



Gym  
tips/5

Contact  
lenses/7

YUHS  
calendar/8

# yale health care

NEWS FROM THE YALE HEALTH PLAN

VOL. VII NO. 6 NOVEMBER–DECEMBER 2004

## *Beyond Brownies: Nuts Are Part of a Healthy Diet*

LINDA BELL, MS, RD, CD/N

YHP Nutritionist

Nuts are enjoying a resurgence in popularity since numerous research studies have been showcasing their health benefits. An impressive number of studies have found that people who regularly eat nuts have half the risk of heart disease compared to those who rarely or never eat them. Regular consumption of nuts has also been linked to a lower risk of Type 2 diabetes. In 2003, the FDA approved a qualified health claim that can be put on package labels of nuts and peanuts (which are not technically nuts, but legumes, and have been shown to offer similar health benefits): “Scientific evidence suggests but does not prove that eating 1.5 ounces per day of most nuts, as part of a diet low in saturated fat and cholesterol, may reduce the risk of heart disease.”

Nuts provide many nutrients that contribute to their health-enhancing properties. They are rich in monounsaturated and polyunsaturated fats, which can lower blood cholesterol, especially if substituted for foods high in saturated fat, such as meat or cheese.

*continued on page 4*

## Minding Manners Makes the World Go 'Round

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Mental Hygiene

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Health Promotion and Education

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Editor

“Didn’t your mother teach you any manners?” Putting aside for the moment the question of why the female parent is often considered solely responsible for civilizing offspring, we all recognize the intent of that phrase.

Perhaps, in an era when we are so often suspicious of those unfamiliar to us, dropping our manners can be rationalized as a means of protecting ourselves—a collective permission to ignore thy neighbors and keep them at a distance by not smiling, withholding pleasantries, and not making eye contact.

However, there are definite advantages to “minding your manners,” which the *New Oxford American Dictionary* defines as “polite or well-bred social behavior.” Even those who seemingly have no manners may recognize their importance in particular situations—such as in job interviews.



While we do often think of manners in terms of a formal “etiquette,” when we talk about good manners we really mean consideration of others, not necessarily specific social forms. Situations and cultural mores may dictate those specific social forms; however, courtesy and consideration are universal.

We often hear, “Who has time for” those basic rules of appropriate social behavior—writing thank you notes (real ones!); responding to invitations so the host knows how many people to expect; waiting in line patiently; recognizing

*continued on page 2*

someone else's right of way; letting others into traffic (at least once in a while); extending offers of help. In fact, in some circles, not caring what others think seems to have become a social virtue. While "I'll do as I please" may be fine if we are making a conscious choice to stand up for something we believe in, disguising that attitude as idealistic defiance of basic social norms undercuts the doctrine of "do unto others as you would have them do unto you"—an essential premise of civilization.

Think about what happens—or how you feel—when people engage in behaviors such as:

- Making assumptions about others and then operating as if the assumptions are facts.
- Assuming that everyone thinks like we do—celebrates the same holidays, practices the same religion, and votes the same way.
- Assuming that everyone is comfortable with vulgar language.
- Conflating informality with friendliness.
- Assuming that if you are comfortable talking about "it" others should be comfortable hearing "it"—whatever "it" is.
- Arguing that what you are doing is appropriate somewhere and therefore could not be inappropriate anywhere.
- Not responding to invitations or not thanking others for gifts or favors.
- Not returning borrowed items.
- Expecting others to guess what you want or think and then becoming angry when they don't or can't.

Good manners can do a lot for us. Not only do they make the world a little brighter—they have some measurable health benefits. Treating those around you with hostility can increase stress levels and contribute to a decline in pleasure and sense of safety. This attitude raises your adrenaline and keeps you on alert for the possible need to defend yourself.

## Important telephone numbers

Urgent Care	432-0123
<i>Open 24 hrs/day, seven days per week</i>	
Toll Free	1-877-YHP-CARE
Information	432-0246
Pharmacy	432-0033
<i>Hours of operation</i>	
Monday, Friday	8:00 AM–6:30 PM
Tuesday, Wednesday	8:00 AM–6:30 PM
Thursday	8:30 AM–6:30 PM
Saturday	8:30 AM–3:30 PM
Patient Representative	432-0109
Medicare/Retiree Coordinator	432-8134
Outpatient Referrals	432-7397
Claims	432-0250
Inpatient Care Facility	432-0001

# in touch



This heightened arousal is physiological as well as psychological and is one of the main culprits in stress-related symptoms. Having to deal with high levels of adrenaline deprives the immune system of the resources it needs to fight off illness.

