

Can Video Games Help *Treat Addiction?*

Video games probably do not come to mind when you hear the words “addiction treatment.” But that may change. Scientists say therapies that use video gaming technology may eventually help people overcome addictions.

Called “virtual reality cue reactivity,” this type of therapy already is used to help people overcome phobias like the fear of flying. Now, researchers at Duke University are testing virtual reality as a way to help people avoid temptations to use alcohol, drugs and even cigarettes.

This experimental technique uses a virtual reality simulator where videos immerse participants in a party scene, a bar or other situations that trigger cravings for addictive substances. In these virtual worlds, even smells like beer or cigarette smoke can be added to make them seem more real.

A therapist works with participants to teach them how to recognize temptations in these virtual settings and develop avoidance strategies they can take back to their real

lives. While researchers admit it's too soon to know how effective these treatments will be compared to conventional therapies, they are confident that virtual reality can play a role in kicking addictions.

Addiction is a multi-faceted problem, and complementary therapies can help people recover. However, the best treatments typically use some combination of counseling or behavior therapy, along with medication and detox.

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ISSUE
FOCUS

Addiction

Junk Food *Junkie*

You might joke about being hooked on fudge ripple ice cream, but can food really be addictive in the same way as alcohol, drugs or gambling?

Some scientists say yes. A screening test developed at Yale University diagnoses “food addiction” using the criteria for substance abuse established by the American Psychiatric Association. Called the Yale Food Addiction Scale, this test shows that certain types of food—usually those high in fat and sugar—stimulate the same patterns in the brain that drugs and alcohol do. And, like drug addicts, food addicts can develop tolerances to certain foods so they have to eat even more to get the “high” they seek.

Twelve-step programs like Food Addicts Anonymous and Food Addicts in Recovery Anonymous offer help to those who struggle to control cravings for high-calorie foods. In meetings held face to face, by phone or online, participants help each other make healthier choices and recognize triggers, such as TV commercials or stressful events, that can lead to binge eating. ■



Treating Addiction

continued from front page

No One-Size-Fits-All Solutions

When alcohol or drugs start to undermine someone's health and safety, damage relationships or affect performance at work or school, professional help may be needed. Finding help, however, can be challenging. Recovery is not a one-size-fits-all endeavor, and many things must be considered before committing to a program.

Treatment programs can range from outpatient services scheduled around work or school to residential rehab, which involves living in a facility for several weeks or months while undergoing treatment. Alcoholics Anonymous also sponsors free local groups that provide ongoing support for substance abusers and their families.

Addiction Vaccines in Development

Imagine if we could fight addictions like we do influenza, whooping cough and measles—with a vaccine. Researchers say it may well be possible.

Scientists have been working on vaccines that use the body's immune response to keep those addicted to stimulants from feeling high after using drugs like meth or cocaine. The hope is that these vaccines will help people struggling with substance abuse to kick the habit.

But don't expect a shot to be a panacea for drug users, warn experts. Addiction is a complicated disease, and vaccines will probably work best when used in conjunction with behavior-modification, drug therapy and other treatments.

✓ **Aftercare plans.** It's important to have a detailed, individualized discharge plan for post-treatment. Ask what kind of follow-up care is available, including support for those who relapse.

Getting Help

The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services maintains a searchable database of licensed, certified drug and alcohol treatment facilities at www.samsha.gov. You also can call its helpline at 1-800-662-HELP. ■



More Than Pumpkins

If you haven't dropped by a farmers market recently—or ever—autumn is the perfect time to go. Thanks to cultivation methods that extend the growing season, many farmers markets are open well into the fall and even year-round in some areas.

And fall markets are not just packed with pumpkins. Many veggies and fruits are at nutritious and delicious peaks in the fall. Look for apples, eggplant, cabbage, root vegetables and more. Leafy greens like kale, spinach, collards and turnip greens also are good fall picks.

Patronizing your farmers market is a great way to support local farmers and the regional economy. Often, you can meet the growers in person and ask where their apples were grown or when their pumpkins were picked. If you're trying to avoid pesticides, don't hesitate to talk to the farmers about their growing methods.

