



FOCUS OF THE MONTH

AUGUST 2021

## Gastroparesis (GP)

Gastric motility disorders are gastrointestinal conditions that affect the body's ability to digest food normally. A number of conditions fall into this category, including gastroparesis.

Gastroparesis literally means paralyzed stomach. It is one of the most severe and complicated gastric motility disorders. Gastroparesis can be caused by a number of factors and is commonly seen in the diabetic population; however, often the cause is unknown. It is more prominent among females than males.

Approximately 1 in 25 Americans, including children, suffers from gastroparesis. In some instances, it appears for a brief time and goes away on its own or improves with treatment. Many cases are refractory and do not respond well to treatment.

Gastroparesis is complicated to treat and treatment options are limited. There are few medications available, mostly geared towards symptom control rather than dealing with the underlying problem. For this reason, they are often ineffective.

Additional treatment options include diet changes, certain surgical procedures and, in severe cases, nutritional support through feeding tubes or IV nutrition.

**The symptoms of gastroparesis** can include: upper abdominal pain, nausea vomiting, loss of appetite, bloating, feeling full after only eating a little, malnutrition and unintended weight loss.

Linda Stotler RN,BSN

Parson's District Parish Nurse

Email: [lstotler@greatplainsumc.org](mailto:lstotler@greatplainsumc.org)

Phone: 620-249-1648



## FOCUS OF THE MONTH

September 2020

# SEPTEMBER IS HEALTHY AGEING MONTH

## *10 Tips for Reinventing Yourself during September:*

1. **Do not act your age** or at least what you think your current age should act like. Some people may say this is denial, but we say it's positive thinking and goes a long way toward feeling better about yourself. (Tip: Don't keep looking in the mirror, just FEEL IT!)
2. **Be positive in your conversations** and your actions every day. When you catch yourself complaining, check yourself right there and change the conversation to something positive. (Tip: Stop watching the police reports on the local news.)
3. **Ditch the downer friends.** Have negative friends who complain all of the time and constantly talk about how awful everything is? Drop them. As cruel as that may sound, distance yourself from people who do not have a positive outlook on life. Surround yourself with energetic, happy, positive people of all ages and you will be happier too. (Tip: Smile often. It's contagious and wards off naysayers.)
4. **Walk like a vibrant, healthy person.** Come on. You can probably do it. Analyze your gait. Do you walk slowly because you have just become lazy or, perhaps, have a fear of falling? (Tip: Make a conscious effort to take big strides, walk with your heel first, and wear comfortable shoes.)
5. **Stand up straight!** You can knock off the appearance of a few extra years with this trick your mother kept trying to tell you. Look at yourself in the mirror. Are you holding your stomach in, have your shoulders back, chin up? Check out how much better your neck looks! (Tip: Your waistline will look trimmer if you follow this advice.)
6. **How's your smile?** Research shows people who smile more often are happier. Your teeth are just as important to your good health as the rest of your body. Not only is it the first thing people notice, but good oral health is a gateway to your overall well-being. (Tip: Go to the dentist regularly and look into teeth whitening. Nothing says old more than yellowing teeth!)
7. **Lonely?** Stop brooding and complaining about having no friends or family. Do something about it now. Right this minute. Pick up the phone, landline, or cell and make a call to do one or more of the following: Volunteer your time, take a class, invite someone to meet for lunch, brunch, dinner, or coffee. (Tip: Volunteer at the local public school to stay in touch with younger people and to keep current on trends, take a computer class or a tutorial session at your cell phone store to keep up with technology, choose a new person every week for your dining out.)
8. **Start walking** not only for your health but to see the neighbors. (Tip: If you don't have time for a dog, go to your local animal shelter and volunteer. You will be thrilled by the puppy love!)
9. **Get a physical.** Make this month the time to set up your annual physical and other health screenings. Go to the appointments and then, hopefully, you can stop worrying about ailments for a while. (Tip: For a list of recommended annual health screenings, a great resource is the **My Health Finder**.)
10. **Find your inner artist.** Who says taking music lessons is for young school children? You may have an artist lurking inside you just waiting to be tapped. Have you always wanted to play the piano, violin, or tuba? Have you ever wondered if you could paint a portrait or scenic in oil? What about working in wood? (Tip: Sign up now for fall art or music classes and discover your inner artist!)