Also, people who interact with their environment in an antagonistic manner come to believe the world is a hostile and aggressive place, since a common human response is to reflect back what we're given. The reverse is also true: You've probably noticed that if you smile at someone they are likely to smile back. In fact—just to stay with this example—smiling can reduce stress because it softens your face and usually causes others to respond to you in a calmer manner.

Apologizing is also a tool for stress reduction. If someone bumps you in the street, you may feel outraged, insulted and insignificant. But if the other person apologizes, the angry feelings abate. When the situation is reversed and you are the one apologizing for your actions, you are receiving evidence that you are a considerate person, boosting your self esteem. Boosting self esteem is another important stress reliever.

We'll end this article with some suggestions for lighthearted but useful—and courteous—responses to problematic social situations. Remember—the point of good manners is to support an environment in which all of us can be comfortable and enjoy ourselves.

- Feeling embarrassed when others use vulgarities: "If you keep talking that way I'm going to pick it up and I'll be in deep trouble with my children. They're very straight laced!"
- When a couple in your crowd makes embarrassing innuendoes about their behavior—act innocent: "Is there some reason you're telling me this?"
- When someone asks why you're not married: "Why? Are you proposing?"
- When someone asks why you don't have children: "I didn't need the tax deduction."
- When someone asks something too personal: "I'm flattered by your interest but I'm baffled about why you're so curious."
- To any question you don't want to answer: "I don't remember!"
- When someone asks how much money you make: "As much as possible."
- When someone asks how old you are: "My mother keeps asking the same question!"



# from the desk of

PAUL GENECCIN, MD

DIRECTOR, YALE UNIVERSITY HEALTH SERVICES

*YUHS is a fitting venue for piloting this initiative. Since joining YUHS as an internist in 1989, I have been reminded daily that health care happens because of the...efforts of a multi-faceted team.*

I am proud that Yale University Health Services has been selected to be a pilot site for the highly publicized *Best Practices Initiative at Yale*—a project that is championed by Vice President for Finance and Administration, John Pepper, and the Presidents of Local 34 and 35, Laura Smith and Bobby Proto. This initiative—which focuses on developing ongoing institutional support for work environments that value quality, productivity, and employee satisfaction—has the potential to be one of Yale’s proudest administrative accomplishments.

YUHS is a fitting venue for piloting this initiative. Since joining YUHS as an internist in 1989, I have been reminded daily that health care happens because of the collaborative efforts of a multi-faceted team. We have a large staff of clinicians, managers and professionals and more than one hundred staff members in Local 34 who serve in diverse positions. Thinking of health care as a system that involves primarily the patient and clinicians is a vast oversimplification.

For example, there can be no health care without the work of those who take care of the facility and tend the parking lot. Our medical receptionists, medical assistants and workers in Medical Records are essential to our providing care. The information system for appointment booking requires constant maintenance by the Information Technology staff.

Staff in Claims must handle referrals, while many other individuals who work behind the scenes are responsible for matters pertaining to budgeting, contracting for clinical services and handling a host of individual situations that arise for members. Medical transcriptionists, Member Services personnel and staff members devoted to quality improvement and care coordination are other indispensable contributors to the care process. The list could go on for pages.

Looking at the care process for our members as a team effort makes clear that we cannot do our best unless all of us pursue the same goals—outstanding care and service. As a service organization, YUHS has room to grow in these areas.

Other units of the University are also focusing attention on improving service and team work in their own workplaces. For those of us at YUHS, the stakes seem particularly high because we are charged with the complex and essential responsibility of providing health care.

The Best Practices Committee will consist of ten YUHS staff members, five from management and five from Local 34. We are committed to working together to ensure that all members of the YUHS staff—clinical, administrative, technical, maintenance—pull together to smooth the way for our members. I have no doubt that our Best Practices Committee will lead the way to breakthroughs in care and service for our members in every area of YUHS. As always, we invite your feedback and suggestions.

---

Please make note of the correct address for submitting claims by postal mail. The envelope must include both the street address and the post office box—otherwise the post office will return it to the sender.

Claims Department  
Yale Health Plan  
55 Whitney Avenue  
P.O. Box 208217  
New Haven, CT 06520-8217



## NUTS

*continued from page 1*

Some nuts, especially walnuts, are good sources of omega-3 fatty acids, the same type of fatty acids found in some fish. These fatty acids help to prevent platelets from sticking and smooth out abnormal heart rhythms. Other nutrients found in nuts and peanuts that promote heart health include folate and other B-vitamins, copper, potassium, magnesium, vitamin E, and arginine (an amino acid that helps relax blood vessels). Nuts are also a good source of fiber.

