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Web site might show you have health coverage after all

By: E'LOUISE ONDASH - For the North County Times



not know it. How can you find out?

Visit www.coverageforall.org, a Web site developed by the nonprofit San Jose-based Foundation for Health Coverage Education, a clearinghouse for 144 government programs. You also can call the U.S. Uninsured Help Line at 800-234-1317 to find a plan that might be a fit. Either way, you'll be able to take a five-question quiz that helps determine whether you qualify for some plan.

This hardly compares to the 100-question test required in most places in California.

The goal of the Web site and the help line is to reduce the bureaucratic steps needed to apply for government-paid health coverage. The site provides access to every state's programs. Studies show that nearly one-third of the 47 million uninsured in the country are probably eligible for government-sponsored health insurance but are not enrolled.

Is red wine any better than other types of alcohol when it comes to protecting against heart disease?

This is the question that researchers at Toronto General Hospital set out to explore in a study published in the February issue of the American Journal of Physiology, Heart and Circulatory Physiology.

They found that after one drink of red wine or other alcohol, blood vessels did "relax" or expand, which reduced the strain on the heart. But after two drinks of either wine or spirits, the amount of blood pumped from the heart, the action of the sympathetic nervous system and the heart rate all increased. The ability of blood vessels to expand diminished.

In case you're wondering how the research unfolded: Healthy, non-smoking adults who were neither heavy drinkers nor abstainers attended three morning sessions two weeks apart. At each session, each participant drank a 4-ounce glass of wine and a 1.5-ounce glass of spirits. The wine was a moderately priced pinot noir with verified high t-resveratrol content, a compound that has high antioxidant properties. Some think that resveratrol may improve blood vessel function and prevent platelets from sticking together, thus reducing clot formation and the risk of heart attack or stroke.

The American Heart Association doesn't recommend that

If you have no health insurance, you might qualify for a government-sponsored plan and

anyone start drinking to prevent heart disease; rather exercise and a healthy diet are the way to go. Besides reducing the risk of heart disease and avoiding obesity, there's another reason to eat a diet high in vegetables and lean protein and low in fat and red meat: Such a diet decreases the risk of developing an enlarged prostate or benign prostate hypertrophy.

A study published online in the American Journal of Epidemiology found that high-fat diets increase the risk of BPH by about a third. Add red meat and the risk increases to 38 percent. Eating four or more servings of vegetables daily was associated with a 32 percent decreased risk, and eating lean meats reduces the risk by 15 percent.

Drinking no more than two drinks a day was associated with a 38 percent decline in BPH risk.

Why a high-fat diet increases the risk of BPH is not fully understood, but it could be that a high-fat intake causes chronic inflammation and changes in hormones.

An enlarged prostate puts pressure on the urethra, making it difficult to empty the bladder completely. Thus the frequent urge to urinate.

The study was conducted at medical centers in Seattle, Los Angeles and San Antonio and funded by the National Institutes of Health.

It's a debate that's likely to continue, but the most recent study of glucosamine showed that the amino sugar supplement did not decrease pain and stiffness, increase function or prevent the progression of arthritis in the hip.

The two-year study in the Netherlands randomly assigned 222 patients to take 1,500 milligrams of glucosamine a day or a placebo. The volunteers had "relatively early stages" of arthritis in the hip; about half had mild arthritis for three years or less.

The glucosamine supplier was required to double-check that the tablets were the correct dose, and doctors, volunteers and researchers did not know who received what. More than 90 percent of the participants completed the study, which was conducted without pharmaceutical company funding. The research was published in the Feb. 19 issue of the Annals of Internal Medicine.

Glucosamine is derived from shellfish shells and because it is a dietary supplement, its manufacture and quality are not regulated in this country.