

Steve Johnston New PA at BHHC



Steve Johnston, Physician Assistant

A little about me.

Ever since I was a child I have always had a strong desire to help others. As a Physician Assistant (PA) I am provided with almost daily opportunities to help a variety of individuals in a way that they may not otherwise be able to...and I wouldn't have it any other way!

In the spring of 2012 I start my clinical practice as a PA in a field of medicine that often addresses a very uncomfortable topic-POOP! Yes, I worked in a gastroenterology clinic and often times had to break the ice with my patients and tell them that it was okay to talk about their bowel movements because, hey, I get paid to talk about it! Now that we've got that out of the way, I want to share some tips and tricks about two common ailments that many suffer from but are often ignored due to their waxing and waning behaviors in the human gut-constipation and diarrhea.

CONSTIPATION

What is it?

The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) has defined constipation as passage of small amounts of hard, dry bowel movements, usually fewer than three times a week. Persons who are constipated may find it difficult and painful to have a bowel movement. Other symptoms of constipation include feeling bloated, uncomfortable, and sluggish.

What causes it?

Constipation can be caused by many things and often is associated with things such as lack of physical activity, low fiber diet, low water consumption, prescription and over the counter medications. Sometimes constipation can be caused by life threatening conditions such as colon cancer.

Who has it?

It is estimated that between 3 and 25 million (www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov) Americans suffer from constipation most days of the week. The most commonly affected individuals are children, women, and individuals over the age of 65. Also, a special group of affected individuals are pregnant women. However, men are still commonly affected by this ailment.

How is it treated?

There are several approaches to treating constipation, depending on the severity and duration of the patient's symptoms. Most treatments involve increasing dietary fiber in the form of whole grains, fruits, and vegetables. Also, increasing water intake and physical activity can be extremely beneficial. If constipation remains an issue after initiating a high fiber diet, then over the counter (OTC) stool softeners, laxative, or psyllium fiber can be used.

Why should I treat it?

Not treating constipation can lead to minor problems such as bloating, painful bowel movements, hemorrhoids, etc. However, the minor problems can lead to major problems and complications such as severe abdominal pain, bowel obstruction, toxic megacolon, etc.

DIARRHEA

What is it?

Diarrhea is defined as an abnormal looseness of stool, changes in stool frequency, consistency, urgency, and continence. Diarrhea can be separated into two separate subcategories: Acute diarrhea and chronic diarrhea. According to the American College of Gastroenterology acute diarrhea is defined as diarrhea that lasts less than 2 weeks. Chronic diarrhea is defined as diarrhea lasting longer than 2 weeks.

What causes it?

Acute diarrhea is usually caused by a virus and is called viral gastroenteritis. Antibiotics and medications containing magnesium are also common culprits. Artificial sweeteners that are poorly absorbable in the gut, if eaten in high quantities can cause acute diarrhea. They are found in diabetic foods, gums, mints, coffee, tea, or diet sodas.

Most episodes of acute diarrhea resolve quickly and without the need for antibiotics. However, some episodes of acute diarrhea may be related to bacterial infections and may need antibiotic therapy. Causes of acute bacterial diarrhea can be from organisms such as Campylobacter, Shigella, or Salmonella. Foreign travel or eating contaminated fruit or ground beef can also lead to exposure to acute diarrhea from bacteria.

Chronic diarrhea as mentioned above, is diarrhea lasting longer than 2 weeks. A common, and potentially life threatening type of bacterial diarrhea is called Clostridium difficile or C.diff. Common causes of C.diff are recent or recurrent antibiotic treatments, usually for other medical conditions or illnesses, and exposure to healthcare settings such as nursing homes or hospitals. It is spread through touching unclean surfaces (i.e. bathrooms, etc) dirty hands, and exposure from an individual with an active C. diff infection. Individuals over the age of 65 are at greatest risk of death from C. diff.

Chronic bloody diarrhea is most likely due to an Inflammatory Bowel Disease (IBD), which includes Ulcerative Colitis and Crohn's disease. Other less common causes include gut ischemia, radiation therapy, colon cancer, or polyps. Non-bloody chronic diarrhea can be due to things such as medications, celiac disease, or Irritable Bowel Syndrome (IBS).

Who has it?

Those who are susceptible to acute diarrhea from either a bacteria or virus are often people with a weakened immune system, such as infants, chronically ill individuals with HIV, and those over the age of 65. Individuals with chronic diarrhea may be at higher risk due to exposure from job hazards in the healthcare field, or if they have a family history of a particular condition associated with diarrhea.

How is it treated?

Acute viral gastroenteritis is treated with hydration, over the counter anti-diarrheals, and as mentioned, a little bit of time. Acute or chronic bacterial diarrhea typically needs antibiotics and a close follow-up with a healthcare provider. Chronic conditions such as IBD, Celiac Disease, and IBS are usually referred to the care of a Gastroenterologist. Colon cancer and polyps should also be evaluated by a gastroenterologist with a colonoscopy.

Why should I treat it?

Some of the conditions noted above can be life threatening and therefore require evaluation from a healthcare provider.

As previously mentioned, constipation and diarrhea can be easily treated with something as simple as a diet adjustment or over-the-counter remedies; however, sometimes many individuals need some added guidance in treating their condition and would benefit from evaluation from their healthcare provider.



