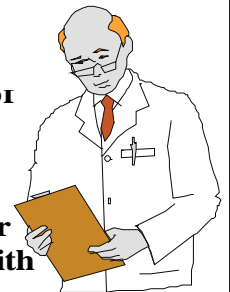
[WWW.SMSLTC.COM](http://WWW.SMSLTC.COM)

Choose the link to **Drug Information**



### Dr. Feelegoode's Corner Swimmer's Ear

Swimmer's ear or *otitis externa* is an infection or inflammation of the external ear and ear canal. Bacteria and fungi may exist on the surface of water-exposed skin without harmful effects, but if there is a break in the skin's normal barrier, they can easily slip inside, causing swimmer's ear. Many remedies may ease the pain of swimmer's ear. Mild cases can be treated with a few drops of white vinegar placed in both ears. Leave it for about 5 minutes. Then turn the ear down to drain the solution. Repeat with the other ear. It is advisable to continue 2x/day for 3 days.



When water clogs the ears, a few drops of apple cider vinegar, diluted in equal parts with water or alcohol, placed in the ear after showering or swimming will help prevent future infection. Or, use a hair dryer to evaporate the water in the ear. Set it to warm and sway it across the ear. The warm air will evaporate trapped water.

# SHELLY'S

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**Partnership In  
Long Term Care**

