



# Desert Health®

News from the Valley's Integrated Health Community

May/June 2016

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## Celebrating the 2016 WELLNESS AWARDS

We live in a special place. Our gorgeous weather, stunning landscapes, and world-renowned resort lifestyle lend themselves to beauty, good health, and tranquility. Many dream of living in this paradise.

But we are just another American community with families, neighborhoods, businesses, and schools. We share many of the same stresses and are subject to the same health concerns as others throughout the country. We have to work at achieving and maintaining good health, and sometimes it is nice to have a helping hand.

Fortunately, there are many within our community inspiring and helping us to learn—and to make—healthier choices.

Desert Health® is proud to honor these unsung heroes through the second annual Desert Health® Wellness Awards presented by Desert Regional Medical Center and JFK Memorial Hospital. This year, thirty-three individuals and organizations were nominated in five categories: Individual, Business, Non-profit, Integrative

Health Care Practitioner and Youth. Finalists have been selected and winners will be announced at the evening celebration on Wednesday, May 18.

Nominees include entrepreneurs, doctors, educators, students and passionate individuals, all of whom are working to make a difference. Bringing all these community members together makes for a magical evening, and we invite you to join us.

The festive celebration takes place at The Pavilion at Indian Wells Golf Resort and features dining stations for Mediterranean, vegetarian, and Paleo fans along with the "new" American Classics. We'll have putting for prizes, a silent auction, and nationally acclaimed health crusader and Wheat Belly author William Davis, MD, as our guest speaker. Additional information can be found in the Official Program on page 15.

Come celebrate this special place we call home and those working to improve the health and wellness of our community at the second annual Desert Health® Wellness Awards.



The Welly Awards will be presented May 18.



## Health is a Choice

### Why practice integrative health care?

This was the topic of a recent panel hosted by Women Leaders Forum (WLF) and moderated by Desert Health® publisher Lauren Del Sarto. The panel featured a medical doctor, chiropractor, acupuncturist/herbologist and naturopathic doctor discussing how conventional and complementary modalities are working together for whole person care.

So why the change? Natural medicine has been practiced for thousands of years and was the prevalent treatment prior to today's conventional medicine, which depends largely on patented drugs to cure and heal. And while millions of lives have been saved by these revolutionary medications, millions more are being affected negatively as drug dependency is killing us in epidemic numbers.

Today's statistics are alarming. From 2003 and 2013, death from drug poisoning nearly doubled and was

highest among those aged 45–54. Opioids like Vicodin and OxyContin to relieve pain are at the top of the list, followed by anxiety meds like Valium and Xanax. Mortality rates for Caucasians 45–54 are increasing for the first time since smoking-related deaths in the 60s with drugs, alcohol, suicide and liver disease leading the way.'

And yet with all these medical advances, our health is declining. In 2013, 74% of all U.S. deaths were due to 10 conditions, many which may be preventable like heart disease, cancer, respiratory disease, stroke, diabetes, and suicide.'

These statistics, coupled with consumer demand, are driving doctors and leading institutions to seek options beyond medication such as nutrition for digestive issues, acupuncture for inflammation, chiropractic for pain, and vitamin supplementation for deficiencies. Who wins? We all do, because the focus is shifting from treating disease to prescribing health and wellness in an effort to take care of the whole person.

Continued on page 3



We are proud to support the Second Annual  
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## Come Celebrate!

I'd like to take this opportunity to congratulate each and every one of you. The fact that you are reading our latest edition of *Desert Health*® means that you are making health a priority – or at least taking interest.

This issue provides many resources to help you on your path to good health. In the medical realm, we discuss innovative technologies for skin cancer, BPH, varicose veins, and interstitial cystitis. You'll also find numerous natural options for managing digestive issues, relieving stress and fasting for health.

Our goal is to encourage all to take their health into their own hands and to celebrate those promoting wellness and prevention. Many in our local community are embracing these aspects of integrative medicine and in *Health is a Choice*, we review a recent panel of medical and natural practitioners discussing this national movement.

This month we also honor those in our valley whose efforts are helping others on their wellness journey. Thirty-three individuals and organizations were nominated by their supporters and peers for the second annual Desert Health® Wellness Awards taking place May 18. Finalists have been selected, and winners will be announced at the evening celebration. The official event program is featured as a center insert (pg. 15) and we invite you to join us in celebrating these deserving nominees.

