

## Health Nuggets January 2021

- 1) For two centuries our normal temperature has been 98.6 Fahrenheit. After studying 35,000 adults in the UK in 2017, and now a 2019 study in Americans, the average temperature is 97.5 F. Our temperature can vary by as much as 1 degree F during the day and tends to decrease as we age.
- 2) Obesity is a disease whose roots are planted in the brain. It's not all about lack of willpower. 450,000 people were studied. They found that genetically there were 26 specific cell populations that process direct actions related to feeding and behavior. Obesity is far more complex than previously recognized. We need more research on the mechanisms of and treatments for weight gain.
- 3) In a survey of 1,272 seniors ages 64+ have taken steps to minimize the risk of COVID-19. They are spending less face-to-face time with family and friends, limiting trips to the grocery store, canceling plans to attend a celebration, saying no to out-of-town trips, skipping funerals, avoiding public places, and canceling doctor's appointments.
- 4) Some information on COVID-19: To go from the identification of a brand new pathogen in January to not only having a safe and highly effective vaccine, but one that's being administered to millions of people is beyond unprecedented. If this were a decade ago, or even 5 years ago, it would have taken several years at best. Speed did not compromise safety or scientific integrity. We've had extraordinary scientific advances that allows us to do things in months that would have otherwise taken years.
- 5) The vaccines' effectiveness was determined by the gold standard, randomized placebo controlled trials. Pfizer's vaccine included 44,000 people and Moderna's vaccine had 30,000 people. The vaccines are 94 to 95% effective. And they're still effective with the new variants.
- 6) In the Pfizer trial 1/3 were 18-65 and healthy, a third had underlying conditions such as obesity, hypertension, and diabetes, and a third were over 65. We won't know until we give the vaccine to millions of people is how effective it's going to be for people who are immunosuppressed, on cancer chemotherapy, or other treatments that modify the immune system. No one will be forced to take the vaccine. It's entirely your choice. There's been much false information received usually through social media. We saw that very clearly with the measles vaccines because of the misinformation that it's associated with autism which is totally untrue.
- 7) Masks and distancing have an upside: I usually get at least one cold /winter, not this year. In Australia their winter ended in August and they had their mildest flu season in recorded history.
- 8) Multiple variants of the coronavirus that causes COVID-19 have been documented in the U S and globally. The UK identified a variant in the fall of 2020. South Africa detected another variant in October 2020. Brazil had a new variant also in early January 2021. They spread more easily and quickly. So far studies suggest that antibodies generated through vaccination recognize these variants.
- 9) Here are some myths and misinformation: The COVID vaccines cause infertility and alter your DNA. Those were two myths making the rounds in December. Anti-vaccine activists

have also falsely claimed that vaccines for polio, hepatitis B, and the HPV (human papillomavirus) cause infertility. Pfizer and Moderna vaccines use messenger RNA to teach the immune system to attack the coronavirus. Although mRNA is similar to DNA, the vaccines can't change your DNA. Like the mRNA your cells make, the vaccine's mRNA is destroyed by the cells' enzymes after it has done its job.