Peanuts account for about half of the “nuts” eaten each year in the US. Incorporating various kinds of nuts into your diet is easy. Here are some tips to get you started:

- Use unsalted nuts in order to avoid adding extra sodium into your diet. Unsalted nuts are becoming increasingly available at many supermarkets, as well as health food stores.
- As nuts are high in fat, they do provide significant calories. One ounce of nuts provides about 160 to 190 calories. To keep calorie intake in check, substitute nuts for other foods in your diet. For example:
  - ▶ Instead of adding meat to your vegetable stir fry, try adding one-third to one-half cup of chopped walnuts, almonds or cashews.

- ▶ Instead of having two slices of toast with butter or cream cheese, try two tablespoons of cashew butter on toast instead.
- ▶ Instead of a meat and cheese sandwich, go for an almond butter and banana sandwich.
- ▶ Pine nuts are a wonderful addition to pasta dishes, either as part of a pesto sauce or sprinkled on top; a sauce with pine nuts can be a healthy alternative to meat sauce.

- Pre-portion nuts into one ounce to one and a half ounce portions and store them away in individual bags or containers. That way, you can grab a bag as a quick snack.
- Nuts tend to be satisfying, probably due to their high fat content, and some studies have shown that they may help to reduce hunger longer than many other foods.

Nuts can also be a solution to winter holiday gift-giving. Some suggestions: an assortment of nuts in the shell with a decorative nutcracker; a decorated tray with dried fruits and nuts; a gift basket with fruit, a jar of nut butter, and some gourmet crackers. It’s a great way to show that you wish someone good health as well as happiness for the New Year!

The chart at the left shows how many nuts in a one-ounce portion.

See <http://www.nuthealth.org/> for more information on nuts.

TYPE OF NUT	NUMBER OF NUTS IN 1 OUNCE
almonds	20–24
Brazil nuts	6–8
cashews	16–18
hazelnuts	18–20
macademias	10–12
peanuts	40 pieces
pecans	18–20 halves
pine nuts	150–157
pistachios	45–47
walnuts	8–11 halves

## Claims From Beyond

Many of our members submit claims for health care services rendered overseas. In order for us to be able to process those claims efficiently—or, sometimes, at all!—we need certain items of information. Bills should be attached to a cover letter or supplemental claim form which can be downloaded from <http://www.yale.edu/uhs/forms/claimsform.pdf>. With either the claim form or the cover letter, the following information must be included:

- Patient’s name.
- Date(s) of service.
- The date of the accident or onset of illness, as well as a brief history to review for benefit determination.
- Name(s) and address(es) of the service provider(s).
- Diagnosis.
- The name of the country and location in the country. This will allow the Claims Department—if the claim qualifies for payment—to locate an appropriate translator if needed and to convert the charge to US dollars.
- The nature of each service and its associated charge.

If you need medical advice, wish to report an out of area event or need help with follow-up care, call toll free from the US or Canada: 877-YHP-CARE.

Also, our website has a list of toll-free numbers allowing you to contact YUHS directly from many overseas locations. Take the appropriate numbers with you when you travel.

[www.yale.edu/uhs/menu/cu/index.html](http://www.yale.edu/uhs/menu/cu/index.html)

# healthy ideas



## EXPAND MEALTIMES, NOT PORTIONS

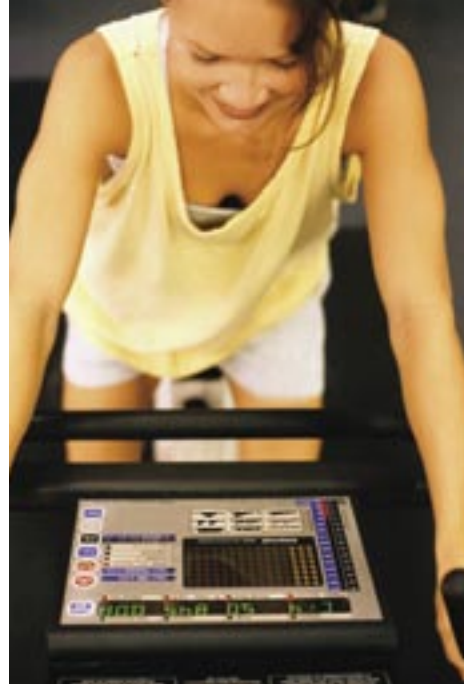
One of the reasons why the French have lower obesity rates compared to Americans may be the time they typically spend eating a meal. Not only do the French eat smaller portions, but they also spend more time enjoying their meals compared to Americans. Eating slowly helps trigger feelings of fullness before you overeat.