Another way to support local farmers is to join a community-supported agriculture (CSA) program. Many farms allow you to purchase a "share" in their harvest. These food boxes are usually delivered weekly or bi-monthly. You won't know what's coming in your box, but it's guaranteed to be fresh and healthy. CSAs are common in summer, but fall and winter CSAs may only be available in mild climates. ■

Time to Quit

The Truth about Smoking Cessation

Nonsmokers often believe that smokers with enough willpower can kick the habit in a matter of days or weeks. In reality, successfully quitting tobacco can take many months of effort. Smokers not only have to wean themselves off nicotine—a substance as addictive as heroin or cocaine—they also have to learn how to keep from lighting up again. And that is usually the hardest part.

Most smokers make several attempts to quit before finally succeeding in giving up the habit, according to the American Cancer Society. In fact, most quitters return to smoking within three months of quitting. Still, it is possible to kick the habit for good.

If you're ready to give up smoking, The American Lung Association suggests you create a "quit plan" to increase your odds of success. To start, choose a quit day. Then talk to your health-care provider about smoking-cessation counseling and medications. Both options improve the likelihood you'll succeed, and using both together can be even more effective.



TRY THESE TIPS TO STAY ON YOUR QUIT PLAN:

Avoid temptation. Stay out of bars or other places where people may be smoking.

Change habits. For example, if your morning routine involves having a cigarette after breakfast, take a short walk instead of lighting up.

Develop coping strategies for stressful events. To avoid succumbing to the urge to smoke during a crisis, try doing some kind of physical activity or practice deep breathing.

Don't get discouraged if you relapse. Just make a plan to stop again, but this time consider new ways to avoid the trigger that caused your relapse.

Celebrate your success. The American Cancer Society encourages smokers to remember that each day that they don't smoke is a small victory. ■



Nicotine: A fully smoked cigarette delivers about 1 mg of nicotine to the lungs. That may not sound like much until you consider that nicotine is one of the most toxic of all poisons—more deadly to mammals than arsenic or rattlesnake venom. A lethal dose is estimated to be 30 - 60 mg, compared to arsenic, which is lethal at doses of 70 - 200 mg.

Classified as a neurotoxin, nicotine acts rapidly in the body, attacking organs as well as the peripheral and central nervous systems, according to The International Programme on Chemical Safety. No wonder smoking is a risk factor for conditions ranging from heart disease to cancer.

Your Food Questions Asked & Answered

This month, we tackle some commonly asked questions about food. Hope the answers get you cooking!

Q: Can you refreeze meat?

A: Yes. If you've thawed out a package of raw meat but don't plan to use it within a few days, it's perfectly safe to stick it back in the freezer. But freezing cooked meats takes a little extra effort to maintain quality. Moisture is lost during both cooking and freezing, so it's a good idea to cover cooked meat with sauce, gravy or broth before freezing.

Q: Are "quick-cooking" oats and brown rice as nutritious as the regular versions?

A: These two kinds of oats are nutritionally similar, with about the same amount of carbs, protein, fiber and



calories. However, traditional oats may be slightly better for controlling blood sugar.

Quick-cooking rice also is as nutritious as regular rice, but it's parboiled (slightly pre-cooked) to reduce cooking time. This process makes it more expensive than long-cooking versions. To cut costs, cook regular brown rice and freeze while still slightly warm, using small freezer bags with all the air pressed out. Just remove from the bag, sprinkle with water and microwave.

Q: What's the best way to use flaxseed?

A: Flaxseed is full of omega-3 fatty acids and fiber, but the hard seeds may not be fully digested unless they are ground first. You can buy flaxseeds pre-ground, or grind them at home in a coffee grinder. Then sprinkle on cereal or add to smoothies, soups, casseroles and baking mixtures. ■

All classes and events require registration. To register, call (702) 233-5300.

MountainView Hospital

Rita A. Moore, Program Manager
(702) 255-5404

The H2U office will be closed on Monday, Sept. 2, in honor of Labor Day.

