

To Your
GOOD HEALTH

Keith Roach,
M.D.



Physicians Must
Use Best Practices
In COVID Treatment

DEAR DR. ROACH: Is there a difference between COVID-19 treatment in academia vs. the real world? I had a telemedicine appointment the other day to see my internist, and he said to call right away if I developed symptoms consistent with COVID. He would order tests for me and start me right away on hydroxychloroquine, doxycycline and zinc. I told him I was surprised that he would prescribe these, since everything I've read recently supports no benefit from hydroxychloroquine. Also, I thought doxycycline was not beneficial for viral infections. He said he uses it, and it works. Your thoughts, please. — B.R.

ANSWER: All physicians are obligated to stay abreast of current standards of care for the practice of medicine. Unfortunately, physicians both in academia and in private practices do not always stay as current as they should. With COVID-19, it can be hard to keep abreast of all the changes and the sometimes-conflicting data that comes from clinical trials and expert recommendations. Although it might be easier for academic physicians to do so, my observation is that some private practice docs are really up-to-date while a few academic docs are behind on the latest updates.

Hydroxychloroquine appeared to show benefit in some early, uncontrolled studies, but the vast majority of the evidence, including the most reliable evidence from controlled trials, has shown no benefit and significant potential for harm for hydroxychloroquine, at least at the time of this writing.

Doxycycline is an antibacterial agent, and is used in people with COVID-19 and concurrent bacterial infections. It has been studied in early trials, as in addition to its antibacterial properties, it is anti-inflammatory as well and may have some antiviral effects. It may have a role in treatment, but it is not recommended for use until there are clear results from clinical trials, which at the time of this writing are lacking.

Similarly, there are theoretical reasons why zinc might be effective, and people with zinc deficiency have suppression of the immune system. However, there are no data showing benefit of zinc treatment in people with COVID-19, although zinc has shown modest benefit in some other viral illnesses.

Hydroxychloroquine has clear potential for harm, and some studies have shown worse outcomes in people with COVID-19 taking it. Zinc and doxycycline are both safe but unproven. Some physicians choose to use unproven but hopeful treatments when there is a low likelihood of harm, as is the case with zinc. Others prefer to have data showing that treatments are both effective and safe before using them. At the beginning of the pandemic, I saw many doctors, frustrated at the lack of treatment options, choose to try unproven medications out of a feeling they need to be doing something. Fortunately, now there are at least two treatments, remdesivir and dexamethasone, that have been proven to be helpful in people with moderate to severe COVID-19 infection.

I would not follow the recommendation of a physician who recommends hydroxychloroquine, whether they come from academia or private practice. Wishful thinking that it helps can lead to bias, especially since most people with COVID-19 will do well. We need to practice what the best scientific evidence says, not what our gut tells us. A single physician's observation that it seems to work is inadequate in the face of evidence saying the contrary.

Readers may email questions to ToYourGoodHealth@med.cornell.edu or send mail to 628 Virginia Dr., Orlando, FL 32803.



Photo Provided
Providing information to the public during an outreach event at the Wetzel County Center for Children and Family Resource Network in New Martinsville Oct. 30 are, from left, Michelle Rohde of Youth Services System, Dawn Lavoie of Youth Services System and Martha Polinsky of BreakThru at WVU Reynolds Memorial Hospital.

YSS, Local Agencies Promote Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services in Wetzel County

NEW MARTINSVILLE — Youth Services System Inc.'s Wetzel County office staff members recently joined representatives of other local agencies to draw attention to mental health and substance abuse services they provide for Wetzel County youth and families.

On Oct. 30, the agencies gathered and distributed information outside the Wetzel County Center for Children and Family Resource Network, 132 Main St., New Martinsville.

YSS representatives, the Family Resource Network coordinator, and a representative of BreakThru, a medical withdrawal management service at WVU Reynolds Memorial Hospital in Glen Dale, attended the outreach event.

"Working together, these organizations are interested in continuing to grow the resource and support network for prevention and recovery for youth of Wetzel County and link with additional service providers to create a strong resource network for Wetzel County families moving forward," said Dawn Lavoie of Youth Services System Inc. (YSS)

"My role as the YSS Youth Peer Recovery and Engagement Support Specialist is to provide one-on-one outpatient services to clients aged 12 to 24 years old who may be experiencing mental health and/or substance use

concerns themselves or have a family member struggling with similar issues," Lavoie added.

These services include, but are not limited to, addressing mental health issues, substance abuse and childhood trauma.

"Through my personal and professional experiences, and my connections with Youth Services System Inc., I have the resources to coach youth through these obstacles. I can assist with life skills, housing, employment services, supportive services and connection to other resources or more intensive treatment if needed," she said.

Lavoie's office is located at 425 S. Fourth Ave. in Paden City. The office serves as a satellite office of our Regional Youth Services Center and one of six centers coordinating mental health and substance abuse services and supports for youth ages 12 to 24.

For information, call Lavoie at 304-217-3871 or 304-559-5547.

Michelle Rohde is the new Wetzel County project coordinator for YSS Prevention Services, also located at the YSS Regional Youth Service Center in Paden City. Her focus is on substance use prevention services for children ages 9-20. Rohde is a long-term resident of the area and said she looks forward to working in collaboration with community leadership and

members to assist Wetzel County in substance use prevention including vaping, alcohol use and substances. For information, call 304-217-3871.

Elizabeth Steckman is the Wetzel County Family Resource Network (FRN) coordinator. FRNs are located in each county. According to the Wetzel County Center for Children website, the network provides "indirect services for communities with organizing, mobilizing and coordinating programs and initiatives. ... These networks also specifically aid organizations and groups helping to provide opportunities for families that wouldn't otherwise have access." For information, call 304-455-2468.

