



## MEET OUR DOCTORS

Faith Frable, M.D. is a new addition to the Western Bucks office of TriValley. She is a recent graduate of University of Connecticut School of Medicine and completed her residency training at Hunterdon Medical Center in the summer of 2006. Her interests in medicine include Women's Health and complementary medicine, specifically herbal medicine and how it can be utilized independently and in conjunction with our traditional medical practices.

Patient education is important to Dr. Frable, the more a patient knows and understands his/her body, the more accountable and involved in decision making the patient can become.

Dr. Frable is married with 3 teen stepchildren, an 18 month old daughter and is due to have another child at the writing of this letter!

We welcome Dr. Faith Frable to TriValley and wish her happiness and health.

## Herbal Products and Supplements: Talk with Your Doctor

### Are herbal health products and supplements safe because they are natural?

Not necessarily. Unlike prescription and OTC medicines, herbal products don't have to be tested to prove they work well or are safe before they are sold. Also, they may not be pure. They might contain other ingredients such as plant pollen, that could make you sick or activate an allergy. Sometimes they contain drugs that aren't listed on the label, such as steroids or estrogens. Some of these products may also contain traces of arsenic, mercury, lead and pesticides. Even though the products are advertised as "natural," they aren't necessarily natural to the human body.

### Do any health problems increase the danger of taking herbal products and supplements?

Yes. Herbal products and supplements may not be safe if you have certain health problems. You also may be at increased risk of problems from these products if you are elderly. **Talk to you doctor** before taking herbal products if you have any of the following health problems:

Blood Clotting Problems	Glaucoma	Parkinson's Disease
Cancer	Heart Disease	Liver Problems
Diabetes	High Blood Pressure	Stroke
Enlarged Prostate	Immune System Problems	Thyroid Problems
Epilepsy	Psychiatric Problems	

If you are going to have surgery, be sure to **tell your doctor** if you use herbal products. Some may cause bleeding problems or problems with anesthesia. Stop using herbal products at least 2 weeks before surgery, or sooner if your doctor recommends it.

### Can herbal products change the way prescription or over the counter drugs work?

Yes. Herbal health products can effect other drugs. When this happens, your medicine may not work as intended; medicines may be absorbed differently, altering the levels in your body and changing the effect they have. You should be cautious with herbal products if you take a drug in one or more of the following categories:

Drugs to treat depression, anxiety or other psychiatric problems;  
Anti-seizure drugs; Blood thinners; Blood pressure medicines; Heart medicine; Drugs to treat diabetes; Cancer drugs.

Also, you shouldn't take more than the recommended dose of any herbal health product or supplement. The problems that these products can cause are much more likely to occur if you take too much or take them for too long.

Please see [www.familydoctor.org](http://www.familydoctor.org) <<http://www.familydoctor.org>> . Find the title to this article and the included PDF files for an herbal product side effect chart and interaction chart. (Permission granted to print and photocopy by AAFP)

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**BILLING CORNER**

As of January 1, 2007, the annual Medicare deductible for physician services is \$131.00. It is expected to increase each year.

***What is the Medicare deductible?***

The annual Medicare deductible is an out-of-pocket expense - that is, it is your responsibility to pay the provider(s) the first \$131 of Part B (physician and outpatient) services. When providers submit a claim, Medicare will classify the first \$131.00 of “the allowed amount” (allowed charges) to your annual deductible. Thereafter (after you’ve had \$131 of allowed charges), Medicare will begin paying claims on your behalf. With certain exceptions, Medicare pays 80% of the allowed amount on any claims for physician services.

The Medicare Summary Notice may say “You have met the Part B deductible for 2007.” But look in the “You May Be Billed” column. That is the amount that providers expect to be paid by you for services that are classified as part of your deductible. [This column will also include the 20% of the allowed amount that Medicare expects you to pay the provider(s).]

TriValley suggests that you retain your Medicare Summary Notices each year to check against the provider billing statement. Note: TriValley will bill your supplemental policy on your behalf. And all TriValley providers accept Medicare assignment.

**Comments?**

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

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People with good emotional health are aware of their thoughts, feelings and behaviors. They have learned healthy ways to cope with the stress and problems that are a normal part of life. They feel good about themselves and have healthy relationships.

However, many things that happen in your life can disrupt your emotional health and lead to strong feelings of sadness, stress or anxiety. These things include being laid off from your job, having a child leave or return home, dealing with the death of a loved one, getting divorced or married, suffering illness or an injury, getting a job promotion, moving, money problems or having a baby. "Good" changes can be just as stressful as "bad" changes.

**How can my emotions affect my health?**

Your body responds to the way you think, feel and act. This is often called the "mind-body connection". When you are stressed, anxious or upset, your body tries to tell you that something isn't right. For example, high blood pressure or a stomach ulcer might develop after a particularly stressful event. The following may be physical signs that your emotional health is out of balance:

Back Pain	Extreme Tiredness	Lightheadedness
Change in Appetite	General Aches/Pains	Palpitations
Chest Pain	Headaches	Sexual Problems
Constipation/Diarrhea	High Blood Pressure	Stiff Neck
Dry Mouth	Insomnia	Sweating
		Upset Stomach

Poor emotional health can weaken your body's immune system, making you likely to get colds and other infections during emotionally difficult times. Also, when you are feeling stressed or upset, you may not take care of your health as well as you should. You may not feel like exercising or eating nutritious foods. Some people abuse alcohol, tobacco or other drugs to try to make themselves feel better.

It's important to be honest with your doctor if you are having these feelings. He or she can't always tell that you are feeling stressed, anxious or upset by just looking at you. First, your physician will need to make sure that other health problems aren't causing you physical symptoms. If they aren't, then you and your doctor can address the emotional causes of your symptoms. Your doctor may suggest ways to treat your physical symptoms while you work together to improve your emotional health.

**How can I improve my emotional health?**

First, try to recognize your emotions and understand why you are having them. Sorting out the causes of sadness, stress and anxiety in your life can help you manage your emotional health. The following are some other helpful tips:

Express your feeling in appropriate ways. If feelings of stress, sadness or anxiety are causing physical problems, keeping these feelings inside can make you feel worse. It's OK to let your loved ones know when something is bothering you. However, keep in mind that your family and friends may not be able to help you deal with your feelings appropriately. At these times, ask someone outside the situation—such as your family doctor, a counselor or religious advisor for advice and support to help you improve your emotional health.

Live a balanced life. Try not to obsess about the problems at work, school or at home that lead to negative feelings. It's important to deal with these negative feelings, but try to focus on the positive things in your life too. You may want to keep a journal of the things that make you feel happy or peaceful. Some research has shown that having a positive outlook can improve your quality of life and give your health a boost. Try to find a way to let go of the things that make you feel stressed and overwhelmed. Make time for things you enjoy.

Calm your mind and body. Relaxation methods, such as meditation, are useful ways to bring your emotions into balance. Meditation is a form of guided thought. It can take many forms. For example, you may do it by exercising, stretching or breathing deeply.

Take care of yourself. To have good emotional health, it's important to take care of your body by having a regular routine for eating healthy, getting enough sleep and exercising to relieve pent-up tension. Avoid overeating and don't abuse drugs or alcohol.