Linda Stotler RN,BSN

Parson's District Parish Nurse

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FOCUS OF THE MONTH

**OCTOBER 2021**

## **National Domestic Violence Awareness Month**

October is National Domestic Violence Awareness Month, a time to raise awareness of the facts and warning signs of domestic abuse and how to help those experiencing abuse by a partner, family member or someone else close to them.

Faith communities can play a role during National Domestic Violence Awareness Month – and beyond by:

- Offering education sessions on sexual and domestic violence so congregants can respond safely and effectively when someone asks for help.
- Leading youth group sessions on healthy relationships, free from abuse and controlling behaviors
- Creating a congregational domestic violence response team
- Identifying resources from within your faith or denomination that are available for domestic abuse survivors
- Stocking your congregational library with domestic and sexual violence information, books and videos
- Publicizing local, state and national domestic abuse hotline numbers through programs, newsletters and posters
- Partnering with other congregations, schools, law enforcement and sexual and domestic violence advocates to present programming during Sexual Assault Awareness Month in April and Domestic Violence Awareness Month in October.

Prayer: We ask for continued courage to stand against all forms of oppression and violence in our world. Help us to assist women, men and children who are suffering abuse in their own homes with finding safety and hope for a better future.

Linda Stotler RN,BSN

Parson's District Parish Nurse

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Phone: 620-249-1648



FOCUS OF THE MONTH

NOVEMBER 2021



## National Gratitude Month

National Gratitude Month allows us to acknowledge the blessings we have in our lives. Gratitude, when practiced consistently, has powerful physical, psychological and emotional effects, such as improved overall sense of well-being, a stronger immune system, fewer feelings of isolation, and better sleep.

National Gratitude Month can inspire us to try something new, like meditating on all for which we are thankful. Other ways to observe include:

- Sending emails or handwritten notes to those for whom you are grateful. Share how that person has inspired you or made a positive impact on your life.
- Volunteering at your faith community or nonprofit organization. This can allow you to express gratitude and feel satisfied, knowing your efforts are making a difference.
- Donating to your faith community or favorite charity.
- Keeping a gratitude journal, taking note of the things that you are grateful for that day.

**Prayer: May we do more than just acknowledge the goodness in our lives. Let us recognize the source of the blessings bestowed upon us. Allow us to show our gratitude by serving others during the season of Thanksgiving and beyond. Amen!**

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Parson's District Parish Nurse  
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Phone: 620-249-1648



FOCUS OF THE MONTH

**DECEMBER 2021**

## **HIV/AIDS Awareness Month**

HIV/AIDS Awareness Month provides an opportunity to raise awareness around HIV/ AIDS, commemorate those who have passed on, and celebrate victories, such as increased access to treatment and prevention services.

Faith communities can get involved by:

- Offering educational opportunities with guest speakers from local HIV service organizations.
- Including information about the HIV epidemic and the importance of getting tested in congregational newsletters, social media and other communication outlets.
- Participating in fundraising or advocacy activities.
- Speaking out against HIV stigma.
- Assisting with onsite or mobile testing events by being a greeter, registrar, health educator or HIV tester.
- Volunteering at a local HIV service organization, providing administrative support, such as filing, data entry or answering phones, helping with special events, providing language skills, and offering professional services, such as legal assistance or medical care, if licensed.

**Prayer: Keep us mindful of our sisters and brothers nearby and around the world who are living with HIV and AIDS. We ask that they feel your healing presence. Fill us with hope as we develop new therapeutics and await a cure. Amen!**

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