

OPINION

## Best LGU health promotion programs named

In recognition of exemplary coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) response and health promotion programs of local government units (LGUs), the first-ever Healthy Pilipinas Awards for Healthy Communities was held this March.

An initiative led by the Department of Health (DoH), the awards recognized model LGU healthcare programs in seven priority areas defined in the DoH Health Promotion Framework Strategy.

"A healthy community is any level of local government unit where the physical, social, political and economic factors that make up the environment of the population are promotive and protective of health; and where healthcare is available and accessible," said DoH Health Promotion Bureau Director Dr. Beverly Lorraine Ho.

For the priority area of nutrition and physical activity, the winners were: Borbon, Cebu – Borbon Healthy Nanay and Bullit; Canlaon, Negros Oriental – Multi-sectoral Approach in the Reduction of Malnutrition; Tandag City – First 1000 Days Program; Bayambang, Pangasinan – ECCD FIK Dietary Supplementation Program for Mothers; and Quezon City – GrowQC: Quezon City's Inclusive and Sustainable Food Security and Healthy Public Food Procurement Program.

For environmental health: Prosperidad, Agusan del Sur – OPLAN ZOD: Toilets for Every Juan; Quezon City – Camp Coordination and Camp Management Program; Carmen, Surigao del Sur – Kugi Uswag Carmen: Annual Search for Environmental and Sanitary Best Practices; Sta. Praxedes Rural Unit – Sapat na Palikuran, Sagot sa Malinis na Kapaligiran; and Borbon, Cebu – Borbon Disaster Risk Reduction and Management in Health and Health Emergency Management Services.

For immunization: Claveria, Cagayan – Immunization; Pampanga Provincial Health Office – Catch-up Immunization Campaign; Imelda, Zamboanga Sibugay – Age-appropriate Immunizations; and Tacloban City – Immunization (COVID-19 Vaccines, Anti-flu, and Pneumococcal for Senior Citizen).

For substance abuse prevention: Cagayan de Oro City – Rehabilitation and Aftercare: Kontra Droga; Ilagan City – Social Advocacy Group and Integration Program (SAGIP); Tacloban City Government – New Beginnings; Antique Province – Tobacco Control Program; and Consolacion Cebu – Community Based Rehabilitation Program.

For mental health: Ilocos Sur – This Book is so Boring – A Self-Care Journal; Baguio City – Mental Health Program; Borbon, Cebu – Mental Health Warriors; Quezon City – Your Mental Health Matters;

The Quezon City Community-Based Mental Health Program; and Bohol – Laum Bohol Program: A Holistic Approach to Mental Wellness.

For sexual and reproductive health: Cagayan de Oro City – Teensights: Adolescent Sexuality and Reproductive Health Insights (Online Campaign); Cabuyao, Laguna – Talk Show with Dra. David at Cabuyao on Air (Population Health and Development); Puerto Princesa City – Sustaining Reproductive Health Services Gearing Towards Population and Development; San Fernando, Camarines Sur – Adolescent Sexual Reproductive Health (ASRH); and Dumaguete City – Sexual and Reproductive Health Promoting Positive Sexual and Reproductive Health in Dumaguete City.

For violence and injury prevention: Valenzuela City – Juana Be Wais: Communicating Violence Prevention; Iloilo City – Iloilo City Bike Lanes; and Lapu-Lapu City – Violence and Injury Prevention Program.

In addition to the priority areas, COVID-19 prevention was also included. Named best LGUs were Baguio City – Baguio BIDA Solusyon Award for COVID-19 Prevention Programs; Legazpi City – The Legazpi COVID-19 Vaccination Program 2021; San Juan City – Ako ay San Juaneño, Bakunado at Protektado: San Juan City Vaccination Information Dissemination Program; and Bataan Province – Bataan Vax; and Guimaras Province – Usapang Bakuna with Barangay Health Workers.

The honorable mentions or the "BIDA Awardees" were San Juan City – COVID-19 Prevention (Minimum Public Health Standards) Program; Ilagan City – Prepare Ilagan (Pandemic Response Program and Recovery of the City of Ilagan); and Biñan City – Sa Lungsod ng Biñan, Bida ang May Bakuna Campaign.