Mitch's Tai Chi/Ki Gong Class

Mondays, 9 - 10 a.m. (No class on Sept. 2)
\$5 per class

Blood Pressure

Tuesdays, 10 - 11 a.m.

Mitch's Meditation Class

Wednesdays, 9:30 - 10:30 a.m.
\$5 per class

Yoga with Christian

Thursdays 9 - 10 a.m.
\$5 per class

Stroke Support Group

Tuesday, Sept. 3
2 - 3 p.m.

Movie Matinee

"Gangster Squad"
Thursday, Sept. 5
1:30 - 3:30 p.m.

Alzheimer's Caregivers Support Group

Tuesday, Sept. 17
10 - 11 a.m.

AARP Driver Safety Class

Tuesday, Sept. 17
11:45 a.m. - 4 p.m.

Fee: Check made out to AARP \$12 for AARP Member and \$14 for non AARP Member- Checks only.

Heart Murmur Clinic

Wednesday, Sept. 18
8 a.m. - 3 p.m.
3150 N. Tenaya Way, Suite 140

Free Medicare Counseling

Wednesday, Sept. 18
9:15 - 11:15 a.m.
By appointment only.

Flu Shot Clinic

Wednesday, Sept. 18
9 a.m. - 1 p.m.

Prepare yourself for this year's flu season. Walgreen's pharmacy will be offering free flu shots for H2U members without insurance (must show your H2U card). For Medicare recipients, Walgreens will also be happy to bill them for you. You can receive pneumonia and shingles vaccines upon request by contacting (702) 256-2059 to speak to a Walgreen's pharmacist.

O2 on the Go Support Group

Friday, Sept. 20
10 a.m. - noon

Lunch & Learn: HomeTrust Healthcare and You

Tuesday, Sept. 24
11:30 a.m. - 1 p.m.
Sponsored by HomeTrust Healthcare

Wii™ Games

Thursday, Sept. 26
1:30 - 3 p.m.
Sponsored by: Quality Care IPA.

Birthday Party

Wednesday, Oct. 2
1:30 - 3 p.m.
If you were born in September or October, you and a guest are invited for cake, ice cream and coffee.

Southern Hills Hospital

Jasmine Smith
Marketing/Volunteer Coordinator
(702) 880-2918

Events and seminars

All seminars are held in Southern Hills Hospital's Education Room on the first floor across from the cafeteria.

AARP Driver Safety Class

Wednesday, Sept. 4
9 a.m. - 1 p.m.
\$12 AARP members, \$14 non-members
Check payments only accepted at the door; payable to AARP. Attend this class and receive a discount on your automobile insurance.

Learn About Arthritis

(Class will be conducted in Spanish)
Saturday, Sept. 14
1 - 3 p.m.

Southern Hills Hospital Education Room

Join the Arthritis Foundation to learn about signs, symptoms and diagnosis of arthritis; the details of medical management including medication and surgical interventions; effective self-management techniques including exercise and stress management. This presentation will be in Spanish, followed by a 20-minute question-and-answer session with Dr. Mario Quesada. This free event is open to the public. Refreshments will be provided. Call (702) 239-9358 by Sept. 10 to register.

Sunrise Hospital

Tracy Netherton, Program Manager
(702) 735-5510

H2U member meal coupons are available in the H2U office at 3131 La Canada Street, Ste. 107, or at the guest services department behind the front desk of the Sunrise Hospital main lobby.

Office Closed

Sept. 6, 13, 20, 27
Limited office hours on Thursdays. Please call ahead at (702) 735-5510.

Diabetes Education "Overview and Medication" Class

Tuesday, Sept. 3, 2 - 4 p.m.
3121 S. Maryland Pkwy, Suite 600
This class provides an introduction to the diabetes disease process and the actions

and effects of medications on the diabetic patient. This class is for adults only; you are welcome to bring a guest.

Diabetes Education "Nutrition" Class

Wednesday, Sept. 4

2 - 4 p.m.

3121 S. Maryland Pkwy, Suite 600

This class will provide an introduction to the dietary needs of the diabetic patient and the benefits of diet and exercise. This class is for adults only; you are welcome to bring a guest.

