

## May newsletter from your healthcare providers Canterbury Wellness Center

In this issue we bring you information about medical identity theft, ways to keep your cool while dealing with a crying baby, tips on instant relief from a bee sting, and amazing success stories from the National Weight Control Registry. (Direct web links to all publications in blue)

### **The Scary Truth About Medical Identity Theft**

Medical identity theft is more than costly -- it can be life-threatening

By R. Morgan Griffin

[WebMD the Magazine](#) -- Feature

Reviewed by Brunilda Nazario, MD

Nobody wants to get a hospital bill for \$44,000. But for Joe Ryan, a Colorado pilot and owner of Rocky Mountain Biplane Adventures, it was especially upsetting. He'd never even had surgery before, but he was being asked to pay for it. Ryan's "medical identity" had been stolen.

When someone uses your personal information to collect money, prescription drugs, goods, or health services, it's called medical identity theft.

Like other versions of identity theft, it causes severe financial problems and indescribable annoyance. But in some ways it's worse; if a thief tampers with your medical records, your chart could have the wrong history and diagnoses.

Those errors can cause serious trouble when you do need medical care.

"Medical identity theft causes terrible harm, both financial and physical," says Pam Dixon, executive director of the World Privacy Forum. And it's becoming more common. She estimates that up to 500,000 Americans may be victims, and many don't even know it.

After Ryan got the bill in spring 2004, he pushed for an investigation, which revealed that an ex-con had checked into a hospital using Ryan's Social Security number. The crook had gotten his operation without a hitch -- sticking the real Ryan with the bill.

Some cases of medical identity theft are like Ryan's, in which someone gets medical care using another person's name. But most involve organized crime rings -- often with the help of corrupt health care workers and sometimes even doctors -- that get rich using a person's medical information to file false claims with insurance companies.

Dixon says that criminals even set up fake clinics, or buy real ones, as a cover. Victims may not know it's happened until they are denied coverage for a pre-existing medical condition that they don't have.

"It's very lucrative," Dixon says. Done over six months to a year, it can net \$1 million to \$2 million -- which makes credit card theft look like small change.

And now that medical records are going electronic, stealing them is getting easier.

"Before, you couldn't steal a million paper files from a hospital," she says. "Now you can walk out with a million digital files on your iPod."

More than two years later, Ryan remains frustrated. "I still can't get my medical records straightened out," he says. And he has the emotional scars to prove it.

## **Arm Yourself**

Federal confidentiality laws meant to protect you can actually make it harder for you to see what's in your own corrupted records. Dixon offers this advice:

- Every year, ask your insurance company for a complete list of payments it has made for your medical care.
- Call (877) 322-8228 or go to [www.annualcreditreport.com](http://www.annualcreditreport.com). A current credit report will alert you to any suspicious activity.

## **Babies cry . . . be prepared!** **As seen in COLORADO PARENT, April 2007**

By: Andrew Sirotnak, MD  
Director, Kempe Child Protection Team  
The Children's Hospital & Kempe Center for the Prevention and Treatment of Child Abuse and Neglect

We all know that babies cry - but sometimes the reality of being in a room with a screaming baby frays the nerves of any caregiver, and sometimes, tragically, caregivers cross the line and take their frustration out on the child.

Statistics nationally and statewide indicate that child abuse cases are not declining very much. At The Children's Hospital, we see several infants and children each month who are suffering as a result of child abuse. That's why Children's is working on an awareness campaign with The Kempe Foundation and Kohl's. By providing people with tips on how to calm a crying baby, we hope to provide ideas for caregivers who are feeling overwhelmed. And, just as importantly, to let people know they aren't alone. Everyone gets overwhelmed, tired and frustrated . . . caring for a baby is hard work.

Child abuse is the third leading cause of admission to Children's trauma program and the most recent registry data shows that Children's admits more than 70 percent of all inpatient child abuse traumas in Colorado. These children are injured severely and in many cases, the severity of their injuries ranks right up with motor vehicle traumas. Shaken baby syndrome (SBS) is one of the most common forms of child abuse seen at Children's.

SBS is a serious type of head injury that occurs when an infant or toddler is severely or violently shaken or thrown down. This action often leads to brain damage, hearing loss, blindness, speech or learning disabilities, cerebral palsy and mental retardation or even death.

Babies get fussy and it's not always easy to figure out why they are crying. It is normal for babies to cry and for caregivers to become frustrated. The most important thing to remember is to be patient and never, ever shake a baby. Babies do eventually grow out of their crying. Keeping your baby safe is the most important thing you can do. We all need to be advocates for kids of all ages and keep them safe. Help is available. Visit [www.dontshakeababy.com](http://www.dontshakeababy.com) for more information about child abuse and how to prevent it.

## **How to Calm A Crying Baby**

- Check physical needs first: Is the baby hungry? Thirsty? Need to be burped? Too hot or too cold? Diaper dirty?
- Check for signs of illness or fever. If you think the baby may be sick, seek medical attention immediately.
- Rock the baby, hold the baby close or walk with the baby.
- Stand up, hold the baby close and repeatedly bend at your knees.
- Sing or talk to the baby in a soothing voice.
- Gently rub or stroke the baby's back, chest or tummy.
- Offer a pacifier or try to distract the baby with a rattle or toy.
- Swaddle the baby with a soft blanket.
- Turn on some music or noise like a vacuum cleaner or clothes dryer.
- Take the baby for a ride in a stroller or in a car seat in the car.