"More than a competition, we want everyone to remember this event as a recognition of the initiatives and activities of LGUs in health promotion. Undoubtedly, many of our *kababayans* benefited from these programs. Indeed, through our concerted efforts, achieving a Healthy Pilipinas is truly within reach," said Health Undersecretary Dr. Maria Rosario S. Vergeire.

TEODORO B. PADILLA is the executive director of Pharmaceutical and Healthcare Association of the Philippines (PHAP), which represents the biopharmaceutical medicines and vaccines industry in the country. Its members are at the forefront of research and development efforts for COVID-19 and other diseases that affect Filipinos.



### MEDICINE CABINET

TEODORO B. PADILLA



## The golden rules of kidney health

THE GOLDEN RULES for kidney health are the golden rules for overall health: physical fitness; proper sleep; adequate nutrition; and the avoidance of vices like smoking. Drinking water, health experts said, is also the best supplement for one's kidneys.

"The cheapest treatment for the kidneys is water," said Dr. Eladio Miguel M. Peñaranda, Jr., a nephrology consultant at Makati Medical Center, in a March 8 webinar organized by the Philippine College of Physicians and the Philippine Society of Nephrologists.

While the advice to drink eight glasses of water a day is a reasonable goal, individual water needs depend

on several factors, including height, exercise, environment, and overall health. According to the Mayo Clinic, adequate daily fluid intake — on average — is 15.5 cups or 3.7 liters of fluids a day for adult men, and 11.5 cups or 2.7 liters of fluids a day for adult women.

Two indicators of adequate fluid intake, the clinic added, are a colorless or light-yellow urine, and seldom feeling thirst.

### CHRONIC KIDNEY DISEASE

One in 10 adults worldwide have kidney disease, said Dr. Michelle Ozaeta-Alpuerto, a nephrologist from Quali Med Hospital Sta. Rosa and Unihealth Parañaque Hospital and Medical Center.

Chronic Kidney Disease (CKD), comes in five progressive stages and is caused by medical conditions such as diabetes, high blood pressure, heart disease, and a family history

of kidney failure. Its signs and symptoms manifest only at stage 4, when the kidneys are already severely damaged, and stage 5, or kidney failure.

While there is no cure for CKD, medications and kidney transplants are treatment options.

Herbal supplements, meanwhile, are not recommended. "There are studies that show herbal supplements with certain ingredients, like aristolochic acid, cause damage to the kidneys," Dr. Alpuerto said in the vernacular. "These supplements have not been studied for use specifically for people with kidney disease."

Frequent intake of over-the-counter (OTC) painkillers like ibuprofen and mefenamic acid may also harm the kidneys. "Don't take OTC painkillers regularly," she said, since ibuprofen can damage the kidneys if taken frequently and for longer periods. — **Patricia B. Mirasol**

## Symptoms of kidney disease

ACCORDING to nephrologist Dr. Michelle Ozaeta-Alpuerto, the signs and symptoms of chronic kidney disease (or the gradual loss of kidney function), are the following:

- nausea or vomiting
- loss of appetite
- itchy skin
- muscle cramps
- fatigue
- trouble sleeping
- anemia
- tea-colored or bubbly urine
- too little or too much urination
- swelling (edema)
- shortness of breath
- mental state changes like disorientation

## Females, pregnancy, and UTI

ONE kidney concern that is more common among women is urinary tract infection (UTI), which is an infection that involves any part of the urinary system.

Women are at greater risk because of their shorter urethra, which translates to a shorter distance from which bacteria can travel to reach the bladder. Certain types of birth control methods — like diaphragms — may increase the risk of UTI. Other states — like pregnancy and menopause — also cause hormonal changes, making one more vulnerable to infection.

If left untreated, UTI may move upstream to one or both kidneys, leading to more serious infections. For pregnant women, the risks of untreated UTI include preterm labor and low birth weight.

