

MEET OUR NEW PHARMACY RESIDENTS



We welcome our four new pharmacy residents for the 2018-2019 year.

These residents have each graduated from an accredited pharmacy school and are licensed to practice pharmacy in Pennsylvania. They will spend a year in various pharmacy practice settings at our institution, including the Anticoagulation Clinic.

When coming to the clinic, please welcome the new faces you may see. These residents staff at the 30 Hope Drive Fingerstick Clinic.

Pictured above (l-r): Sarah DiVello (Albany College of Pharmacy and Health Sciences), Amber Dietrich (Wilkes University), Jillian Gutierrez (University of Maryland), Toni Campanella (Jefferson College of Pharmacy)

SEPTEMBER IS ATRIAL FIBRILLATION AWARENESS MONTH

What is atrial fibrillation (a.fib)?

Atrial fibrillation is a type of irregular heartbeat.

Normally, your heart beats 60 to 100 times per minute. When you have a.fib, your heart rate can be as high as 175 beats per minute.

If you have a.fib, you are **FIVE** times more likely to have a stroke.

The good news is that diagnosing and treating a.fib prevents 60 to 80 percent of strokes!

STAY HYDRATED!

Summer is in high gear! The staff at the Anticoagulation Clinic want you to go outside and enjoy the beautiful weather, but we also want to bring to your attention the importance of staying well hydrated by drinking plenty of fluids, especially if you are out and about in the heat of summer.

A fact you may find surprising is that water is the primary component of your body and accounts for about 60 percent of your body weight. Water is used by every system in your body. For example, water helps your body get rid of toxins and carry nutrients to the many cells throughout your body. Every day, our body loses water through various normal body functions such as breathing, sweating, urination, and bowel movements. This water must be replaced through eating and drinking. Dehydration, is a condition that occurs when our bodies do not have enough water to function properly and is often the result of not drinking enough water throughout the day. The table below provides some common signs and symptoms of dehydration.

Signs and Symptoms of Dehydration
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Dark-colored urine• Less frequent urination• Constipation• Sleepiness or fatigue• Dry mouth• Extreme thirst• Headache• Confusion

Dehydration itself can have some very serious consequences on your health leading to kidney damage and **BLOOD CLOTS!!!** That's right! Dehydration can cause blood clots to form in your body. How does this happen? Well, when you are dehydrated the blood vessels in your body become narrow and your blood becomes **THICKER**. This is all the result of your body not having enough water. Two of the most common causes of dehydration are exercise and hot and humid weather (see table below for other causes).

Other Causes of Dehydration
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Fever• Diarrhea• Vomiting

How do you prevent dehydration? The key is making sure that you are drinking enough fluids every day to replace your body's needs. Something you may not know is that you can also get fluids from eating. In fact, food provides about 20 percent of your total water intake every day. Many fruits and vegetables like watermelon, strawberries, iceberg lettuce, cucumber, and celery are 90% or more water by weight. Who would have thought that you could get some water from eating a few healthy foods?

Plain water is not the only source of hydration. Beverages like milk and juice are mostly water and provide an alternative source for making sure you stay hydrated. Water is still the healthiest option as it is **ZERO** calories and sugar free.

The next question you might have is how much water or other fluids should you drink each day? According to experts from the Institute of Medicine men should drink about 13 cups (3 liters) of fluid every day. Women, should consume about 9 cups (2.2 liters) of fluid every day. These recommendations can be simplified with a general rule that you may have been told in the past, "Drink eight 8-ounce glasses of water a day." Keep in mind that this doesn't have to be just plain water and can be other fluids like those listed above, although water is still the healthiest option. A very general rule is that if you drink enough fluid every day that you rarely become thirsty and your urine is clear to slightly yellow in color you are probably drinking enough. It is important to mention that if you are exercising or spending a significant amount of time out in the heat your body will require more water than if you were resting at home. It is very important to make sure you drink more fluids in these situations.

