



KALAMAZOO GAZETTE

NOW YOU KNOW

Tuesday, March 04, 2008

FROM BEADS TO STRAPS

Trendier medical IDs offered to teens

Many teens with illnesses such as asthma and diabetes are looking for something subtle and stylish when it comes to medical identification. They want something that doesn't scream "I have an illness" or "I'm different."

Over the past few years, companies have been popping up around the country touting trendier medical ID jewelry. They offer everything from glow-in-the-dark beads and Swarovski crystals to wood beads and leather straps that look like "normal" accessories.

The medical IDs provide important information, such as allergies, medications and an emergency contact number.

"Find the best medical ID that fits your personality. All it takes is one time for it to be a matter of life and death," said Susan Eisen, who created LIFETAG, which integrates the medical caduceus symbol into silver, gold, rubber, bead and stainless-steel jewelry.

-- Newhouse News Service

Where to find them

v beadin-beagle.com

v laurenshope.com

v lifetag.com

EXPERTS CITE REASONS

Why flu shots for nearly all children?

ATLANTA -- Last week an advisory panel from the federal Centers for Disease Control recommended that virtually all children -- not just those under 5 -- receive flu shots. Only infants younger than 6 months and those with serious egg allergies were excluded from the recommendation.

Why the recommendation? Reducing illness among children ages 5 to 18 should cut down on days of lost work for parents who take care of them, some experts say. Children of that age get flu at higher rates than other age groups.

Experts also say giving flu shots to more children may prevent the illness from spreading to adults and the elderly, although studies haven't clearly established that will happen.

-- Associated Press

'ALARMINGLY LOW'

Just 1 in 4 know heart-attack warning signs

ATLANTA -- Only about 1 in 4 Americans know the warning signs of a heart attack and what to do first, according to a new government report.

That's a decline in knowledge since the last survey in 2001, which showed nearly 1 in 3 to be well informed.

The study's lead author, Dr. Jing Fang, of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, called public awareness in the new survey ``alarmingly low."

Heart-attack warning signs can include one or more of the following: shortness of breath; pain or discomfort in the chest; discomfort in the arms or shoulder; a feeling of weakness or lightheadedness; and discomfort in the jaw, neck or back.

-- Associated Press

CORPORATE INTEREST

High health costs drive push for online prescribing

WASHINGTON -- Motivated by mounting medical costs, lawmakers and executives are urging doctors to embrace a seemingly simple way to save billions of dollars a year: prescribe medications online.

Officials in the public and private sectors say electronic prescriptions will make transactions more efficient, reduce medication errors and entice doctors to prescribe less-expensive drugs.

A majority of pharmacies are equipped to receive electronic prescriptions, but just 6 percent of U.S. physicians own the software, according to Surescripts, an electronic-prescribing network operator.

Ford Motor Co., Verizon and Wal-Mart are pulling for electronic prescribing to keep their health-care costs from pummeling profits.

-- Associated Press

A NORTHERN NEED

It's time to get your vitamin D

Michigan citizens are particularly susceptible to vitamin D deficiency because the scarcity of sunlight during the winter months makes it difficult for the body to manufacture the vitamin.

A deficiency can lead to fatigue and depression and increase the risk of many types of cancer, according to a press release from the UV Foundation.

People interested in boosting their vitamin D production during the winter can seek moderate exposure to UV light from a tanning bed. Other options for getting vitamin D are a diet rich in vitamin D supplements and certain foods such as salmon, mackerel, tuna fish, sardines, vitamin D-fortified milk and ready-to-eat cereals.

-- Kalamazoo Gazette

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