## SLEEP INCREASES VACCINES' EFFECTIVENESS

When you schedule an immunization, plan to get plenty of rest afterward. A recent study revealed that sleep may help a vaccine to work even better. In the study, people who got a good night's sleep after getting a vaccination had a better response to the vaccine compared to people who didn't get enough sleep.

## MIX AND MATCH WITH CARE

With the coming of cold weather, we spend more time in confined spaces, where we are more likely to come into contact with colds and other viruses. If you take self-help cold remedies, including herbal items, be careful about mixing them with any prescription medications you are taking. Always ask your pharmacist about the potential for interactions between prescription and over-the-counter medications. Make sure to read inserts to learn about drug interactions which may make the drugs less effective, cause unexpected side effects or even cause health problems. For instance: Decongestants will help your runny nose but may also interfere with blood pressure, whether you are on blood pressure medication or not. Many over the counter cold medications already contain high doses of ibuprofen or acetaminophen, so be very careful if you take either of them while also taking a cold remedy with these same ingredients. You may end up taking an amount which exceeds the recommended daily doses.



## GYM TIPS

As the temperature drops and the nights lengthen, many of us move our exercise routine indoors. If you are looking to join a gym, here are some questions to ask the staff and yourself.

- Does the staff have academic and life-experience education regarding weight training? If they don't have sports medicine or exercise science degrees, they should at least have some sort of certification from a recognized organization such as the National Strength and Conditioning Association.
- Is the gym clean? Is the equipment well maintained? Are seats on benches and machines stable? Make sure machine cables do not appear worn.
- Is the gym air fresh and well circulated? It should never smell stale or musty.
- Is the temperature of the gym at a level that won't increase the possibility of injuries? Temperatures that are too cold make joint and muscle injuries more likely.
- Does the gym offer an initial orientation to its equipment? Does it have regularly scheduled follow-up evaluations of your progress and help you vary your routine?
- Is there an emergency medical plan in place and are the staff members trained in CPR and first aid in case someone becomes ill or injured?

# YHP staff



## NEW DIRECTOR OF NURSING FOR YUHS

Linda K. Digangi, RN, who came to YUHS as the new director of nursing in July of this year, received her undergraduate degree at

Southern Connecticut State University and completed her MPS (Master of Professional Studies) in hospital administration at Quinnipiac College.

She began her nursing career as an operating room nurse at Yale-New Haven Hospital and subsequently became the OR nurse manager. Most recently, Digangi was the vice president of long term care and director of nurses at the Jewish Home for the Elderly of Fairfield County in Fairfield, Connecticut. She brings extensive knowledge of nursing leadership, rehabilitative services, and regulatory compliance to the YUHS Inpatient Care Facility.

# information



## SHORELINE SURGICAL CENTER

Yale Health Plan members have access to certain services at Yale-New Haven Hospital Shoreline Medical Center in an arrangement similar to the one we have with Temple Medical Center in downtown New Haven and with Yale New Haven Hospital (YNHH). The urgent care facility, located at 111 Goose Lane in Guilford, will be covered under the same terms as the use of the Emergency Department at YNHH: a genuine

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emergency (as defined in our member handbook); or when referred there by our Urgent Care clinicians. Imaging procedures (CT scans, MRIs and some ultrasounds) that would otherwise be scheduled at Yale, Temple, or Long Wharf, may be scheduled in Guilford.

Our network clinicians in general surgery, urology and ENT may, at some time in the future, decide to perform some outpatient surgery in Guilford and those procedures, scheduled through our regular pre-op channels, would be covered. Visits, tests, and procedures that would not be covered at the Yale Medical Center will not be covered in Guilford.

## LATEST ON VIOXX

As you probably know Vioxx has been voluntarily withdrawn from the market by Merck & Co. due to concerns about increased risk of cardiovascular problems. Vioxx, a prescription COX-2 selective, non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drug (NSAID) was approved by the FDA in May 1999 for relief of the signs and symptoms of osteoarthritis, for the management of acute pain in adults and for treatment of menstrual symptoms; it was later approved for the relief of signs and symptoms of rheumatoid arthritis in adults and children.