These are general recommendations and may not apply to everyone. Always speak with a health care professional such as your pharmacist, physician, or a registered dietician who can help make sure you are getting enough water or other fluid to meet your specific needs. **ALSO**, If you have been told by your doctor that you have heart failure or diseases that make it difficult for your body to get rid of water such as kidney disease, please speak with your doctor before following these recommendations as these diseases may require you to **LIMIT** the amount of water or other fluids you drink. **ONE SIZE DRINK DOES NOT FIT ALL.**

Enjoy the rest of summer, and remember: **STAY HYDRATED!!!**

-- The Staff at the Anticoagulation Clinic.

WARNING SIGNS OF A STROKE

Atrial fibrillation is a common arrhythmia and often leads to patients taking Warfarin for a long period of time. This is because atrial fibrillation leads to clot formation in the heart, which can break off and travel to the brain. This clot can then clog the vessels of the brain leading to a stroke. Atrial fibrillation increases your risk of stroke by **FIVE** times. Warfarin prevents the clot from forming.

Recognizing the symptoms of a stroke can help save a life. The best part is, all you have to do is remember the acronym, "**BE FAST**." BE FAST is used to identify the symptoms of a stroke. The B stands for "balance loss", E stands for "eyesight changes." F stands for "facial droop". If someone smiles, does the one side of the mouth droop down? The A stands for "arm weakness". If someone puts both arms out, does one arm drift downward compared to the other. The S stands for "speech difficulty." Are you struggling to understand someone when they are talking because their words are slurring together? The T stands for "time." If someone has one or more of these symptoms, it is time to BE FAST and call 9-1-1. Fast recognition of these symptoms could help save a life or lead to better recovery of the symptoms.

By recognizing these symptoms early and getting the person to the hospital, medical care can be provided and improve the chances of recovery. While you are waiting for the ambulance to arrive, consider collecting the following information to help improve the care in the hospital:

- When was the last time the person was seen without any symptoms of the stroke?
- What medications is the person on?
- Has the person had any recent surgeries?
- Does the person have any drug allergies?

Early recognition can help save lives and brain tissue.

BE FAST

B – Balance loss

E – Eyesight changes

F – Face drooping

A – Arm weakness

S – Speech difficulty

T – Time to call 911

LESS COMMON A.FIB. TRIGGERS

Atrial fibrillation (a.fib) can be random and unpredictable. However, there are some triggers. You are probably aware of caffeine, certain cold medicines, alcohol, and exercise.

However, there are lesser known causes as well.

1. Medical Procedures- Anything that evokes the flight or fight response, such as emotional or physical stress, can stimulate your heart. Therefore, inform your doctor of your a.fib history.

2. Travel- Taking a trip can cause you to be overtired, change your sleep patterns, and change your diet. Whenever you travel, make sure you stay well rested, stay well hydrated and eat regularly. Taking a trip can expose you to potential a.fib triggers.

4. The holidays. Holiday Heart is a well-known a.fib. trigger. This is due to the holidays having extra stress, fatigue and alcohol. Binge drinking is a classic a.fib trigger. Therefore, it is important to know your limits. For some, a mere half glass of wine may trigger a.fib.

5. Air pollution. Fine particles of pollution from cars and power plants can go deep into your lungs, travel and trigger a.fib. Before going outdoors, check local air quality to prevent an a.fib attack. You may want to consider staying inside when air pollution is high.

6. Dehydration. Dehydration can trigger atrial fibrillation. Low levels of minerals in the blood (electrolytes), especially potassium, can trigger an abnormal heart rhythm, and when you're dehydrated, electrolytes are depleted. Dehydration is most common in hot weather, especially when exercising outdoors, but it can also result from an illness that includes vomiting or diarrhea. Be sure to drink enough water on hot days and whenever you're sick.

7. Recreational drugs. Over-the-counter cough and cold medications can trigger a.fib. because they stimulate your heart, but they aren't the only drug culprits. Marijuana can have the same effect, possibly raising your heart rate by 20 to 100 percent for several hours. Cocaine can also trigger an abnormal heartbeat.

