



MEET OUR DOCTORS

Our spotlight physician for this newsletter is Jerome Sag, M.D. of the Lansdale office. Dr. Sag and his partners joined TriValley in April of 2002 and have enabled the practice to extend its care into the Lansdale area. Dr. Sag has been a board certified internal medicine physician since 1977.

His career began upon graduation from New York Medical College in 1972, followed by the start of his medical residency at Hershey Medical Center. He took a sabbatical from residency to join the fledgling National Health Service Corps and started a general practice in Monterey, Tennessee where medical care was greatly needed. He remained in Tennessee for two years as the sole practitioner in the small mountain community until he returned to complete his residency at Hershey.

Dr. Sag has been practicing in Lansdale since 1977, first with the Lansdale Medical Group, and now as a part of TriValley Primary Care. He has held positions such as president of LMG, medical director of a nursing home, and risk management and peer review committee member within North Penn Hospital.

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SMOKING: Steps to help you break the habit

Smoking causes changes in your body and the way you act. The changes in your body are caused by addiction to nicotine. The changes in the way you act developed over time as you bought, lit and smoked the cigarettes. These changes are your smoking habit.

IMMEDIATE reasons to stop:

- Bad breath and stained teeth
- Bad smell of clothes and hair
- Lower athletic ability
- Cough and sore throat
- Faster heartbeat and increased blood pressure
- Risk of passive smoking to others around you
- Cost of smoking



LONG-TERM reasons to stop smoking:

- Toxic chemicals in cigarette smoke
- Risk of lung cancer and other types of cancer
- Risk of heart disease
- Serious breathing problems
- Time lost working or having fun because you're sick
- Wrinkles
- Risk of stomach ulcers and acid reflux
- Risk of damage to babies of pregnant women who smoke
- Setting a bad example for your children

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The Important stuff on West Nile Virus

West Nile virus usually causes no symptoms or only mild illness. However, infection can lead to swelling of the brain called encephalitis. Mosquitoes become infected by biting birds that carry the virus. People can get West Nile virus when an infected mosquito bites them.

The symptoms of West Nile virus are usually NONE. Others may have mild illness, such as fever and headache. In rare cases, West Nile virus causes a disease that can lead to permanent brain damage or death. Symptoms usually occur 2 to 15 days after a person is bitten by an infected mosquito. The symptoms may include slight fever, headache or rash. However, serious illness is possible, with symptoms such as sudden, severe headache, high fever, stiff neck, confusion, coma and even death. The people most at risk for getting severe disease are those over 50 years of age, but of the 150 people infected, only one gets severe symptoms. There is no specific treatment

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Dr. Jerome E. Sag.....

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In 1982 he was elected to be an officer of the medical staff at NPH and served as president from 1986-1988.

Since joining TriValley in April of 2002, he has found a niche on both the executive and strategic planning committees.

Dr. Sag has 2 children. His daughter, Jessica works at Merck and is expecting her first child soon, his son Michael produces Broadway plays in New York at Richard Frankel Associates. We are happy to have him within our TriValley group.

West Nile virus.....

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for West Nile virus infection, and there is no vaccine. Patients with severe disease may be hospitalized and given intravenous fluids.

Even if you travel to an area where birds have been reported to be infected with West Nile virus, and get bitten by a mosquito, you are unlikely to get sick. Less than one in 500 mosquitoes are infected (and that's a lot of bites), and only one in 150 people infected will get serious illness. If you do get bitten, it is NOT recommended that you get tested for the disease. However, if you get bitten and develop high fever, mental confusion, weakness or severe headaches, see a doctor right away. People with mild disease probably do not need medicine or lab tests and will get better on their own.

The best way to avoid the virus is to use insect repellent on skin and clothes, and to reduce the number of mosquitoes around your house and neighborhood. Here are some things you can do:

Get rid of standing water – birdbaths (change water daily), ponds, flower pots, wading pools and old tires.

Repair any tears in window screens.

Wear shoes, long pants, long sleeves when outside during dusk, dawn and early evening hours.

Use insect repellent – the best are those that contain DEET at 20% for older children and adults, 10% DEET for children 2 months to 2 years.

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Comments?

If you have comments or ideas for other topics, write:

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Smoking.....

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You have the best chance of stopping smoking if you do the following:

Get ready – set a stop date 2-4 weeks from now so you'll be ready. Write down your personal reasons for stopping. Be specific and keep your list with you so you can look at it when you feel the urge to smoke. To help you understand your smoking habit, keep a daily diary of when and why you smoke. Just before your stop date, get rid of all cigarettes, matches, lighters and ashtrays.

Get support – tell your family and friends what kind of help you need. Their support will make it easier for you to stop smoking. Ask your doctor for help. He or she can give you information, telephone numbers of hotlines and material or medications that will be helpful. Give yourself rewards for stopping smoking. With the money you saved, buy yourself something special.

Anticipate stress and urge to smoke – many people have the habit of using cigarettes to relax during stressful times. Luckily, there are good ways to manage stress without smoking. Relax by taking a bath, going for a walk, or breathing slowly and deeply. Think of changes in your daily routine and environment that will help you resist the urge to smoke.

How you feel when you stop smoking will depend on how much you smoked, how addicted your body is to nicotine, and how well you get ready to stop smoking. You may crave cigarettes or feel hungrier than usual. You may feel edgy and have trouble concentrating. You also may cough more at first and you may have headaches. These things happen because your body is used to the nicotine. They are called "nicotine withdrawal symptoms". The symptoms are strongest during the first few days after you stop smoking, but most go away within a few weeks.

Nicotine replacement products are ways to take in nicotine without smoking. These products come in several forms: gum, patch, nasal spray, inhaler and lozenges. Nicotine replacement works by lessening your body's craving for nicotine and reducing withdrawal symptoms. This lets you focus on the changes you need to make in your habits and environment. Once you feel more confident as a nonsmoker, dealing with your nicotine addiction is easier. Talk to your doctor about which of these products is likely to give YOU the best chance of success. For any of these products to work, you must carefully follow the directions on the package. It's very important that you don't smoke while using nicotine replacement products.

Most people gain a few pounds after they stop smoking. Remember that any weight gain is a minor health risk compared to the risks of smoking. Dieting while you are trying to stop smoking will cause unnecessary stress. Instead, limit your weight gain by having healthy, low fat snacks on hand and exercising on a regular basis.

If you smoke again, don't think of yourself as a failure. Think about why you smoked and what you can do to keep from smoking again. Set a new stop date. Many ex-smokers did not succeed at first, but kept trying.

The first few days after stopping will probably be the hardest. Just remember that even one puff on a cigarette can cause a relapse, so don't risk it...and good luck!

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