



Z **St. Luke Hometown Health Care** Z
"Modern Medicine in the Old-Time Tradition"
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As September approaches this beautiful end-of-Michigan-Summer we can all begin to imagine the sounds of Fall: the geese honking in that wonderful way as they reluctantly give up their temperate Michigan lakes to turn South, the crackling of the bonfires as they say goodbye to the wispy cloud covered blue skies, the roar of the stadiums as football season finally gets underway.

I know the 'New Year' begins January 1st and yet for most of us the NEW YEAR really begins when our children go back to school (or at least when we used to go back to school). September is really what most of us think of as the start of a new year!! We are going to: get rid of light weight clothes that clutter our closets (but were never worn) as we replace Summer with Fall/Winter apparel; learn a new way to handle stress or a new language for that trip to Europe we might finally talk our spouse into taking next year; start over with projects that never really got 'off the ground' despite our having started them in January.

At St Luke Hometown Healthcare we hope you will also include in this upcoming, beautiful Fall season the promise to 1) get your health in good shape, 2) get your recommended vaccinations (from the flu vaccine to the vaccine for prevention of pneumococcal pneumonia to the shingles prevention vaccine) 3) get what ever your health problems may be (whether high blood pressure, diabetes, overweight condition or muscle soreness/strains) in maximal condition so you can feel your best as the chills of Winter descend upon us!!

High blood pressure (BP) is a perfect example of a malady that most people don't even know they have until somebody takes a reading because they've gone to a doctor for something else. Oh sure, there are patients who suffer headaches and go to a physician only to be told that their high BP is the likely cause of the headaches and, sure enough once the BP is controlled the headaches go away; that is not as common, however, as the patient who has no symptoms to suggest high BP but suddenly learns that he has it!!



At that point some patients believe, "If it isn't broken, don't fix it!!" In other words, "if I don't have symptoms of a BP that is high, I don't want to take medicine for it". That thinking is flawed, however, because that high BP continues to make the left ventricle (the chamber of your heart that does the work of pumping your blood around your body)

overwork itself. If long enough time passes, with that work being a burden to your left ventricle, you can develop heart failure (we often call it *congestive* heart failure as fluid begins to back up into the lungs, causing 'congestion'). I estimate if we took 100 patients that are attached to a tube with an oxygen tank on the end of it, 60 of them would be long time smokers of cigarettes BUT about 30-40 of them were non-smokers all their lives. They need oxygen tanks because their left ventricles failed to continue pumping blood sufficiently and the blood began to back up into their lung causing the congestion.

Flu Shots will be available beginning in mid-October. Please note that it takes two weeks for the vaccine to become effective, and it will usually last for four months. For this reason, we encourage our patients to get their flu shot around November 1st to ensure that it will last through the entire flu season.

It is our hope that you will have a healthy Fall and Winter and we are always here to make sure your enjoyment of these seasons is not hampered by nagging aches and pains or other conditions that can rob you of good health.

Sincerely,

Dr. Jean Dunegan