Patients can get a refund on unused Vioxx by mailing back the remaining drug in the original container, along with a pharmacy receipt, to: NNC Group, Merck Returns, 2670 Executive Drive, Indianapolis, IN 46241. The YUHS Pharmacy can provide a receipt for your last Vioxx refill. When you mail it back, include a note with the patient's name, address and phone number. Merck & Company will reimburse the cost of the full prescription plus regular shipping.

The YHP Pharmacy will stock Celebrex (100mg and 200mg caps) and Bextra (10mg and 20mg tabs) and also continue to stock several NSAIDs, including ibuprofen, naproxen, diclofenac (Voltaren) and nabumetone (Relafen). Your clinician will recommend the medication most appropriate for you. If you have any questions, contact your clinician or a member of the Pharmacy staff.

## MAKING SPACE, CONTINUED

Renovations continue at 17 Hillhouse Avenue. The latest:

- Member Services is now located on the far side of the 4th floor.
- Student Medicine and Employee Health will be moving shortly to an expanded clinical area on the 4th floor.
- In early 2005 the Dermatology Department will move into a new, expanded space on the 3rd floor.
- Also in early 2005 we will expand the Obstetrics & Gynecology clinic space.

Clinical and administrative departments will be open as follows during the winter holiday recess. Care for urgent problems is available after hours, weekends and holidays in the Urgent Care Department.

## HOLIDAY RECESS HOURS

Thursday, December 23  
8:30 am–12:30 pm

Friday, December 24; Closed

Saturday, December 25; Closed

Monday, December 27  
8:30 am–5:00 pm

Tuesday, December 28  
8:30 am–5:00 pm

Wednesday, December 29  
8:30 am–5:00 pm

Thursday, December 30  
8:30 am–12:30 pm

Friday, December 31; Closed

Saturday, January 1; Closed

# Contact Lens Wearers Have Wide Range of Choices

MICHAEL COSTA, OD

*Ophthalmology and Optometry Department*

RHEA HIRSHMAN

*Editor*

Back in the early 16th century, the great Leonardo da Vinci himself sketched and described ideas for vision enhancement that we would recognize nowadays as the precursors to our modern contact lenses. Other notables in the worlds of science and technology—including 17th century French philosopher and scientist Rene Descartes and 19th century English astronomer Sir John Herschel—also tinkered with the idea. While improvements in the technology continued to be made and the American Optometric Association recognized contact lens fitting as part of optometric practice as early as 1945, contact lenses did not come into widespread use until the introduction of the soft contact lens in the early 1970s. Now, millions of Americans correct their vision with contact lenses, choosing from a wide range of contact lens products.

Modern contacts come in two basic groups: soft lenses and rigid, or gas permeable (GP or RGP) lenses. Within the soft lens category are several sub-groups:

*Way back in the early 16th century...Leonardo da Vinci himself sketched and described ideas for vision enhancement that we would recognize as the precursors to our modern contact lenses.*

disposable (worn for a day or for a week or two); planned-replacement (worn for somewhere between one and three months); and yearly (worn for a year). There are spherical lenses which correct myopia (nearsightedness) or hyperopia (farsightedness), and toric lenses for those with myopia or hyperopia and astigmatism—a mild distortion of the visual image. RGP lenses are custom designed for each patient.

The indoor environment in which many of us spend so much time presents challenges to contact lens wearers. Many buildings are very dry, due to the circulation of forced air used to heat and cool the indoor environment. In addition, when we concentrate visually to read or write or use computers, our rate of blinking—which helps moisten the eyes—drops substantially. A normal blink rate (as in carrying on a conversation) is one blink every four to six seconds, or twelve to fifteen blinks per minute. This may decrease to one blink every fifteen to twenty seconds during concentrated computer use, or three to four blinks per minute. Since the contact lens wearer is blinking to moisten not only the corneas but also the contact lenses, this lack of blinking can affect comfort.

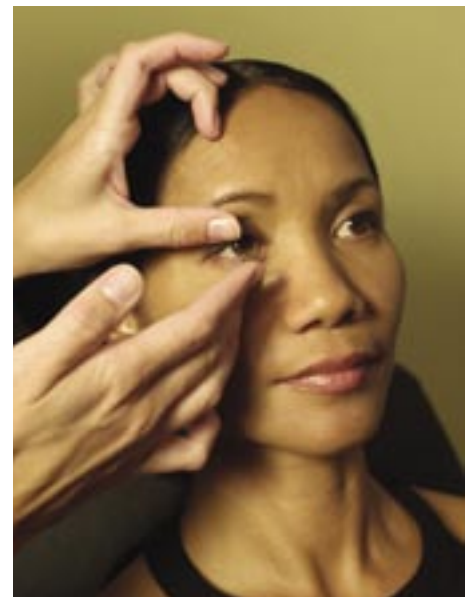
Even those who do not wear contact lenses can benefit by altering their work routine. Glance away from the computer toward a more distant object, such as a window or wall, and moisten your eyes by blinking for four or five seconds.