Martha Polinsky is the care coordinator at BreakThru Medical Withdrawal Management. BreakThru offers a stabilization of withdrawal symptoms from alcohol, opiates, benzodiazepines or combined substances. The staff works to ease discomfort thereby decreasing chances of relapse during acute withdrawal. BreakThru provides an individualized discharge plan and follow-up for one year. As COVID continues to be a concern, BreakThru provides tests and other medical clearances when necessary for patients going to residential treatment. For information, call 304-221-4528.

Five Flu Season Tips to Keep Your Household Healthy

(StatePoint) Flu season is here, and amid the COVID-19 pandemic, it's even more important than usual to take steps to avoid getting sick. Here are five top tips to help your household stay healthy:

1. Wash hands regularly: Make sure every member of the household washes their hands regularly with soap and water for at least 20 seconds each time. This is especially important to do after getting home, before preparing food and after using the bathroom. Even with regular hand-washing, it's still important to avoid touching your mouth, nose and eyes.

2. Guard against germs: Cold and flu viruses can survive on household surfaces long enough for germs to spread. However, cleaning surfaces with an effective disinfectant can help put a stop to germ transfer. The good news is that you don't need harsh chemicals.

Inspired by nature, Arm & Hammer Essentials Disinfecting Wipes, a citrus-based disinfectant, can be used around kids and pets and cleans without harsh chemicals. Safe for use on a range of surfaces, including stainless steel, sealed granite, hardwood, tubs, shower walls, classrooms and gym surfaces, use these wipes to disinfect kitchens, bathrooms, pet areas, non-porous surfaces



Photo Provided
As COVID-19 continues to place substantial demands on hospitals and healthcare resources, staying healthy and protected against the flu is especially vital. Take steps to boost your immunity and stop the spread of germs.

car interiors and other frequently-touched areas of your home.

In the never-ending battle against germs, this is an invaluable tool to have on hand, as the wipes kill 99.9% of viruses (including cold and flu viruses and human coronavirus), 99.9% of bacteria, MRSA, streptococcus, staphylococcus, E. coli, salmonella and klebsiella pneumoniae. To learn more, visit armandhammercleans.com.

3. Load up on veggies: A nutritious diet can help keep you vital during flu season. Pack a range of immunity-boosting vitamins, minerals and antioxidants into just one meal with a hearty stew of potatoes,

carrots, green leafy vegetables, broccoli, beans and lentils. To eliminate pesticides, wax and soil from produce, include a vegetable wash in your meal prep routine, which can be more effective than water alone.

4. Supplement your diet: Consider incorporating a dietary supplement into your family's daily routine that contains vitamin C, zinc and other immunity-boosters.

5. Practice healthy habits: Getting regular exercise, staying hydrated and getting plenty of shut-eye are all proven ways to protect your health. Be sure to practice these healthy habits.



DEAR
ABBY

Abigail
Van Buren

Family Ties Break
Down After Mom
Moves Away

DEAR ABBY: Since I moved eight years ago, my son, "Jim," has visited me only once, and that's because I gave his son my car. I rarely hear from him, and when I have visited, we barely talk. We have totally different ideas on life, and it has caused a rift in our relationship.

When I have visited Jim and his wife, they just sit, watch movies and eat takeout food unless I take them out and pay for the meal. Over the years, I have given my son money and housed him when he went through a terrible divorce. His children are grown now, and I don't hear from them either.

He remarried a woman he met on the internet who has different ideas on things than my family and the way I was brought up. It hurts me very much. What's your opinion on what to do about this situation? I'm at a loss. — LET DOWN IN IDAHO

DEAR LET DOWN: It's sad, but the breakdown in your relationship with Jim started a long time ago. It should have been addressed then.

It's not uncommon for adults to have ideas that differ from their parents', but it shouldn't cause a rift. If your son and his wife are hiding behind their television set rather than conversing, the situation may be as uncomfortable for them as it is for you.

If the dynamics in your relationship are going to improve, you will have to convince them to discuss where things went off track, agree to disagree on certain topics and talk about other things when you see them. From what you have written, it appears you are doing all the work in the relationship, and that isn't fair to you.

DEAR ABBY: I'm a gay male who has fallen in love with my best friend, who is straight. After months of feeling dishonest in our friendship, I told him how I felt. At first he seemed OK with it. He told me he couldn't reciprocate those feelings, but he still loved me as his friend and asked me not to make it "weird."

A month later, he said if I can't find a way to fall out of love with him, we could no longer be friends. I didn't change anything about my relationship with him. I maintained the status quo, and he seemed good with it. I don't know what to do.

I am extremely sad because I don't want to lose my best friend. We had a great relationship, which is why I thought he would appreciate my honesty and we could work through the issue. What's your advice? — TURNED DOWN IN TENNESSEE

DEAR TURNED DOWN: This person may be wonderful, but he could not handle the responsibility of a close personal relationship with someone who was in love with him if it wasn't reciprocal. My advice is to accept it and move on. You really have no alternative because the decision has already been made for you. You have my sympathy, but you WILL heal from this. I promise.

DEAR ABBY: All my boyfriend wants to do is clean the house and make love to me. He also cooks for me, massages me, worships my body, insists that I take naps and makes me laugh nonstop. What's wrong with him? — PONDERING IN THE SUNSHINE STATE

DEAR PONDERING: What's wrong with YOU? This must be a new relationship. Give it time, and I am sure you will uncover something.

Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Contact Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.