Tai Chi Class

Thursdays, Sept. 5, 12, 19, 26

11 a.m. - Noon

Breast Center Multipurpose Room

\$5 per class

Tai chi instructor Terry Tichota has been practicing and teaching Tai Chi since 1995. Terry specializes in working with seniors and is very in-tune with the needs and requirements to get the most benefit from Tai Chi.

AARP Driver Safety Class

Wednesday Sept. 11, Noon - 4 p.m.

\$12 for AARP members, \$14 non-members

Attend this class and receive a discount on your automobile insurance.

One-on-One Medicare Counseling

Wednesday, Sept. 18

10 a.m. - Noon

Join a Medicare volunteer as they help you navigate through the Medicare process one-on-one. By appointment only, every 20 minutes.

Flu Clinic

Wednesday, Sept. 18, Noon - 4 p.m.

Prepare yourself for this year's flu season. Walgreen's pharmacy will be offering free flu shots for H2U members without insurance (must show your H2U card). For Medicare recipients, Walgreen's will also be happy to bill them for you. You can receive pneumonia and shingles vaccines upon request by contacting (702) 836-3134 to speak to a Walgreen's pharmacist.

H2U Birthday Celebration

Tuesday, Sept. 24, 1:30 - 3 p.m.

If you are born in August or September, you and a guest are invited for cake, coffee and a relaxing game of bingo.

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Broken Heart Syndrome

Broken heart syndrome might sound like a condition that afflicts only soap opera heroines, but it's actually very real.

The scientific name for this condition is stress-induced cardiomyopathy. Researchers believe that the body releases adrenaline in response to extreme stress, which in turn affects the functioning of the heart, although the exact mechanism is still unknown.

After a stressful or traumatic event, a person can suddenly develop symptoms like intense chest pain. Other key symptoms are shortness of breath and arrhythmia (irregular heartbeats).

Since the symptoms mimic those of



a heart attack, broken heart syndrome often is confused with a heart attack.

Women tend to be more susceptible to

developing stress-induced cardiomyopathy than men, particularly women who are middle-aged or older.

The good news is that unlike a heart attack, there are no blocked arteries cutting off the supply of blood to the heart. Also, broken heart syndrome can reverse itself very quickly, with no permanent damage to the heart muscle. Since it's considered a transient disorder, the usual treatment is supportive therapy. Once the effect of the stress passes, the symptoms usually dissipate. You're unlikely to die of a broken heart, though stress-induced cardiomyopathy can be fatal in rare cases.

If you experience symptoms of this disorder when stressed, don't ignore them. The symptoms could be a sign something more serious is going on. ■



A Nail Biter. If stress, anxiety or boredom causes you to chew on your nails, try these tips to break the habit: Keep nails short. Chew gum or play an instrument to keep your mouth occupied. Wear gloves or bandages over your nails as a deterrent. Use clear, bad-tasting nail polish. Make a fist or tap your nails on a hard surface when the urge hits.

Practice Restfulness

Monthly Challenge

This month, we challenge you to sit quietly for 15 to 20 minutes each day. Restfulness practices like deep breathing, relaxation exercises, quiet meditation or prayer can provide a

much-needed escape from the noise in your life and in your head.

And you don't have to sit to benefit. Yoga is a great way to relax your body and mind. Or take a meditation walk and focus

inward. Leave the music and headphones behind—just you and your thoughts!

Studies on meditation show it can help lower blood pressure, reduce pain and even change the structure of the brain. A study last year found that participants in a meditation course improved gray matter in the brain related to learning, memory, self-awareness and empathy. And a recent study in the journal *Social Cognitive and Affective Neuroscience* found that meditation reduces anxiety.

Get your "om" on:

- ✓ Set aside 10 minutes to start.
- ✓ Find a quiet spot to sit comfortably.

Use the same spot daily to help you ease into meditation more quickly.

- ✓ Close your eyes and focus on your feet, slowly relaxing those muscles. Then shift your focus upward and relax each group of muscles in turn, from toe to head.
- ✓ Take slow, deep breaths and exhale fully. Feel the peace wash over you. ■



Hannah Curlee, H2U Director of Health Engagement and runner-up on NBC's "The Biggest Loser: Season 11."