The "Welly Awards" are an inspiring event that we are certain you'll enjoy. Our greatest compliments last year recognized "the amazing energy in the room." This is what happens when you bring like-

minded individuals from different sectors together to celebrate our common goal – a healthier Coachella Valley (and a healthier you!).

We look forward to seeing you there! And thank you for reading *Desert Health*®.



Lauren (center) with Wellness Awards Executive Committee (left to right): Donna Sturgeon, Tricia Gehrlein (2015), Lisa Ford and Margot Nelligan at the first annual Wellness Awards.

*Lauren*

Lauren Del Sarto  
Publisher



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Health is a Choice

Continued from page 1



Women Leaders Forum's integrative practitioner panel (left to right): moderator, Lauren Del Sarto; Dan Cosgrove, MD; Stephanie Nazemi, DC; Jessica Needles, ND; and Diane Sheppard, Ph.D., L.A.C. All photos by Lani Garfield.

To discuss this topic, WLF invited Desert Regional Medical Center's wellness director Dan Cosgrove, MD; Stephanie Nazemi, DC, of Nazemi Chiropractic; Jessica Needle, ND, a naturopathic doctor with Optimal Health Center; and acupuncturist and Chinese herbologist Diane Sheppard, Ph.D., L.A.C., of AcQPoint Wellness Center.

**Del Sarto:** One of the questions I hear all the time is, "I pay too much for medical insurance, why should I also pay for alternative therapies?"

**Dr. Cosgrove:** It bothers me that insurance forces doctors into the reactive role in only paying for things that are symptomatic instead of proactive. I recommend that people pay lower rates for higher deductibles and then pay as you go for health care you choose; otherwise, the insurers are dictating what health care you will and can receive. For example, if you undergo a preventative physical which includes extra blood work, scans, ultrasounds, an EKG, etc., and everything is normal, the bad news is you will have to pay for all that testing. However, if the results show that you have osteoporosis, or blood sugars that are out of line, then insurance will pay for those tests.

**Dr. Nazemi:** Chiropractic is covered by insurance and Medicare as they now realize how preventative chiropractic can be. 12 maintenance visits a year is standard. With HMOs, you need an approval from your primary care.

**Dr. Sheppard:** Acupuncture is also covered by insurance and we are moving towards Medicare being inclusive. When I worked in an emergency hospital in China, I was amazed at the health of the aging population and couldn't understand why we didn't have that here. So it is exciting to see acupuncture paid for.

**Dr. Needle:** The Affordable Healthcare Act was written so naturopathic medicine (or any licensed care for that matter) has to be covered by insurance. Unfortunately, that is not yet happening and we will see how it develops. For now, office visits are on a cash basis. Lab tests can be covered, or, a lot of people will have tests run with their medical doctor and then bring their results to us for detailed interpretation.

**Del Sarto:** Why do people seek your care?

**Dr. Needle:** I had an associate who used to say, "If you've been hit by a bus, go to a conventional doctor. If you just feel like you have been hit by a bus, go to a naturopathic doctor." Conventional medicine is very good at acute care, but they are not very good at taking care of chronic conditions.

Naturopathic medicine is good for such cases as digestive issues which are very easily resolved with natural therapies and hormone balancing. Food sensitivity and micronutrient testing are common labs we run. Cancer care through IV therapy is also common.

**Dr. Sheppard:** In my practice stress is everything. Stress enters the mind and affects the body just as the body affects the mind. It is really the number one approach to everything that we treat, and acupuncture is proven to treat stress, as well as pain. Although Traditional Chinese Medicine was not created [5,000 years ago] to help people in pain and stress. In Chinese medicine, you never paid the doctor if you were sick; it was his job to keep you well.

**From the audience:** "So where do you start?"

**Dr. Cosgrove:** By looking at your diet, fitness, stress reduction and sleep. And consider a consultation with an integrative practitioner. If you go to a standard primary care physician, you will probably get 5-10 minutes of his time, blood tests will be done and will come back normal. One of the biggest benefits of consulting with these complementary modalities is that they will spend the time with you to understand and help identify where you can make changes.

