**Vitamin D and a Healthy Heart: Research Study Opportunity**

This month, the "Take Charge of Your Health Today" page focuses on vitamins and supplements. Jennifer J. Jonas, MPH, community engagement coordinator with the University of Pittsburgh's Department of Pharmacy, was promoting a research study to see if vitamins and supplements could improve heart health. Participants found to have vitamin D deficiency as measured by serum vitamin D levels will be invited to take vitamin D supplements. The study will run from November 1 to April 30, 2016, at Children's Hospital of Pittsburgh of UPMC. More information about the study can be found in the December edition of this newsletter.

**Which dietary supplement is right for you?**

Getting help with supplements can be as easy as walking over to the pharmacy counter. As Dr. Berenbrok reminds us, "Pharmacists have a lot of answers, but sometimes it's in the evenings, weekends and some holidays. They're open in the evenings, weekends and some holidays, and they are staffed by medication experts."

Dr. Lucas A. Berenbrok, PharmD

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**Vitamin D is important for our bone health. Maintaining adequate vitamin D levels in our blood may be beneficial for our heart-health. Our bodies make vitamin D when a particular range of ultraviolet rays in the sunlight bounces off our skin. We can also get vitamin D from foods and supplements.**

**Vitamin D deficiency (low levels of vitamin D) is common in winter among people living in the northern parts of the U.S. and other northern parts of the world. This is because their skin is not exposed to the sun as much as it is in the summer to produce vitamin D. Vitamin D deficiency has been associated with bone and muscle problems.**

**Dr. Kumaravel Rajakumar, M.D., associate professor of Pediatrics, University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine and Children's Hospital of Pittsburgh of UPMC, is conducting a multi-center randomized controlled trial study to see if increasing the vitamin D levels of vitamin D-deficient children with obesity can improve their heart-health.**

Healthy 10- to 18-yr-old children who are overweight or obese are potential participants. Eligible participants must have a vitamin D deficiency as measured by serum vitamin D levels. If you are interested to join the study, contact Dr. Kumaravel Rajakumar at 412-624-4145 or D3VHStudy@chp.edu. Information about the study is also available at www.chp.edu/d3v.