



The Network

DECEMBER 2014

10

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Food Drives: Benefitting You and Your Community

The ASN would like to extend a huge thank you and congratulations to our local Verizon employees and to the Human Resources Association of the Central Coast, who both hosted very successful food drives for our Pantry!

In fact, they are this region's winners of Verizon's MORE GIVING contest!

A food drive is a wonderful way to show support for your community, and help to ensure that your SLO County neighbors living with HIV/AIDS and Hep C have the nutritious foods that are so vital to health and well-being.

In fact, studies show that helping our communities through giving and community service actually increases our own sense of well-

being and happiness.

In short, holding a food drive for the ASN's Food Pantry will not only benefit our hundreds of clients, but will also leave you with a sense of satisfaction that you've done something good for someone else.

If you are interested in having a food drive for the ASN, give us a call!

We can help set you up with a



place to hold it, flyers with lists of what our clients need the most, and even volunteers to help out!

805-781-3660

Thanks for everything SLO!

The ASN Housing staff are actively recruiting landlords interested in learning more about the Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) program. We have several clients who are actively seeking rentals willing to accept these HCV's.

For more information, please call 8015-781-3660 and speak with Elena.

FREE HIV Testing at ASN

The ASN offers FREE confidential HIV testing every week!

Come and see us!

WEDNESDAYS:

1pm to 4:pm

FRIDAYS:

11am to 3pm

#Follow Us!



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Tips for Coping with the Holiday Blues



For many reasons, lots of people deal with stress, anxiety, and even depression during the holiday season. There's no single reason for this, but a plethora of factors that often lead to these challenging

feelings.

Though many of these circumstances are not in our direct control, there are certain actions we can take that often help ease the holiday blues. Here are some tips from Terry, the ASN's HIV Health Counselor, about keeping holiday stress and depression at bay.

“...Remember that you are worthy of care and love, and you can prioritize your own needs. You are allowed to say No.”

1. **Plan Ahead:** Set a schedule and get ready for any down time. Get a good book, plan a hike, or get some games on your smart phone.
2. **Avoid Family Conflicts:** Tell your argumentative family members to make an appointment after the holidays if they'd like to continue at a more appropriate time and place.

3. **Forget Perfection:** From gifts to meals- everyone tries too hard to create the perfect day. Save yourself the stress because perfection is not required.

4. **Schedule Some Sleep:** Don't stay in bed throughout the holidays or neglect your sleep either. Instead, routinely go to bed and get up at the same time every day keeping your body's clock on schedule. Rest helps *everything*.

5. **Get Help:** Plan time with close friends who are supportive and who you enjoy spending time with- the people who bring you up!

6. **Prioritize Workouts:** If you routinely exercise, don't stop! This is the most important time to exercise and the first thing that people stop. Those endorphins will help!

7. **Focus on What Matters- You!** You are worthy of care and love, and don't you forget it! You have every right to prioritize your own needs.

8. **Don't Binge on Food or Alcohol:** Use the money you save to schedule a massage or a

hot tub as a New Year's treat!

9. **Don't Make Stressful Plans That You Can't Complete:** Be careful not to over- or double- book yourself. Make sure to allow ample time for both travel and a relaxed visit at all of your holiday stops.

10. **Stick to a Budget:** Money is one of the most common causes of anxiety. There are lots of inexpensive and creative ways to enjoy yourself! In fact, volunteering is free and is proven to uplift the human spirit.

11. **Remember That You Can Say No:** It's ok to not want to disappoint family and friends, especially during the holidays, but remember that you are worthy of care and love, and you can prioritize your own needs. You can say No.

12. **Seek Professional Help if You Need It:** Those of us who suffer from any type of holiday anxiety, depression, or stress can benefit from counseling or support groups, so don't hesitate to take advantage of these!

Your support and the support of local community members and businesses are vital to our continuing ability to provide comprehensive services to our growing number of clients. There are many ways that you can make a generous donation!

- **Money:** ALL MONEY DONATED TO THE ASN IS TAX DEDUCTABLE & REMAINS IN THIS COMMUNITY to help SLO County residents in their struggle with HIV/AIDS and Hep C.
- **Time:** One of the most important ways the SLO community supports the ASN is through the gift of time. Our volunteer program offers opportunities to directly assist clients and help keep the agency streamlined.
- **Food:** ASN's Food Party is always in need of the basics. If you would like to hold a food drive, or donate food directly, we have a list of suggestions for you!

