



# The Toilet Paper

Division of Student Affairs



EASTERN  
CONNECTICUT  
STATE UNIVERSITY



## The Common Cold...It's Just a Matter of Time

A scratchy throat, stuffed up nose, sneezing, chest cough, sinus headache...the symptoms of the common cold are pretty straight forward.

Caused by a number of different viruses, colds almost always get better after 1-2 weeks without the need to see the doctor or take antibiotics like amoxicillin. That's true even if you have thick green nasal discharge or cough up phlegm. Plenty of rest, lots of fluids and some decent food usually do the trick along with perhaps some decongestants and cough medicine to relieve symptoms. Once in a great while, however, a cold may turn out to be more than just a cold and may require additional medical attention. The question is how do you know when something more serious is going on? The following signs can help you decide:

- ◆ If, after two weeks, your cold symptoms haven't improved at all or are getting worse, it's time to get checked out.
- ◆ If your cold has gotten a lot better as expected but then the symptoms, such as cough or sinus pain and congestion, suddenly get much worse again, it's time to get checked out.
- ◆ If you have a fever. Typically, colds don't produce fevers but if they do, the fevers are generally very mild (less than 100°) and last at most a day maybe two. If you have or develop a fever of around 100° or higher 3-4 days after the start of your cold, it's time to get checked out. (Of course, it helps to have a thermometer.)

## Give a Pint, Save a Life... or Maybe Three



Although more famous for being Valentine's Day, February 14th is also *National Donor Day*. That being so, what better time to remind folks about the upcoming blood drive on February 19th, 20th and 21st from 11 am—4 pm in the Student Center's BTR. (See Upcoming Events) According to the American Red Cross, approximately 5 million men, women and children in the U.S. need blood annually—about one person every two seconds—yet only a tiny 5% of the eligible population donates each year. That's a shame considering one unit of blood, which eventually is separated into red cells, plasma and platelets, can help as many as three different people. Let's face it—when it comes to blood, there is no substitute for the real thing and that, as one person once wrote, “can only come as a gift from other people.”



## A Subject Worth Bringing Up

Twenty years ago the term erectile dysfunction was whispered only in doctor's offices – and rarely at that. Today, it's almost impossible to turn on the TV without seeing a commercial for products used to treat ED. While this may not be viewed as a good thing by some, the greater openness surrounding this condition has encouraged more men dealing with it to seek help. Although erectile dysfunction affects males of all ages, including those in college, it becomes significantly more prevalent as men get older, especially after age 50. Its causes are many but differ depending on age. In older individuals, the main culprit – by far – is damaged blood vessels (atherosclerosis) due to *smoking*, high blood pressure, high cholesterol and diabetes. Basically the same things that lead to heart attacks and strokes can lead to ED so older men experiencing it should see their doctor to determine the exact cause and whether additional evaluation for heart and vascular disease is needed. Other less frequent causes in this age group include hormonal (testosterone), psychological and spinal cord problems. In young men, medical conditions are far less likely the issue. Instead, psychological factors such as stress, depression and generalized or performance anxiety tend to top the list. These often are temporary and usually clear up on their own. However, sometimes they may not in which case help is available. In fact, whatever its cause and whatever age it occurs, erectile dysfunction, by and large, can be and often is successfully treated. ***For the cigarette smoking male students out there, ED may not be a problem right now but, chances are, it's only a matter of time. It really would be a shame to see your sex life go up in smoke.***

## Upcoming Events

HIV Testing -  
At Health Services (465-5263)  
Mon., Feb. 25th 2-4 pm  
Thurs., Feb. 28th 12-3 pm



You can always check out our website  
[www.easternct.edu/depts/health](http://www.easternct.edu/depts/health) under “events”  
for additional testing dates and times this semester

Blood Drive- +  
Feb. 19th, 20th and 21st, 11 am—4 pm  
BTR of the Student Center, Call x50090  
to reserve a time \*See article above\*



## The Funny Bone....

A man said to his friend,  
“I keep seeing spots in  
front of my eyes.”  
The friend asked, “Well,  
have you seen a doctor ?”  
The man replied, “No,  
just spots.”

## The Pressure is Off When It Comes to Eating Chocolate



Yet more sweet news about the health benefits of chocolate. Results from a study published just this last summer in the Journal of the American Medical Association found that a daily piece of chocolate lowered blood pressure 2-3 points. That may not sound like much but it's estimated that the difference could reduce a person's risk of death from a stroke by 8% and from a heart attack by 5%. However, before you run out of the bathroom to buy a 2 pound bag of peanut M&Ms or a 30 pack of Reese's Peanut Butter Cups read on. The amount of daily chocolate consumed by participants in the study was just 6.3 grams – little more than one Hershey's kiss which weighs 5 grams. What's more, not any chocolate will do. It has to be dark chocolate. That's because dark chocolate has a higher cacao content and therefore has greater amounts of flavanols – the substance in chocolate believed to lower blood pressure by causing blood vessels to dilate. If you're tempted to try this tasty “treatment”, look for dark chocolate (no caramel, nuget or other sugar add-ons please) with a cacao content of at least 45% or, even better, 60-70%. The number is usually listed on the product label. Those of you with diabetes, high cholesterol or heart disease, it's probably a good idea to check with your health care provider first.