Your Nature Fix

Can't recall when you last spent time enjoying the outdoors? You're not alone. Most of us spend far more time indoors

than our parents or grandparents did. Immersion in virtual worlds on computers, TVs or smartphones can lead us to become disconnected from nature, and our health may suffer.

In fact, studies show that spending time in nature has real wellness benefits. Japanese researchers found that walking in the woods increases levels of disease-fighting white blood cells, lowers blood pressure and decreases stress hormones. A British study discovered that people who live near parks or greenways were healthier overall than those who do not.

To Reconnect with Mother Nature:

- >> **Explore a state or national park on foot or by bicycle.** Or join a free, ranger-led nature walk.
- >> **Go canoeing.** Build arm muscles by paddling along a local waterway and observing the flora and fauna.
- >> **Rediscover lawn games like croquet, badminton or tag.** Gather the kids or grandkids for some old-fashioned fun.
- >> **Take a picnic lunch and walking shoes to work.** Invite a coworker to walk in the park with you.
- >> **Do outdoor yoga.** Many groups offer yoga-in-the-park sessions, but if you're pressed for time, just step outside and do a few sun salutations.
- >> **Try bird watching.** Pick up a guide and hit the trails. Or join a bird-watching group to socialize, exercise and learn something new. ■

Yogurt It Up!

Not only is yogurt filled with protein, calcium and probiotics, but studies show that eating yogurt also can battle osteoporosis and irritable bowel syndrome and even improve certain brain functions.

To get more yogurt in your diet, substitute yogurt for sour cream as a garnish or in recipes. In baked goods, replace half of a recipe's butter with yogurt.

Or use yogurt cheese as a bagel and cracker spread. To make yogurt cheese place plain, unsweetened yogurt in a colander lined with several layers of cheesecloth. Put the colander in a bowl and allow yogurt to drain overnight in the fridge. Pour off the excess liquid, and stir in fresh herbs, a splash of olive oil or a dried herbal blend like Mrs. Dash.



Cucumber Yogurt Salad

Serves 4

Ingredients

2 cucumbers, peeled, quartered lengthwise, then sliced

1 cup plain, non-fat yogurt
1 tsp. dried dill, or 2 - 3 tsp. fresh dill
Sprinkling of salt and pepper

Directions: Taste cucumbers for bitterness. If bitter, soak slices in salted water for at least 30 minutes. Rinse and drain.

To make the salad, gently mix together all ingredients. Salt and pepper to taste.

Nutrition Information (per serving):

Calories 233, Total fat 0.7 g, Sodium 389 mg, Carbs 43.4 g, Sugars 19 g. ■

More Shopping, More Savings

Online shopping has continued to grow in popularity—and for good reason. Shopping online offers quick price comparisons, a variety of payment and shipping options, and the convenience of shopping from home when you're short on time.

H2U makes online shopping even easier and more rewarding through our partnership with the Corporate Shopping Company. Whether you need a birthday gift, a new gadget for yourself, or a hotel room for an upcoming vacation, the Corporate Shopping Company provides exclusive discounts, as well as extras like free shipping.

Participating companies vary, but recent retailers included Target.com, Walmart.com, Macys.com, Amazon.com and

many more. Discounts also are available for travel, dining and entertainment.

Examples of recent deals from the Corporate Shopping Company include:

- > Discounts from JCPenney, Best Buy and Sports Authority
- > \$10 for \$25 restaurant gift cards through Restaurant.com
- > 15 percent off hotels from Orbitz.com
- > A free credit score from CreditReport.com

Deals rotate frequently, so check back often. Your link to the shopping site and your member discount code can be found at H2U.com. Simply log into your account and look for Corporate Shopping Company on the Shopping and Travel Discounts page. ■



All About Health ... All About You



Join H2U today, and we'll help you reach your health goals—and live life to the fullest! With H2U membership, you receive valuable resources you can use at home, at work or on the go, including these:



- * H2U magazines and newsletters
- * Online library, health tools and other resources at H2U.com
- * National savings on travel, health services, gifts and more
- * Benefits at local affiliated hospitals
- * 10% off at ShopH2U.com, plus double H2U Reward Points

Learn more at www.h2u.com.