Practicing good hygiene is one of the simplest ways to prevent UTI. Always wipe from front to back after bowel movement. Avoid tight-fitting underwear. Minimize the use of douches. — Dr. Kathryn Marie L. Ramirez, senior fellow-in training, nephrology section, Makati Medical Center

## 1 in 4 symptomatic kids suffer from long COVID

THE FOLLOWING is a summary of some recent studies on coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19). They include research that warrants further study to corroborate the findings and that has yet to be certified by peer review.

### ONE IN FOUR KIDS WITH COVID DEVELOP LINGERING PROBLEMS

One in four children with COVID-19 symptoms develop "long COVID," according to data pooled from 21 earlier studies conducted in Europe, Asia, Australia, and South America.

Among the 80,071 children with COVID-19 in the studies, 25% developed symptoms that lasted at least 4-to-12 weeks or new persistent symptoms that appeared within 12 weeks, researchers reported on Sunday on *medRxiv* ahead of peer review.

The most frequent problems were neuropsychiatric (mood symptoms, fatigue, sleep disorders, headaches, cognitive alterations, dizziness, balance problems), cardiorespiratory (breathing difficulty, congestion, exercise intolerance, chest pain and tightness, cough, irregular heart rhythm), skin-related (excessive sweating, itchiness, hair loss) and gastrointestinal (abdominal pain, constipation, diarrhea, vomiting, and nausea).

Analyses of data pooled from many different studies with different methodologies cannot yield firm conclusions, the researchers acknowledge.

What is clear, however, is that "children and adolescents have also physical and mental health consequences derived from COVID-19," said study coauthor Sonia Villapol of Houston Methodist Research Institute in Texas. "Identifying the main signs and symptoms of pediatric long COVID can help diagnose, develop better treatments, create multidisciplinary teams for optimal clinical management, and find risk factors for prevention."

### VACCINE PROTECTION IN MOTHER'S MILK STRONGEST AFTER mRNA SHOTS

Women who wish to pass protective antibodies induced by COVID-19 vaccines to their babies via breast milk should opt for the mRNA shots from Moderna or Pfizer/BioNTech, according to a study reported on Monday in *JAMA Pediatrics*.

For the study, 124 lactating women each provided 17 milk samples over a period of 100 days. The women had received either an

mRNA vaccine or a vector-based vaccine from Johnson & Johnson (J&J) or AstraZeneca.

Researchers measured two types of antibodies in the milk samples — IgA antibodies and IgG antibodies, both of which are thought to play important roles in protecting breastfed infants.

Nearly all — 96% to 97% — of the women who received both doses of an mRNA vaccine had detectable IgA antibodies in their milk, while only 39% had antibodies in their milk after two doses of the AstraZeneca shot and 48% after the one-dose J&J vaccine.

All the women who received both doses of the Pfizer/BioNTech, Moderna or AstraZeneca vaccines had IgG antibodies, compared to only 28% of women who received J&J's shot.

"An mRNA-based COVID-19 vaccine is the optimal choice for lactating women when they want to transfer breast milk antibodies to their infants," the researchers concluded.

### OMICRON IS INFECTIOUS ON SURFACES LONGER THAN ORIGINAL VIRUS

Omicron particles remain infectious on surfaces for longer periods than particles of the original SARS-CoV-2, according to laboratory experiments.

Researchers put droplets of infectious virus from the original coronavirus version and the Omicron BA.1 variant on a variety of surfaces at room temperature.

On smooth surfaces (glass, stainless steel and plastic sheet), Omicron was still infectious after seven days, whereas particles of the original SARS-CoV-2 were no longer infectious on stainless steel and plastic sheets by day 4 and on glass by day 7, the researchers reported on Thursday on *bioRxiv* ahead of peer review.

On tissue paper and printing paper, the original virus was no longer infectious at 30 minutes. Omicron was still infectious at 30 minutes, but no longer after an hour, the researchers said.

For the most part, SARS-CoV-2 is transmitted via respiratory droplets in the air. While infection via contact with contaminated surfaces is less common, the new study "highlights the importance of hand hygiene and cleaning on surfaces that are regularly touched by different persons," said study coauthor Leo Poon of the University of Hong Kong. "For surfaces and settings contaminated by a COVID-19 patient, proper cleaning should be done." — **Nancy Lapid/Reuters**

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