There are many Atrial Fibrillation triggers, many surprising.

A good suggestion to remain heart-healthy with a.fib is to keep everything in moderation.

Ginger and warfarin: “Proceed ginger-ly!”

Ginger is a tropical flowering plant, whose root is cultivated and used commonly as a spice, especially in Asian and Indian cuisine. It can be peeled and eaten as a snack, pickled, candied, boiled for flavoring, or dried and ground into a powder. In the U.S. ginger is used for its warm spicy citrus flavor, found in ginger beer, gingerbread, and some teas. Ginger ale, another popular ginger beverage, is the center of a popular old wives’ tale, which suggests that drinking ginger ale can soothe an upset stomach. While there is no proof to support this, ginger continues to be used medicinally in many cultures.

The evidence for the medicinal use of ginger, for upset stomach or other conditions, is largely inconclusive. However, ginger root is sold as an over-the-counter product and may be used to help with a variety of conditions. Capsules of ginger root are thought to help with motion sickness, nausea and vomiting, arthritis pain, and migraine headaches. Topical ginger juice is used to help treat burns. Ginger oil can be used as an analgesic agent. Other topical forms of ginger are believed to help prevent insect bites.

For patients managed with warfarin, the use of medicinal ginger may pose a safety risk. It has been seen that taking ginger while on warfarin may further decrease the ability of sticky cells, called platelets, to clump together and form clots. If clots are not able to form, this means the body’s ability to stop bleeding is reduced. Therefore, using ginger and warfarin together may put you at a higher risk of bleeding. This may also mean warfarin users may see an increase in measures of bleeding, including their International Normalized Ratio, or INR.

These effects of ginger are especially seen at higher doses or larger quantities.

Foods containing ginger like ginger ale or ginger bread contain smaller amounts of ginger and should not pose as great a risk to warfarin users. However, it is always important to keep your doctor and pharmacist informed of what you are taking, both prescription and non-prescription medications, and of any major changes in your diet. Always keep healthcare professionals up-to-date with any over-the-counter products or vitamins you are taking.

For warfarin users, if you are taking, or are interested in taking ginger let us know! You may need to have your INR checked more often and we will advise you to watch for signs/symptoms of bleeding more closely!

Cancer Institute Retail Pharmacy
717-531-1272
Hours:
9:00 a.m. - 9:00 p.m. (Monday - Friday)
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717-531-5312 or
Toll-free at 1-800-243-1455, ext. 5312
Email us any time:
anticoagulationclinic@pennstatehealth.psu.edu

EDITOR'S NOTE: Let us know of any topics
of interest for our next edition.

DID YOU KNOW?

**The Anticoagulation Clinic is now listed in
the PATIENT PORTAL!**

**When accessing your records through the
patient portal, look for the Anticoagulation
Clinic listing in the area where you would
communicate to providers. This is how to
reach us there.**

**Why enroll in the Penn State Health Portal?
Here are some of the many features of this
system:**

- Use secure messaging with your care team
- Manage appointments – real-time scheduling is available for select appointment types
- View test results
- Review medical history
- Renew prescriptions
- Manage family member accounts (with proper consent)
- Smartphone apps available for iOS and Android

**Please visit hmc.pennstatehealth.org/myhealth
for details on how to use website features,
and to log in to your personalized website.**



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Anticoagulation Clinic, EC079
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ONE PATIENT AT A TIME

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(OR 1-800-243-1455 EXT. 5312)

Monday through Friday: 9:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.

In case of emergency, please call 911.

HOW ARE WE DOING?

Please send your comments to Lisa Barletta, MBA, RPh
(lbarletta@psu.edu), Director of Pharmacy, Outpatient Services

Editor: Amy Foltz, RPh

Contributors: Regis Bender, Pharm D; Kyle Sukanick, Pharm D;
Sydney Stuyvesant, PharmD