**Dr. Sheppard:** We are not "alternative" practitioners; we work with medical doctors and do not consider ourselves an alternative to allopathic medicine. It isn't one versus another; it is the multidisciplinary approach of what is best for you as an individual. And this is where medicine is going.

This informative luncheon covered much more, and one significant thing to note is the importance of sharing all treatment plans with your entire health care team. Understanding all modalities will help each of your doctors to help you, and will encourage them to work together on your individualized care.

So why should you seek integrative care? Because the goal is long term health and prevention, and each of us is only one injury or one chronic condition away from becoming the next statistic.

For more information on Women Leaders Forum's Lunch & Learn Series, visit [www.wlfdesert.org](http://www.wlfdesert.org). A special thank you to Desert Regional Medical Center for co-sponsoring this luncheon with Desert Health®.

References: 1) Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Health, United States, 2013 with Special Feature on Prescription Drugs <http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/abus/abus13.pdf>. Pg 20



Acupuncturist  
Dr. Diane Sheppard



Naturopathic doctor  
Jessica Needle



Chiropractor  
Dr. Stephanie Nazemi



Desert Regional's  
Wellness Director  
Dan Cosgrove, MD

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## Scar-less Skin Cancer Removal

### New technology offers non-surgical option

By Mark Vincent Sofonio, MD

Skin cancers, including basal cell cancers and squamous cell cancers, are the most common cancers in the United States, affecting more than 4 million Americans every year.

Skin cancers are over two times more common than all other cancers combined. They are also increasing faster than all other cancers combined. Every 10 seconds an American citizen turns 65 years old, and it is estimated that over half of these individuals will eventually develop a skin cancer. In addition, once a person develops a skin cancer he or she is twice as likely to develop another skin cancer in the future.

Traditional treatment of established skin cancers almost always involves surgery, usually MOHS surgery. MOHS surgery is a treatment where the tumor is microscopically examined at the time of excision to be sure that tumor has been completely removed. Normally performed by a specially trained dermatologist, MOHS surgery can leave a large skin and soft tissue defect, much larger than the original skin cancer appeared, as many times the cancer will extend far deeper and wider than it appears on the surface of the skin. These defects can be especially cosmetically deforming in areas such as the face. Plastic surgery may be necessary to help correct these defects, but even with the expertise of a plastic surgeon, the outcome can be less than perfect. Patients can be left with large scars and prolonged recovery.

Fortunately today there is another choice, superficial radiotherapy (SRT). The SRT-100 is a new technology that uses low energy radiotherapy to eliminate the skin cancer. It is a safe and painless treatment that only takes a few seconds to perform; the treatment goes no deeper than the thickness of the skin. This treatment is highly effective as the superficial x-rays are concentrated very close to the skin and skin cancers are exquisitely sensitive to this type of treatment. The skin cancers normally take several treatments to be eliminated. During these treatment sessions, the skin cancer is destroyed by the radiotherapy while the other surrounding skin cells are not destroyed. Normal skin cells are able to repair themselves following the treatment while the skin cancer has little ability to repair itself and is simply eliminated.

In our office, we have treated well over 300 lesions on over nearly 300 patients since 2013. We have had only 3 cancers that either returned or did not respond to the radiotherapy treatment. The SRT-100 manufacturer claims that since this technology was introduced in 2005, the combined data from submitting physicians shows over a 95% cure rate. This is very similar to the cure rate of MOHS surgery which is also typically around 95% or greater.

Superficial radiotherapy treatment is a highly effective treatment that leaves no surgical scars, has minimal down time and recovery, and only takes a few seconds to perform. Now that is what we call "good technology."

Dr. Sofonio is board certified in plastic and reconstructive surgery and can be reached at (760) 341.5555. For more information visit [drsofonio.com](http://drsofonio.com). He is also a member of Desert Doctors. For more information visit [DesertDoctors.org](http://DesertDoctors.org) or call (760) 232.4646.



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## Are Whitening Drops Bad for Your Eyes?

By Greg Evans, OD

The short answer is "maybe." To understand why, we need first to understand why one would use an eye whitener; other conditions it could mask or complicate; and how long it has been used.