New Employees at BHHC: (L-R) Sena Yesslith, Health Information Clerk; Francena Little, LPN; Vicki Wilson, Health information Management Coder; Jessica Buchanan, Patient Benefits Coordinator and Mae Jordan, Reception Clerk. (SFNews photo)

Dangers of "Fad Diets" *By Elizabeth Burgess MS, RD/LD*



Elizabeth Burgess MS RD/LD

With summer just around the corner, many of us are looking to get slim. We may turn to the internet, television, or books that offer a quick fix. Before you jump in to a weight loss diet, consider what you are doing to your body.

Diets that recommend a strict calorie restriction should be discussed with a dietitian to ensure your body continues to receive proper nutrition. Cutting back extremely on calories can leave your body feeling weak instead of healthy and will actually lower your metabolism and lead to weight gain.

Focusing on one nutrient like carbohydrates or protein can also be dangerous. Our body needs protein, fat, and carbohydrates to power our everyday activities like reading, talking, and walking. When we cut out one nutrient we are depriving our bodies of

"fuel." Naturally our body will try and make up for this lack of nutrient.

In the case of carbohydrates, not eating these can lead to the formation of ketones causing ketosis. Symptoms include headaches, mental fatigue, nausea, and weakness. Just as cutting out a nutrient can be harmful, eating too much of one nutrient has the same effect.

For instance, many people believe very high protein diets are the key to weight loss. Their meals consist solely of meat, dairy, or beans. Depending on the type of meat and dairy you are eating, your risk of cardiovascular disease may increase. Your kidneys will also be forced to work harder to get rid of the waste produced from metabolizing protein. Over time this can lead to kidney damage or even failure.

Many people choose to avoid dieting altogether and go for weight loss supplements that are available over the counter. Make sure you discuss starting any weight loss supplement with your doctor. Many products available today are not FDA approved and can have more negative side effects than positives. As an example, products that claim to block fat metabolism can cause severe diarrhea or diverticulitis when eaten with high caloric and fat meals.

It is important to remember that there is no "quick fix" for weight loss. Lifetime weight management requires attention to diet and a commitment to staying active.

April Cooking Class

Featuring: Stuffed Bell Peppers



Come learn how to make this easy, colorful dish that is sure to become a dinner time favorite!

Monday, April 27th at 12:00pm
Tuesday, April 28th at 11:00am

Location: Sac and Fox Learning Center

SAC & FOX NATION		April 2015				
Black Hawk Health Center Activities						
Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday		
		1 Exercise Room open 7AM-6PM 11:15 Circuit Training 12:15 Circuit Training 5 PM Lower Body Focus Training Class	2 Exercise Room open 8AM-6PM 11:15 Circuit Training 12:15 Circuit Training 5 PM Upper Body Focus	3 Exercise Room open 7AM-4:30PM 11:15 Circuit Training 12:15 Circuit Training		
6 Exercise Room open 7AM-6PM 11:15 Circuit Training 12:15 Circuit Training 5 PM Cardio/core training	7 Exercise Room open 8-4:30 Anthony in Shawnee	8 Exercise Room open 7AM-6PM 11:15 Circuit Training 12:15 Circuit Training 5 PM Lower Body Focus Training Class	9 Exercise Room open 8AM-6PM 11:15 Circuit Training 12:15 Circuit Training 5 PM Upper Body Focus	10 Exercise Room open 7AM-4:30PM 11:15 Circuit Training 12:15 Circuit Training		
13 Exercise Room open 7AM-6PM 11:15 Circuit Training 12:15 Circuit Training 5 PM Cardio/core training	14 Exercise Room open 8-4:30 Anthony in Shawnee	15 Exercise Room open 7AM-6PM 11:15 Circuit Training 12:15 Circuit Training 5 PM Lower Body Focus Training Class	16 Exercise Room open 8AM-12PM, 4:30-6PM Closed 12-4:30 for In service training 5 PM Upper Body Focus	17 Exercise Room open 7AM-4:30PM 11:15 Circuit Training 12:15 Circuit Training		
20 Exercise Room open 7AM-4:30PM	21 Exercise Room open 8-4:30 Anthony in Shawnee	22 Exercise Room open 7AM-6PM 11:15 Circuit Training 12:15 Circuit Training 5 PM Lower Body Focus Training Class	23 Exercise Room open 8AM-4:30PM 11:15 Circuit Training 12:15 Circuit Training 5 PM Upper Body Focus	24 Exercise Room open 7AM-4:30PM 11:15 Circuit Training 12:15 Circuit Training		
27 Cooking Class 12:00 PM Exercise Room open 7AM-6PM 11:15 Circuit Training 12:15 Circuit Training 5 PM Cardio/core training	28 Exercise Room open 8-4:30 Anthony in Shawnee Elizabeth Cooking Class 11:00 AM	29 Exercise Room open 7AM-6PM 11:15 Circuit Training 12:15 Circuit Training 5 PM Lower Body Focus Training Class	30 Exercise Room open 8AM-4:30PM 11:15 Circuit Training 12:15 Circuit Training 5 PM Upper Body Focus			

ATTENTION: SAC and FOX TRIBAL MEMBERS

POWWOW TIME IS APPROACHING. If you plan on attending any of the events, and an unforeseen medical need should arise, Black Hawk Health Center is available for your use. The Black Hawk Health Center is located east of the tribal complex/headquarters, across the highway. If you do not have a medical record established, we will need the following documents to establish a medical record: CDIB (Certified Degree of Indian Blood); Photo ID (preferably a Driver's License); and a Social Security Card. If you have any Insurance coverage (Insurance cards); Medicare card; and Medicaid or Sooner Care information, we would appreciate this information; but it is not needed to establish a medical record. The Health Fair will be on Thursday, July 9, 2015 – 10:00 am – 2:00 pm