

... November 2011 ...

QUICK TAKES



Be a Smart Health Care Consumer Away from Home

More than 40 million travelers will be on America's roads, rails and airways over the Thanksgiving holiday. If you're planning on being one of those travelers, take a minute to review some basic health precautions before your trip begins so you're not scrambling should you get sick when you're far from home.

Also check out our advice on finding a health care provider should you need one while traveling.

Enjoy a safe, healthy Thanksgiving holiday!



Before You Go: Healthy Travel Tips

Need a Flu Shot?

With all that's going on at this time of year, getting vaccinated against seasonal flu may be the last thing on your mind. But you don't want to come down with the flu when you're away from home. And you certainly don't want to spread the flu to more vulnerable family members. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommends that everyone six months and older get a flu vaccine. Many pharmacies offer flu shots on a walk-in basis.

Bring Your Insurance I.D. Card

Check your wallet now to prevent anxiety later. If you can't find your card, try to print one out from your insurer's website. Make sure you're also carrying information about your prescription drug plan.

Make a List of Your Current Medications

Ideally, you should bring all your bottles with you. That way, if you end up in the emergency room and are unable to speak, a doctor can make sure he's not giving you a medication that would adversely interact with something you are already taking. But at the very least, bring along a written list of your medications and keep it in your wallet. Remember to include any non-prescription or alternative medicines in this list. Also, if you have a heart ailment, consider bringing a copy of your latest EKG report.

A Tip for Air Travelers

Stow any medications you use in your carry-on bag, not in your checked luggage. You never know when your checked bag will be delayed or lost. During the busy holiday season, it may take a couple of days before you are reunited with your belongings.

Finding Care When You're Away from Home

What do you do when if you get sick when you're away from home? Many people head straight to the nearest emergency room. With the cost of health care continuing to rise, it's more important than ever to make smart decisions when seeking care even when you're far from home. According to the National Center for Health Statistics, almost half of all trips to the ER are not considered urgent.

Call Your Insurer First

If you think you have a life-threatening injury or illness, you should go directly to the nearest emergency room.

For emergencies that are not life threatening, first pull out your insurance I.D. card. If you opt for provider who doesn't participate in your insurance plan, you may be liable for costly out-of-network charges.

What is an Urgent Care Walk-in Center?

Urgent care centers provide medical care to patients with non-life-threatening illness or injuries who need immediate attention when their family doctor is unavailable but a trip to the emergency room may not be warranted. There are more than 8,700 urgent care centers in the United States. Urgent care centers are often open after hours, 7 days a week and with no appointment necessary. Check online or the Yellow Pages for a center close to you.

Don't Ignore Signs of Holiday Heart Attack

A 2004 study from UC San Diego revealed that more people die from heart attacks on Christmas Day and New Year's Day than on any other days of the year. Many hospitals report an upswing in heart attacks over the Thanksgiving weekend, as well.

What makes a holiday coronary event more deadly than an August attack? Researchers think the holidays bring a double dose of denial. It's not uncommon for people to initially shrug off chest pain as indigestion after a large holiday meal. And many people are reluctant to disrupt a celebration with a run to the emergency room. But for those suffering from a heart attack or stroke, every second counts.



If you see or have any of the symptoms listed below, immediately call 911:

- Chest discomfort or discomfort in other areas of the upper body.
- Shortness of breath with or without chest discomfort.
- Sudden numbness or weakness of the face, arm or leg, especially on one side of the body.
- Sudden confusion, trouble speaking or understanding.
- Sudden trouble seeing in one or both eyes.
- Sudden trouble walking, dizziness, loss of balance or coordination.
- Sudden, severe headache with no known cause.
- Other signs may include breaking out in a cold sweat, nausea or lightheadedness.

Sweet Potato and Pineapple Gratin Makes: 12 servings

Your family will love this fresh interpretation of the Thanksgiving dinner standard. The gratin may be made the day before: Rewarm the sweet potatoes in the oven and add the crumb topping at that time.

Ingredients

1 20-ounce (560-g) can unsweetened crushed pineapple (not drained)
2 tablespoons honey
1 teaspoon salt
¼ teaspoon ground red chile (optional)
24 graham cracker squares
2 tablespoons brown sugar
1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
1 teaspoon ground ginger
¼ teaspoon ground allspice
4 sweet potatoes (about 2 ¼ pounds / 1 kilo), peeled and very thinly sliced



Preparation

1. Preheat the oven to 375°F (190°C). Lightly oil a 3-quart (3-liter) lasagna dish.
2. Drain pineapple, reserving pineapple and about 1 cup (240 ml) juice separately. Add honey, salt and ground red chile (if using) to juice and stir well.
3. In a food processor, combine graham crackers, brown sugar, cinnamon, ginger and allspice. Process to crumbs.
4. Arrange half the sliced sweet potatoes in the oiled lasagna dish. Spread with the crushed pineapple. Top with half of the graham cracker crumb mixture. Stir juice mixture and drizzle half of it over the crumbs. Cover with the remaining sweet potatoes. Drizzle the remaining juice mixture over top.
5. Cover tightly with aluminum foil and bake for 1 hour. Uncover, sprinkle with remaining graham cracker crumbs and bake for 10 minutes longer.



Nutritional info per serving

135 Calories
1g Fat
0g Saturated fat
1g Protein
32g Carbohydrate
2g Fiber
227mg Sodium

Source:
Healthy Living Kitchens