Eye drops are often prescribed to treat multiple eye conditions such as glaucoma, allergies, infections, dry eye, and inflammatory eye conditions to name a few. All of these conditions typically create a red eye condition, and often the drops prescribed can actually make the eye red as well. A study published in clinical ophthalmology, for example, showed 60% of patients on glaucoma medication had clinically significant ocular surface conditions including redness, burning and irritation. For these patients, eye whiteners may be used occasionally; however, a better solution is to change the patient from preserved medication to non-preserved. Research shows that when preservatives are removed from glaucoma medications the incidence of red eye is reduced significantly.

So the real message here is to find out from a professional why the eye is red.

Eye whiteners such as Visine and Clear Eyes have packaging inserts that advise against over use or use for extended periods as well as use under many conditions (such as inflammation or infection). Many people ignore these instructions, using eye drops whenever they feel the slightest discomfort or for long term use of chronic red eyes. In clinical practice it is not uncommon to find patients using eye whitening drops for months at a time.

Many patients that use eye whiteners to "get the red out" are often surprised to learn that overuse can increase eye redness and initiate something called rebound hyperemia. The rebound hyperemia is caused by fatigue of the smooth muscles lining the small

conjunctival blood vessels that respond to the vasoconstriction component of whitening drops. When this happens it becomes a never-ending cycle of use to remove redness followed by even more redness when the dosage begins to wear off.

Ingredients found in eye whiteners such as imidazoline derivatives, antihistamines, and corticosteroids can cause dizziness, headache, increased sweating, nausea, weakness, nervousness, and decrease in body temperature when overused; they can also slow the heartbeat. Some ingredients can also cause permanent redness and damage to the blood vessels in the eye. Corticosteroids (often prescribed for red eyes) suppress the normal immune response and can interfere with normal healing. This can exacerbate herpetic and fungal infections.

So when should you avoid whitening eye drops?

- Do not use if there is any pain.
- Do not use if there is any discharge.
- Do not use if the vision is involved (vision is worse).
- Do not use if there are other symptoms such as irritation, itching and swelling.
- Do not use if you have concurrent high fever, seasonal allergies or a shingles outbreak.

If you have a specific ocular condition, ask your doctor if it is OK to use whitening eye drops. When you do use them, use only on occasion and only for a short time, and if the redness returns upon discontinuation, seek the advice of a professional.

Dr. Evans is the founding owner of Evans Eye Care in Palm Desert and can be reached at (760) 674.8806 or online at [www.evanseyecare.com](http://www.evanseyecare.com).





# Why is The Flint Water Crisis So Important?

By Brian Fiani, DO

In April 2014, the city of Flint, Michigan changed its water source from the Detroit Water and Sewerage Department to the Flint River. The decision was politically controversial and debated from the onset. Problems with the change stemmed from the fact that the Flint River water was not chemically treated with corrosion control measures. Therefore, as it entered houses via lead pipes, it became contaminated from pipes leaching lead. This is dangerous when that lead-filled water is used for household utilities and drinking.

The focus of media attention was directed towards its danger to children. In a news article from January 2016, Jamie Gaskin, the CEO of the United Way of Genesee County, stated that between 6,000 and 12,000 children were exposed to lead-contaminated water. Hurley Medical Center in Flint performed research showing results that children with elevated blood-lead levels rose from 2.4% to 4.9%. Some areas even saw increases from 4.0% to 10.6%. However, research showing levels of lead in the average resident's blood is tremendously difficult to obtain and would be hard to even research due to a vast variety of factors.

So how can it affect the children who have been exposed?

Although it varies slightly by laboratory, most consider the normal amount of lead in an adult patient's blood to be less than 10 micrograms per deciliter. For children, the normal range is less than 5 micrograms/deciliter. Testing is usually performed when there are children in households with known lead piping, especially in urban districts, or if they show learning disabilities. Industrial workers should also be tested as well. These are the main populations at risk for higher than normal lead exposure. Additional methods of exposure include soil and paint; high exposure can lead to lead toxicity both acutely and over time. Acute symptoms would require a large amount of lead to enter the blood stream quickly. Symptoms may include, but are not limited to fatigue, muscle weakness, decreased sensation to touch, nausea, vomiting, anemia, shortness of breath, lethargy, and kidney damage.

Even more concerning, however, are the symptoms that develop over time in children from the early exposure. In addition to some of the previously mentioned symptoms, learning disabilities, such as memory and motor skills, can be prevalent. Lead is a neurotoxin which can produce irreversible damage. It has even been shown to have a correlation with ADHD (attention deficit hyperactivity disorder), aggression, and delinquency.