You will make a difference! Contact us, or visit ASN.org, for more details!

**You Can
Make a
Difference!**

It's Time to Knock Out Hep C in SLO County!

Earlier this month, the ASN received word that it was given one of five community grants funded by Dignity Health. **(Thank you Dignity Health and the French Hospital Medical Center!)**

The goal of this funding is to provide SLO community members with access to confidential hepatitis C (Hep C) testing and education throughout the county. We'll be partnering with several agencies, including Planned Parenthood, CAPSLO, Drug & Alcohol Services, and the Noor Clinic, to bring you SLO County's only FREE confidential Hep C testing.

Why is it important for you to get tested for Hep C? Because then you know! This is the easiest and most important answer to the question of why get tested. The bottom line is that nobody knows with absolute certainty that they are Hep C negative until they've taken the test. Like HIV, stigma surrounds Hep C and those who live with this devastating disease. However, the truth is that Hep C can and does affect all kinds of people in diverse situations.

Take a look at this chart, provided by axiumhealthcare.com, to see if you have any of the most common Hep C risk factors.

One of the biggest factors is age. In fact, **if you were born between 1945-1965, you are 5x more likely to have Hep C**, and not even know it! We aren't sure why Baby Boomers are particularly affected; it may have to do with certain medical procedures (or a lack of) during that time. All we know is that **all people between 49-69 years old should get tested for Hep C at least once, and as soon as possible.**

You may be thinking that you don't need to get tested because you feel fine. The truth is that Hep C often doesn't show obvious outward symptoms, and the longer that people live with this disease, the more likely they are to develop serious, or even life-threatening conditions.

All of this might seem pretty dire, and we acknowledge that getting tested is scary, especially if it turns out that you do have Hep C. However, the good news is two-fold. First,

this past year has brought HUGE developments in Hep C treatment, and has actually made this a curable disease. Second, **we will be with you every step of the way!** The SLO Hep C Project was created to help folks here in SLO County who live with this disease. We can help you understand your diagnosis & treatment options, assist with insurance benefits, nutrition, and more. **Know you are not alone!**

Stay connected through [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/asnslo) (www.facebook.com/asnslo) for updates on when FREE confidential Hep C testing will be available near you!

As always, if you have any questions or concerns about Hep C, getting tested, or any of these risk factors, call us and we'll be happy to talk with you!

805-781-3660

HEPATITIS C: SHOULD I GET Tested?

KNOW THE RISK FACTORS Can you answer **YES** to any of the following?

- you were BORN FROM 1945-1965?**
- You are a Current or former injection drug user, even if you injected only one time or many years ago.**
- You were BORN to a mother that was infected with the hepatitis C virus.**
- You received A BODY piercing or tattoo with non-sterile instruments.**
- You received A blood transfusion or organ transplant before July 1992.**
- You have ABNORMAL LIVER TESTS or Liver Disease**
- You work in Health Care or Public safety and were exposed to blood through a needle stick or other sharp object injury.**
- You are INFECTED With HIV.**
- You were TREATED for a blood clotting problem before 1987.**
- You are on LONG-TERM hemodialysis treatment.**

IF YOU ANSWERED YES

Know that you are not alone. Contact your doctor. Complete tests ordered by doctor.

GET TESTED. IT COULD SAVE YOUR LIFE.

References: 1 CDC.gov Hepatitis FAQ (2008). Retrieved from 2 Bettertoknow.com. Testing for Hepatitis C (2012) Retrieved from www.cdc.gov/hepatitis/c/ctq.htm#FAQ02 www.bettertoknow.com/pages/testing-hepatitis-c



The San Luis Obispo County AIDS Support Network remains the sole community-based, non-profit organization in this county that provides supportive services to residents living with HIV disease & AIDS, and their families and friends.

Mailing Address:
P.O. Box 12158
San Luis Obispo, CA 93406

Physical Address:
1320 Nipomo St.
San Luis Obispo, CA 93401

Phone: 805-781-3660
800-491-9141
Fax: 805-781-3664

The SLO Hep C Project is dedicated to meeting the needs of people living with hepatitis C and increasing public awareness through educational outreach in SLO County.

The agency strives to improve the quality of life and independence of its clients by providing support on an individual basis.

Learn more at ASN.org & SLOHepC.org

**Wishing you a
Safe and Happy
Holiday!**

*- From All of Us
at the ASN*