Try each of the above for a few minutes before trying something else, or try a few together. If nothing seems to work, it is OK to leave the baby in a safe place (like a crib) and take time to calm down. Leave the room. Shut the door. Take a few deep breaths. Call a friend, family member or your health-care provider.

To request copies of our How to Calm a Crying Baby brochure, please call The Children's Hospital at 303-861-6555. You also may download a PDF of the brochure at [www.dontshakeababy.com](http://www.dontshakeababy.com).

### **Kempe Child Protection Team**

The Children's Hospital houses the Kempe Child Protection Team which offers comprehensive, multidisciplinary consultation, assessment, treatment, and referral services for children and adolescents who may have been physically or sexually abused or neglected. In collaboration with Kempe, sensitive care is provided by dedicated clinicians to help the hospital and community identify, treat and console child abuse victims and their families. For more information, visit [www.dontshakeababy.com](http://www.dontshakeababy.com).

### **Most Recent Data**

The most recent available US Department of Health and Human Services data noted the following:

- 3 million reported child abuse cases in 2004.
- This reflects an estimated 872,000 victims in 2004 for a national incidence rate of 12 per 1,000 children.
- Each year nationally, there are approximately 1,400 deaths and in 2004, there were 1,490 reported deaths for an incidence rate of 2.03 per 100,000 children.

In Colorado:

- More than 120,000 cases were reported in 2004.
- Of these cases there were 9,578 victims and an incidence rate of 8.1 per 1,000 children.
- There were 35 deaths from abuse in 2004 for an incidence rate of 2.97 per 100,000 children.

### **Instant Relief from Bee Stings**

[www.CanterburyWellnessCenter.com](http://www.CanterburyWellnessCenter.com)

## From Herbal Remedies Info

If you, or someone you know, gets stung by a bee, do this:

First, remove the stinger by gently scraping it away with a dull knife or a credit card.

Next, take a tablet of Alka-Seltzer and slightly moisten it so that it begins to fizz when you apply it to the sting. Alka-Seltzer contains baking soda, which reduces inflammation and aspirin, which relieves the pain. The fizzing allows both substances to travel beneath your skin, providing immediate relief!

## The National Weight Control Registry Success Stories

There are currently more than five thousand members of the National Weight Control Registry, all of whom have lost significant amounts of weight and kept it off. These members lost the weight in a variety of ways and for a variety of reasons. Some have lost 30 pounds, some 130 pounds. Some have kept the weight off for one year, some for decades. What they all have in common, though, is a commitment to successful weight loss maintenance. These are the success stories of just a few of our many participants.

### **Sandra Wright, member since March 2005**

Sandra Wright lost 100 pounds over the course of a year through a combination of portion control, food records, and regular exercise. She attributes her success largely to a change in attitude and outlook. “By changing my ‘self-talk,’ I went from thinking that sitting up in bed to read was an aerobic activity to running half-marathons. I'm now an active, healthy, energetic woman who loves to exercise. Although I slowly regained 30 pounds over a period of 13 years, in 2003 I lost the extra weight and am back to maintaining the 100-pound weight loss.”



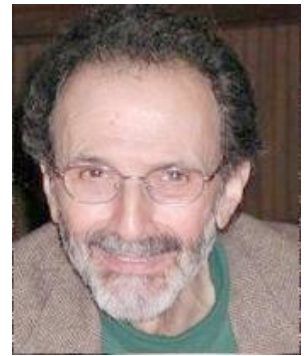
### **Drew Saur, member since August 2005**

At 325 pounds, 34-year-old Drew Saur decided in 2003 that it was time to make some major lifestyle changes. “I embarked on a two year odyssey that started with counting calories to see how much I was ingesting. As it turned out, I was eating somewhere between 4,000 to 5,000 calories per day! By gradually reducing my caloric intake and learning that being hungry before meals could actually be a good thing, I lost weight at a safe rate of about two to three pounds per week.” Drew started to walk on a regular basis, and as he lost more weight, the walking soon turned to running. Today, Drew has lost over 150 pounds and regularly runs 5Ks and half-marathons. “I joined the NWCR in the hope that the knowledge and experience I have gained can be put to use helping other people make similar wonderful transformations in their lives.”



### **Charles Aloisio, member since July 1998**

It wasn't until Charles Aloisio was in his fifties that he realized there was something unhealthy and problematic about his relationship with food. "My relationship with food was very much like that of the alcoholic with alcohol," he said. Unable to stabilize his weight, he began to view his problems with food more as a disease that he could cure with a lifestyle change. This change began with adopting a vegan diet, and once he combined healthy eating and portion control, he lost 100 pounds. Now in his seventies, Charles exercises regularly and has been maintaining a healthy weight for over 16 years. He describes his current challenge as, "Finding ways to help others find what I have found. It is amazing to be totally free of the bondage of food."



### **Michal Eakin, member since June 2003**

Michal Eakin was significantly overweight throughout childhood, adolescence, and early adulthood. By the early 1980's, numerous unsuccessful dieting attempts had left her feeling frustrated and hopeless. It wasn't until 1984, when Michal changed her mindset and her priorities, that she successfully lost over 60 pounds. She has maintained this weight loss ever since. "It took refusing to continue enslaving my life to bingeing and obesity, as well as recognizing my own unique irreplaceable value. From there, I learned to make my health un-negotiably important. Following that, it took little to no effort to apply what I had known all along but was unable to persist in doing."