Taking these steps also permits your accommodative (focusing) and convergence (eye crossing) systems to relax. Further, the movement of your head from side to side can help relax tense neck muscles.

For patients with dry eye, clinicians may look for low water, nonionic lenses, though some investigators believe that the value of these lenses remains in question. Higher water content lenses dehydrate faster than lower water content lenses, so soft lenses made from a silicone hydrogel material can be beneficial;

however, because dry eyes present a challenging environment for contacts, the wearer may have to reduce hours of daily wear and use lubricating drops. Some clinicians have seen positive results with contact lenses that are slightly thicker.

Keeping lenses clean is essential. Lenses become coated with deposits that increase the longer a lens is worn without cleaning. These deposits allow less oxygen to be transmitted through the lens to the cornea, creating higher risk for problems such as corneal swelling or abrasions. Always follow your contact lens specialist's advice for cleaning and wearing your lenses and for changing the storage boxes.



The most popular lens cleaning solutions are the one-step multi-purpose variety. They offer convenience, especially for travel, but following directions is essential, particularly for the “no rub” solutions. Many of these are “no rub” only for lenses that are thrown away after fourteen wearings. Lenses worn for longer times between disposal need to be rubbed for cleaning. Also, all one step solutions are not created equal. Consistency is important. Companies design contact lens care products to be compatible with each other; the preservative in one brand of cleaner, may react badly with the preservative in a different brand of disinfectant. Once a solution has been prescribed, stay with that same brand, even if another brand is on sale.

*continued on page 8*

## CONTACT LENS WEARERS

*continued from page 7*

Even though YUHS no longer offers a separate contact lens service, our Ophthalmology and Optometry Department can offer advice about lens care and may be able to assist you in locating a provider. Because contact lenses are now available via telephone, mail order, or the Internet some patients consult their contact lens specialists

less often than they should. Many services now fax prescription confirmation notices with an eight-hour window to confirm the prescription before they fill it with the previous contact lens measurements. Therefore, you should make sure that your contact lens prescription is current, valid,

and accurate before using these services. All contact lens wearers should be evaluated yearly to make sure that performance and fit are optimal.

Appropriate care in the handling, cleaning, and disinfection of your contact lenses, proper selection of the most beneficial wearing regimen, and always carrying your contact lens case and backup eyeglasses can markedly increase your chances for successful contact lens wear.



# calendar

## Wellness Programs at YUHS

### Blood Pressure Monitoring

The Office of Health Promotion and Education conducts blood pressure screenings on the 4th floor of YUHS on the first Tuesday of each month from 9:00 to 11:00 am and at many campus locations (consult the YHP website for dates and places) for YHP members who are not currently being treated for a blood pressure problem. Members who have been diagnosed and are under treatment for hypertension are monitored in the Internal Medicine Department (203-432-0038) by appointment (Monday through Friday, 8:30 am to 4:00 pm).

### Adult CPR Classes

Adult CPR classes are held monthly. For information, call 203-432-1892.

### Cancer Support Group

Life Options is a support group for adult YHP members diagnosed with cancer, regardless of type of cancer or stage of disease. The group meets weekly with a facilitator. There are three 15-week programs each year, and members can enroll in consecutive series of meetings. The group is partially funded by the Edith S. Hallo Fund and by a small weekly fee charged to each participant. To enroll or for more information, contact the facilitator, Naomi Panza, MSW, at 203-432-0290.

### Obstetrics Programs

The Yale-New Haven Hospital Wellness Center (688-WELL) offers early trimester prenatal classes for all new and expectant mothers and post partum reunion classes for those who have recently given birth. There is no charge for YHP members. Patients can register for either class at the YHP Ob/Gyn appointment desk or by calling 203-432-0222. Spouses and significant others are welcome to attend.

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Yale Health Plan  
Member Services  
17 Hillhouse Avenue  
P.O. Box 208237  
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*Please remember that free parking for YHP members is available both in the lot right next to 17 Hillhouse Avenue and in parking lot 37, just across Trumbull Street.*

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