



November 2008 Issue #06

flu update

NEW RECOMMENDATIONS

cervical cancer

THE VACCINE EXPLAINED

WITH A VIEW TO IMPROVING OUR SERVICES WE WILL BE INTRODUCING A NEW TELEPHONE NUMBER FOR ARRANGING APPOINTMENTS AT OUR MAIN CITY BISHOPSGATE OFFICE.

From Thursday 13th November please telephone **0845 4370691**.

sunlight - risks and benefits

A POOR DIET AND TOO MUCH SUNLIGHT MAY PLACE THE EYES AT RISK, BRITISH RESEARCHERS WARNED RECENTLY.

The Europe-wide research showed that vitamins C and E and two carotenoids, lutein and zeaxanthin, help to protect the eyes against the effects of sunlight.

The study found that plenty of sunlight and few vitamins in the diet increased the risk of developing age-related macular degeneration by four times.

It follows that simply wearing sunglasses and a wide-brimmed hat might help protect against eye disease. However this is not necessarily a reason to avoid the sun altogether, the benefits of sunlight are well documented, in particular its role in vitamin D synthesis. Equally this is not a reason to take vitamin supplements; it is perfectly possible to achieve the recommended dietary reference intakes for these essential antioxidants by following a balanced diet.

Arch Ophthalmol. 2008; 126[10]:1396-1403



PARKINSON'S DISEASE LINKED TO LOW VITAMIN D?

People with Parkinson's disease are more likely to have insufficient levels of vitamin D than healthy people of the same age.

However further studies are necessary to establish whether this is a cause or an effect as the illness may lead to a fall in activity levels with lower sun exposure (the body uses ultraviolet radiation to produce vitamin D).

Archives of Neurology 2008;65:1,348-52

red wine may benefit smokers

MODERATE RED WINE CONSUMPTION COULD HELP PROTECT MALE SMOKERS AGAINST LUNG CANCER, RESEARCHERS REPORTED LAST MONTH.

US researchers found a 60 per cent reduced lung cancer risk in smokers who drank one to two glasses of red wine per day. Research scientist Chun Chao, from California's Kaiser Permanente Department of Research and Evaluation said an antioxidant component in red wine may be protective of lung cancer.

"There is a compound called resveratrol that is very rich in red wine because it is derived from the grape skin," he said. "This compound has shown significant health benefits in preclinical studies."

Researchers analysed data collected through the California Men's Health Study, which linked clinical data with self-reported data from 84,170 men aged 45 to 69 years.

No clear associations with lung cancer were noted for consumption of white wine, beer or spirits, according to the report in the journal Cancer, Epidemiology, Biomarkers and Prevention.

These findings should not be construed to recommend heavy alcohol consumption.



flu update

A US study has found that vaccinating mothers could offer protection to newborn babies.

They found a 63% reduction in influenza illness among infants born to women who were vaccinated while pregnant. Consequently the Department of Health is considering extending the influenza vaccine programme to include pregnant women next year.

The number of fever-linked respiratory illnesses fell by 29% in infants of vaccinated mothers and by 36% in the mothers themselves. The vaccine can be given after the first trimester and will give the infants a degree of immunity against flu at a time when they are vulnerable, below the age of six months.

The flu vaccine is safe for use in pregnancy.

ROODLANE MEDICAL IS STILL RUNNING FLU VACCINATION CLINICS.
FOR MORE INFORMATION OR TO MAKE A BOOKING PLEASE CONTACT
flu@roodlane.co.uk

Double doses of new vaccine may be needed if humans are hit by a bird flu epidemic.

A study in Leicester, UK, has found that a second dose of vaccine has a dramatic impact on immunity and protection against flu. The study involved volunteers who received their first shot of a new H5 vaccine seven years ago. Bird flu, or H5N1, is a strain of H5 flu.

The study found that a booster shot of the vaccine gave 80 % of volunteers protection against all strains of H5 influenza. But a single shot given to new volunteers was ineffective until they were given a second vaccination. The vaccine took effect after six weeks.

The findings were reported last month in the New England Journal of Medicine. This suggests that a flu epidemic could be prevented - but would place pressure on world health resources as big stockpiles of vaccine would be needed.

If a pandemic occurred it would take some time to produce vaccine and then administer two doses to protect people and if the pandemic spreads rapidly this could be challenging to deliver.

New England Journal of Medicine (October 9 2008)

the cervical cancer vaccine

Cervical cancer (cancer of the neck of the womb) is the second most common cancer in women under 35.

Every year about 3000 women are diagnosed with cervical cancer in the UK and about 24,000 have a severely abnormal smear.

30 years ago it was discovered that cervical cancer is caused by HPV (human papilloma virus) infection. Up to 80% of sexually active woman will become infected with HPV in their lifetime. Of the over 100 different types of HPV, types 16 and 18 are high risk and cause about 70% of cervical cancers. Most of the remaining 30% of cervical cancers are associated with other high risk HPV types. HPV types 6 and 11 are low risk and cause genital warts but are less likely to cause cervical cancer.

15 years ago work started on vaccine development against HPV to prevent cervical cancer and a couple of years ago two vaccines were approved, Cervarix® and Gardasil®.

HPV vaccination is recommended in 18 out of the 19 European countries. Gardasil is funded, or soon to be funded, in 15 of these. It is also recommended and funded in the USA, Australia, New Zealand and Canada.

From September 2008, in the UK, girls aged 12 to 13 yrs will be offered Cervarix. There will also be a 2 year 'catch up' programme starting in autumn 2009, to vaccinate girls under the age of 18. Cervarix is currently licensed for females aged 10 - 25 and it protects against HPV types 16 and 18 i.e. high risk.

Gardasil, besides protecting against cervical cancer, also protects against genital warts and is currently licensed for females aged 9 - 26, and males aged 9 - 16. It protects against types 6, 11, 16 & 18 i.e. both low and high risk.

Research trials have shown that HPV vaccination will prevent at least 7 out of 10 cancers of the cervix. So far the trials have followed up people for 6 years so we know that it lasts at least



Electron microscope images of HPV

this long. More research is needed to find out how long it lasts and if women need a booster dose at some time.

It is possible to have the HPV vaccination as an adult privately. As an adult, if you are sexually active and have not had a recent smear, a routine smear and HPV test are advised to screen for active high risk HPV and other cervical abnormalities. It is also possible to test for low risk HPV. If all is well, 3 doses of vaccine are needed over 6 months.

The HPV vaccines don't prevent infection with all types of HPV and will not prevent cervical cancer in women already infected with HPV. This needs to be treated by a gynaecologist. It takes about 10 to 20 years after HPV infection for a cervical cancer to develop.

So it is very important to note that women will still need cervical cancer screening (smear tests) for many years to come.

A UK trial is planned to look at a vaccine to treat women already infected with HPV.

Prices at Roodlane:

Gardasil HPV Vaccine - £110 per vaccination
Thin prep cervical smear - £39
HPV testing - £71

Above prices exclude consultation fees.

CITY OF LONDON
164 Bishopsgate,
London, EC2M 4LZ
T: 020 7377 4646

CANARY WHARF
25 Cabot Square,
London, E14 4QW
T: 020 7715 7450

TOWER BRIDGE
2B More London Riverside,
London, SE1 2AP
T: 020 7940 1390

GLASGOW
163 West George Street,
Glasgow, G2 2JJ
T: 01412 229 950