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If you'd like to join the H2U program at a local, H2U-affiliated hospital, please enter the hospital's name here. _____

(Members who do not belong to a local program still receive all the national H2U benefits.)

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Check or money order payable to H2U enclosed

Visa/MasterCard/AmEx/Discover (#) _____

Credit Card Expiration Date Month _____ Year _____

Signature _____ Date _____

Print Name (as it appears on credit card) _____

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Physician Lectures



Physician Dinner Lecture: Urinary Incontinence

Sunrise Hospital Auditorium
Wednesday, Sept. 25
5:30 - 7:30 p.m.

Join Dr. Christian Quintero, Gynecologist, for an educational lecture on urinary incontinence. Please call (702) 233-5300 to RSVP.



Lunch & Learn with Dr. Ryon Parker - Allergies: What You Need to Know

Tuesday, Sept. 24
11:30 a.m. - 1 p.m.

Southern Hills Hospital Education Room,
First Floor

Like any team, there are many parts working at the same time and sometimes,

they tend to clash. This same concept can occur at any time to our bodies as related to allergies, such as with prescription medications and the changing seasons.

Please join Dr. Ryon Parker for an educational presentation to help understand allergies, their history and up-to-date guidelines on severe allergic reactions and how to treat them. Lunch will be provided free for all attendees. This event is open to the public, and registration is required by calling (702) 880-2700 at least 48 hours in advance of the event date.



Lunch and Learn with Dr. "Farzin" Farhangnejad

"MountainView Rehab
Hospital and YOU! Plus
an Enjoyable Tour of our

Expansion of the Rehab Hospital"
Wednesday, Sept. 25, 11:30 a.m. - 1 p.m.

Guest Speakers: Dr. "Farzin" Farhangnejad, Medical Director; Michael Mericle, Director of Rehabilitation Services; Billy Meyer, Rehabilitation Unit Coordinator; and Timothy Deaton, Administrator of Rehab Services
H2U MountainView Office
First Floor, Medical Office Building 3150
North Tenaya Way, Suite 114
Las Vegas, NV 89128

Reservations required, call (702) 233-5474. If you are in need of inpatient rehabilitation services after your discharge from the hospital, look no further than MountainView's brand-new rehabilitation unit. We offer a variety of amenities, including: Continuum of care; close to home; a Beautiful, healing environment and immediate access to care. Tours will be available after lunch and learn.

Suspect a Stroke?

Call an Ambulance

If you think you or a loved one is experiencing a stroke, don't jump in the car and race to the hospital. Call an ambulance instead. Though you might have to wait a short time for the ambulance to arrive, you'll still be better off in most cases.

A recent study in the journal *Circulation* found that one-third of people with stroke symptoms didn't call 9-1-1 but went to the hospital by other transportation. However, the patients who called an ambulance typically arrived at the hospital sooner and received quicker treatment.

Emergency personnel have advantages you may not have. Ambulance drivers know where the best stroke treatment centers are and can bypass traffic snarls more easily. EMTs also notify the hospital while en route, so the patient can get immediate care upon arrival.

And every minute counts. Doctors say "time is brain" because 2 million brain cells die every minute during a stroke. Rapid treatment improves the chances of a full recovery. In fact, the clot-busting drug tPA must be administered within three- to four-and-a-half hours of symptom onset.

Remember FAST to help you recognize the warning signs of stroke. And when symptoms strike, quickly call 9-1-1 and wait for the ambulance. ■

F **FACE.** Ask the person to smile. Does one side of the face droop?

A **ARMS.** Ask the person to raise both arms. Does one arm drift downward?

S **SPEECH.** Ask the person to repeat a simple phrase. Is speech slurred or strange?

T **TIME.** If you observe any of these signs, call 9-1-1 right away.

Source: National Stroke Association