



# The Beacon

The Newsletter of  
Med-Cert, Inc.  
Volume 1  
Issue 36  
July 2010

## Med-Cert Medical Management Resources

*“Guiding your way to better health management”*

### How to Dispose of Old Medicines Safely

If you are like most people, you probably have a cache of old prescription drugs in your home. It's really surprising how quickly unused meds can collect, whether because the acid suppressant caused a bad reaction or you just needed the painkiller for a day or two. Whatever the reason, eventually you need to get rid of these drugs. The question is, though, what's the best way to dispose of unused, often still-potent medications?

If you're thinking you can just flush them down the toilet, think again. Until recently that was standard advice, but the US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) began to worry when environmental studies showed the practice was posing a potential threat. Consequently, the USFWS asked the American Pharmacists Association (APhA) to partner with them in determining and issuing new recommendations for the proper disposal of old drugs. It is advised that proper disposal, as follows, insures the destruction of the drug

and prevents it from entering the water supply:

- Mix solid medications (pills and capsules) with a little water and crush them into a paste. Mix liquid meds with water in the same way.
- Mix the results with saw dust, used coffee grounds or kitty litter, all of which makes it less appealing for pets and children to eat, and causes the drug to degenerate faster.
- Place contents in a plastic bag and seal it.
- Throw out the mixture in your trash.

There is one caveat to the last instruction. Some states and municipalities have collection programs or sites where you can drop off hazardous substances. If you have access to such a resource, this would be the final destination of choice for used or expired drugs. Your local public health department can give you information about options in your community.

You should also dispose of over-the-counter drugs along with unused nutritional and herbal supplements in this manner. Check medication

expiration dates, but generally follow the rule to dispose after one year - especially if the medication is kept in humid or temperature variant conditions. When in doubt, ask the pharmacist.

The FDA suggests some exceptions to the no-flush rule. They advise disposing of certain serious painkillers, including OxyContin and others, by flushing them. Although the "paste and toss" method is safer environmentally, flushing the medication down the toilet serves as an extra precaution to keep drugs that can be abused from falling into the wrong hands. To see the FDA list of drugs that should be flushed, go to <http://www.fda.gov/drugs/resourcesforyou/consumers/buyingusingmedicinesafely/ensuringsafeuseofmedicine/safedisposalofmedicines/ucml86187.htm>.

## Med-Cert News

**The Med-Cert office will be closed on Monday, September 6<sup>th</sup> for Labor Day. We wish you a safe and happy holiday!**



# Ask A Nurse

**Q: If the orange juice label says "not from concentrate," does that mean it's better for you?**

**A:** Not really. "Not from concentrate" juice is nutritionally almost identical to its "from concentrate" counterpart. One caveat: Orange juice that isn't from concentrate may not be pasteurized (put through a heating process that kills dangerous bacteria such as E. coli). So if you do opt for the not-from-concentrate variety, check the carton. The FDA requires unpasteurized juices to carry warning labels.

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**Q: Is there a way to estimate the calories in fruits and vegetables?**

**A:** Sure, and it's easy. On average, one small piece or 1/2 cup of fresh fruit contains about 60 calories. Starchy veggies such as potatoes and corn average 50 calories per 1/2 cup, while all other veggies such as broccoli and tomatoes average just 25 calories per 1/2 cup. These are great calorie bargains--especially if you're following the recommended fruit and veggie goal of nine a day.

## July is Cord Blood Awareness Month

July been designated Cord Blood Awareness Month by the National Health Information Center and a society of the American Hospital Association, with the goal of educating others about the medical value of cord blood stem cells.

For more information go to <http://www.cordblood.com/>

## DON'T FORGET TO PRECERTIFY

**Med-Cert's Toll-free Precert Telephone Number is (800)-356-7126 and should be reflected on your health insurance ID cards.**

It is ultimately the responsibility of the employee/participant/member to make sure precertification has been done. Many plans will reduce your benefit amount if you fail to precertify.

Group Health Plans vary from one employer to the next so it is important for you to know what your health plan requires. Call the customer service representative for your health plan if you have questions

Below is a list of some of the common Standard Precertification Notification Requirements.

- *Inpatient Hospital Stays*
- *Inpatient Treatment for Mental and Emotional Conditions or Substance Abuse*
- *Inpatient Rehabilitation Therapy*
- *Skilled Nursing Care*
- *Outpatient Stays over 12 hours*
- *Outpatient Surgeries*
- *Physical Therapy after first 6 visits*
- *Speech Therapy after first 6 visits*
- *Home Health Care*
- *Hospice Care*
- *Maternity – on confirmation of pregnancy (or at least 2 months prior to delivery) and again on admission for delivery*
- *Outpatient Procedures – refer to your Employee Benefit Plan booklet as some plans require precertification for outpatient procedures*

### Med-Cert provides:

*Utilization Management, Maternity Management, Large Case and Wellness Disease Management, Transplant Coordination and Stop Loss Assessments*

**For information on any of our services, please call**

**866-261-5657 (toll free). We are on the**

**Internet. Visit us at:**

[www.medcertinc.com](http://www.medcertinc.com)

## Did you know??

Considering all the tissues and cells in your body, 25 million new cells are being produced each second. That's a little less than the population of Canada – every second!

## Recipe Corner



### Crab Bisque

Enjoy a small bowl of this rich seafood cream soup as the First course of a fine meal.

### Ingredients

- 2 cups Water
- 2 cups Clam juice (bottled)
- 1 cup White wine
- 1 medium Onion, rough diced
- 2 stalks Celery, rough diced
- 2 cloves Garlic, peeled, whole
- 1/2 pound Crab meat (lump)
- 1/2 teaspoon Dill
- 1 cup Cream
- 1 Tablespoon Tomato paste
- Salt and white pepper to taste

### Directions

Combine the water, clam juice, wine, onion, celery, and garlic in a large soup pot. Slowly bring to a boil. Reduce the heat and simmer 30 minutes. Strain and return the liquid to the pot. Whisk in the cream and tomato paste. Add the remaining ingredients. Simmer for 25 minutes. Serve warm.  
*Serves 6.*



This newsletter is brought to you courtesy of Med-Cert, Inc. Our sources for this edition are Web MD and Prevention magazine.