

What You Need to Know

Smartphones are addictive but they also offer a solution, a reminder before you try out the latest online “life hack,” new concerns for counterfeit HIV medications in pharmacies, and more

Are You Reading This on Your Phone?



If you're reading this on your phone, you may be addicted to it. But so are a lot of people, **according to a recent NPR study of 2,000 people.** The average American adult spends four hours or more of each day tapping, swiping, and scrolling. One reason is that using your phone is part of your daily routine, but if you feel—like 31% of respondents did—that you have self-control issues, you may have formed a bad habit that can lead to addiction. And while your phone is at the heart of the problem, it also may offer a solution: apps that help you limit the time you spend on it. You can also use your phone to learn more about digital dependency by listening to the August 9 episode of NPR's *The Indicator From Planet Money* podcast.

Source: NPR

Patient Perspective — Extracting Wisdom From Social Media



You shouldn't always believe what you see online, especially when it comes to medical advice. But when Mackenzie Fuhrman saw a “life hack” to reduce swelling from wisdom tooth extraction, she decided to try it and **shared the results on the video-sharing service TikTok**. The advice was simple: the day before surgery, drink 64 ounces of 100% pineapple juice. As a nursing student, she found merit in the recommendation, since pineapple contains bromelain, an enzyme that promotes an anti-inflammatory response in your body.

Following the surgery, Fuhrman reported a quick and pain-free recovery, while acknowledging that in her case she is young and healthy, and the procedure was straightforward. She also recommends everyone check with their doctor before doing something like this themselves. *Buzzfeed* consulted with Aaleeyah Alim, DMD, who confirmed the positive impact pineapple has in reducing swelling—in moderation. Dr. Alim also warned that too much pineapple has negative side effects as well, including diarrhea and skin rash, and may interact with other medications; it's also high in acidity and sugar, increasing your risk for cavities. **The bottom line: Always check with your healthcare provider before trying any medical advice you see online.**

Source: BuzzFeed

Medication Safety — Buyer Beware: Fake HIV Drugs



When you fill a prescription, it's important to note whether you need the brand name drug or if a generic drug can be substituted. But now patients have to look out for another possibility: counterfeit drugs. These fake drugs are dangerous, even life-threatening, because they may not contain the active ingredients of the real medicine at all, or they may have them in the wrong amounts, produced under unsafe conditions.

Pharmaceutical manufacturer **Gilead Sciences has issued a warning that their HIV medications, including Biktarvy and Descovy, are being supplied to pharmacies by an unauthorized distributor.** Because real bottles have been tampered with and look authentic, it's important to closely examine the pills before taking them. Biktarvy pills should be purple-brown and capsule-shaped, stamped with “9883” on one side and “GSI” on the other. Descovy pills are blue, rectangular, marked with “225” and “GSI” on opposite sides.

Source: Newsweek

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Infection Prevention — The Vax Pack



Many young people in the United States are not getting vaccinated against COVID-19, and the rate of child vaccinations is slowing. In some cases, this is attributed to vaccine-hesitant parents, who refuse to allow their children to get vaccinated. But is there anything a teen who wants the vaccine can do without parental permission? To help them answer that question, Kelly Danielpour, an 18-year-old freshman at University of California, Los Angeles, **created the website VaxTeen**. Its slogan: “Young people taking responsibility for their own health to put an end to preventable diseases.”

VaxTeen shares information on minor consent laws organized by state (40 states require parental consent for children under 18), a primer on available vaccines and when you should get them, and various resources—including guides on how to change parents’ minds about vaccines, which is often the only option for teens. Danielpour also spends her free time responding to emails and messages asking for help, and answering questions on social media. “A vaccine is a collective health measure,” she told *TIME*. “We all have to take part for it to be truly effective.”

Source: TIME

Improving Diagnosis — Urine Trouble If You’re Over 50



Anyone is at risk of having a urinary tract infection (UTI), especially when they’re older, and often following catheterization. An infection of the urinary tract, which includes the kidneys and bladder, UTIs predominantly affect women, and older women are two times more likely to suffer chronic UTIs than younger women. Recognizing UTIs early helps ensure successful treatment. **AARP shares seven early warning signs for UTIs**, such as painful urination, pain or tenderness around the kidneys, fever, and mental fog. If you think you have a UTI, contact your doctor.

Source: AARP

NEW LMS COURSE

Challenges and Potential Solutions for Patient Safety in an Infectious-Agent-Isolation Environment

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Long-Term Care — Hospice Programs Are Dwindling



The number of healthcare workers was already decreasing before the pandemic hit, but this is another problem that COVID-19 has made worse: According to a study in *JAMA Network Open*, at least 20% of healthcare workers have considered leaving their jobs, and 30% have considered working less. Hospice and palliative care staff are being affected too, and many of them are retiring, but new workers are not stepping in to fill their vacant roles.

The diminishing staff and consequently diminishing returns have left health and hospice programs unsustainable, **forcing some of them to shut down entirely or be absorbed into larger companies**. Tom Murphy, CEO of Minidoka Memorial Hospital in Idaho, which will close its hospice program on September 20, told the *Times-News*, “The harsh reality is that we don’t want to run a service that we can’t operate to the best of our ability.”

Source: Hospice News

Pediatrics — When Life Gets Heavy, Build Healthy Habits



You might be worried if your child has put on some extra pounds, especially during the pandemic, but what can you do about it? **The first step is talk to your pediatrician to see where your kid should be in their growth pattern** and to check for health problems like high cholesterol and sleep apnea that might be affecting their weight. If they need to slow down their weight gain, it’s important to focus not on the number on the scale, but on building healthier habits, slowly and as a family: if necessary, start to reset their bedtimes and wake-up times and set a regular mealtime schedule, and include more physical activity during the day like walks, bike rides, and outdoor games. Experts also remind you to have compassion for yourself and your children, and teach them to demonstrate it for others who may be struggling with their own weight and body image—we’re all in this together.

Source: NPR



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