The updated reports from February 2016 indicate that Flint mayor Karen Weaver plans to begin replacement of 15,000 water service lines containing lead piping immediately at an estimated cost of \$55 million. A great deal of attention both on the political controversy and scrutiny of Michigan Governor Rick Snyder is still largely at play with many celebrity figures adding to the situation both in form of commentary and philanthropy. I'll leave the political side for the politicians to discuss, as my concern revolves around ensuring we supply all families with the proper water supply, especially the innocent children of Flint, Michigan.

In the next issue of *Desert Health*®, I will be addressing the health concerns of chromium 6 and the new state regulations for California water systems.

Dr. Fiani is a neurosurgery resident with Desert Regional Medical Center's Graduate Medical Education Program. He is from Michigan and a graduate of Michigan State University's medical school.

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## An Option to Medications for BPH

By Lance Patrick Walsh, MD, Ph.D.

Having to go all the time? You are not alone. Over 70% of men in their 60s have symptoms of BPH (benign prostatic hyperplasia),<sup>1</sup> a condition in which the prostate enlarges as men get older. While BPH is a benign (non-cancerous) condition, it can certainly decrease one's quality of life.

The most common treatment for BPH is drug therapy which requires that patients take a pill each day for the rest of their lives. Until recently, the only other option was invasive surgery which left many with undesired side effects including sexual dysfunction. In 2013, the FDA cleared the UroLift® System, a minimally invasive procedure that does not require any cutting, heating or removal of prostate tissue.

Medications to treat BPH include alpha blockers and alpha reductase inhibitors. However, over 17% of men on BPH drug therapy discontinue treatment early due to undesirable side effects or not getting adequate symptom relief and it is easy to see why.

**Alpha blockers** (Flomax, Rapaflo, Hytrin, Uroxatral, Cardura) are most widely used to treat BPH and work by relieving the amount of tension in the smooth muscle of the prostate and bladder neck, which allows easier urination. These drugs require a pill a day for the rest of your life in order to keep symptoms from worsening. While they provide rapid improvement of urinary symptoms and some improvement in urinary flow, associated side effects include impotence, retrograde ejaculation (dry orgasm) and decreased sex drive, as well as other physical effects such as wheezing, fatigue, dizziness or hypotension (low blood pressure).

**5-Alpha reductase inhibitors**, or 5-ARIs, include Proscar (finasteride) and Avodart (dutasteride). These medications work by blocking the conversion of testosterone to DHT. 5-ARIs shrink the overall prostate gland size and reduce the obstruction that causes problems with urination. They also require ongoing daily dosage and can take 3 to 6 months to be effective. Side effects of 5-ARIs may include impotence, decreased sex drive, reduction in semen during ejaculation, swelling of the breasts, and artificially low readings of PSA levels.

When alpha blockers are not enough and the prostate grows to a certain size, a combination of an alpha blocker and 5-ARI may be prescribed. This is called combination therapy and has been shown to be more effective than just one drug, but also associated with added side effects. It can require two pills a day, or there is Jalyn which has both drugs in one pill.

As an urologist, I have treated BPH for decades and welcome the UroLift system as a safe and effective option for patients, which do not require a lifetime of medications. The minimally invasive procedure can be done in an office setting and most importantly, preserves sexual function. Numerous clinical studies have demonstrated that the UroLift provides a similar level of symptom relief compared with other BPH procedures with fewer side effects.<sup>2</sup> Reported side effects include blood in the urine, painful or difficult urination, the urge to urinate, pelvic pain, and urge incontinence. Most events were mild to moderate in severity and resolved within two to four weeks after the procedure.

If you are experiencing symptoms of BPH or would like to consider options to medication, speak with your urologist to see if you are a candidate for this innovative technology.

*Dr. Walsh is a specialist in urology, treating a variety of conditions ranging from cancer of the genitourinary tract (kidney, prostate, bladder) to benign conditions including kidney stone, BPH, incontinence, bladder prolapse, and hematuria. He specializes in minimally invasive and robotic assisted laparoscopic surgery using the latest techniques to help his patients. For more information call (760) 346.7191 or visit [walshurology.com](http://walshurology.com)*

References: 1) NeoTract US market model estimates for 2013 based on IMS Health and Drug Procedure Data; 2) Publications <http://urolift.com/physicians/results/publications/>

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Most common adverse events reported include hematuria, dysuria, micturition urgency, pelvic pain, and urge incontinence. Most symptoms were mild to moderate in severity and resolved within two to four weeks after the procedure.

