



# The Monthly INSTALLment

UHS Health Promotion Office, UHS Building, 2nd Floor, 585-273-5772, www.rochester.edu/uhs

May 2010



## Safety & Selflessness

The UHS Health Promotion Office hopes you have a **fabulous** summer!

### Drive Safely



In 2008, nine teens ages 16 to 19 died every day from motor vehicle injuries. Motor vehicle accidents are the leading cause of death for U.S. teens, accounting for more than one in every three deaths in this age group.

#### According to recent studies:

- The #1 reason for a driver's inattention is the use of a wireless device.
- Drivers who use cell phones while driving are 4 times more likely to get into crashes causing injury to themselves or others.
- 10% of drivers ages 16-24 are on their cell phone at any one time while driving.
- Driving while distracted is a factor in 25% of police reported crashes.
- Driving while using a cell phone reduces the amount of brain activity associated with driving by 37%.



### Bicycle Safety

- A **helmet** is the single most effective way to prevent head injury resulting from a bicycle accident.
- Bicyclists are considered **vehicle operators**; they are required to obey the same rules of the road as other vehicle operators and ride in the same direction as traffic flow. Obey traffic signs, signals, and lane markings.
- The **safest** place for cycling is in the street. Bicycling on the sidewalk is dangerous for both bicyclists & pedestrians and in many locations considered illegal.
- Bicyclists should increase their **visibility** to drivers by wearing fluorescent or brightly colored clothing during the daytime and at night. When riding at night, use lights, reflectors, and reflective tape or markings on equipment or clothing.
- Drivers of motor vehicles need to **share** the road with bicyclists. Allow at least three feet clearance when passing a bicyclist on the road, look for cyclists before opening a car door or pulling out from a parking space, and yield to cyclists at intersections and as directed by signs and signals.

### Safe Use of Prescription Medications

Prescription medications are necessary treatments for a variety of health conditions. Most people who take prescription medications do use them responsibly. The prescription drugs used to treat ADD (Ritalin, Adderall, and others) are **used without a prescription by about 5% of college students**, often to study or write a paper at the end of a semester. These drugs in particular can cause serious problems when used in the absence of medical supervision.

A common misconception is that a prescription medication used for non-medical reasons is a safer choice than using a street drug. Unfortunately, misuse of prescription medications can lead to addiction and physical dependence. Additionally, dangerous health consequences such as: decreased brain function, irregular heartbeat, or seizures can occur with the misuse of many prescription medications.

For more information visit: [www.drugabuse.gov](http://www.drugabuse.gov).

### Volunteering

Are you looking for opportunities to volunteer in the community? Are you hoping to gain some career experience this summer?

Here are some tips for finding opportunities:

- Utilize your skills. Whatever you are good at can be put to good use by non-profit organizations and local agencies.
- Talk with professors, campus staff members, or the Rochester Center for Community Leadership (RCCL) to learn about opportunities or organizations in need.
- Look for courses during the school year that offer service components. It's a great way to make connections and gain work experience.
- Ask your friends to help. Studies have shown that the #1 reason why people volunteer is because someone asked them to help.
- Ask around. Word of mouth is a great way to find opportunities.
- Check out [www.volunteer.gov](http://www.volunteer.gov) for volunteer opportunities.



### Health Benefits of Altruism



Altruism can be defined as an unselfish concern for the needs of others.

Research suggests that there are positive mental health benefits to those who are altruistic.

According to the Dartmouth Undergraduate Journal of Science, there may be physical health benefits as well. Those who volunteer tend to live longer than those who do not.

Additionally, there seems to be evidence that volunteers are also physically healthier than those who do not volunteer. These individuals tend not to participate in activities that pose a threat to their health.

At UR, 30% of our students surveyed last fall indicated that they volunteer between 1-9 hours a week. Another 2% indicated that they volunteer more than 10 hours per week!

### Organ Donation

There is nothing more selfless than the act of giving. Becoming an organ donor is one example of this. Many people are not aware of the importance of organ donation or have misconceptions about the donation process.



Here are some interesting facts about organ donation:

- Each day, 78 Americans will receive a life-saving organ transplant.
- More than 100,000 people are on a waiting list for an organ donation.
- More than 100 people die every week while waiting for an organ from the National Transplant List.

While some of us may wish to donate our organs or bodies after we die; many of us may be eligible to be living donors as well. It is important to know all of the facts associated with organ donation before making such a personal choice.

Contact a donor registry in your home state or visit: [www.organdonor.gov](http://www.organdonor.gov) or [www.donatelifeny.org](http://www.donatelifeny.org) for more information.

#### Did you know?

Using a seat belt reduces the risk of death in a car accident by 61%!