1. Roehrborn, Can J Urol. 2013; 30(suppl 1):E1. Study

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I Have Cancer, but My X-ray Is Normal

By Stuart May, MD

It was August 2014 when Bob, age 49, developed a cough that did not resolve with the usual over-the-counter medications. He visited his family physician who ordered a chest x-ray. The chest x-ray report was normal. However, the cough persisted over the next 2 to 3 months so his physician decided to order a CAT scan of the chest. The CAT scan was abnormal showing a 2.5 cm mass in his left lung. He also had a few suspicious lymph nodes in the middle of his chest called the mediastinum. More tests, including a PET scan and biopsy, proved that the mass was lung cancer that had spread to his lymph glands.

Bob had surgery to remove the lung cancer as well as several lymph nodes. In spite of several months of radiation and chemotherapy, Bob died one year later at age 50. Prior to his illness Bob had been a non-smoking, active father of two. He followed a strict healthy diet, even preparing his own oat bran muffins.

Not all tests are created equal. The average size of a lung cancer detected by chest x-ray is 20 mm in diameter. At this size, the cure rate is low. That is why routine chest x-rays are not recommended for lung cancer screening. The average size of a lung cancer detected by a CAT scan is 5 mm. At this small size, the patient can have minimal surgery to remove a small wedge of lung tissue - and a much higher survival rate.



The average size of lung cancer detected by a CAT scan is 5 mm versus 20 mm with a chest x-ray.

American Cancer Society. This applies to smokers or former smokers who have smoked at least one pack per day for 30 years or two packs per day for 15 years.

There are many reasons that lung cancer may not be detected by a routine chest x-ray. About 45% of chest x-rays are interpreted by non-radiologists (physicians who have not had specialized training in chest x-ray interpretation). Another reason is location of the tumor as there are structures in the chest that can obscure small tumors. For instance, the tumor may be located behind the heart or the pulmonary arteries and go undetected until it grows into a large, lethal cancer. On the other hand, a CAT scan contains hundreds of highly detailed pictures of the lungs that can detect smaller tumors in any part of the chest. There is no area in the chest that a tumor can hide in a quality CAT scan.



A CAT scan contains hundreds of highly detailed pictures that can detect smaller tumors in any part of the chest.

The rise in obesity also presents a challenge for physicians trying to diagnose tumors using standard chest x-rays. In a large patient, lung detail can be severely compromised. The CAT scan does not usually suffer these limitations.



According to May, there is no area in the chest that a tumor can hide in a quality CAT scan (2.5 cm tumor detected here).

excellent for imaging small lymph nodes in the chest that the chest x-ray is unable to evaluate.

In conclusion, if a cough does not resolve after appropriate therapy, a CAT scan of the chest may be a valuable imaging option. Cancers not visual on a routine chest x-ray can be detected by a quick 10-second CAT scan of the chest. Lung cancer is the number one cancer killer and early detection is key to a cure.

Dr. May is a board certified diagnostic radiologist with Desert Medical Imaging and can be reached at (760) 776.8989 or [www.DesertMedicalImaging.com](http://www.DesertMedicalImaging.com). He is also a member of Desert Doctors. For more information visit [DesertDoctors.org](http://DesertDoctors.org) or call (760) 232.4646.



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# D.A.P. Deemed FQHC

## Clinic serves more than those living with HIV

Despite the name it's had since being incorporated as a nonprofit organization in 1984, Desert AIDS Project in Palm Springs expanded its service purview beyond HIV care when it became a Federally Qualified Health Center (FQHC) "Look-Alike" in April 2012. But that doesn't mean D.A.P. is any less concerned with HIV/AIDS than it has been before.

"We knew that changes in the Ryan White Care Act and eventual implementation of the Affordable Care Act were going to make it essential for us to seek additional funding sources, so that we could expand our primary care services," said David Brinkman, CEO of D.A.P. "Given the documented physician shortage in our Valley, we wanted to be better positioned as a primary care alternative for the uninsured or underinsured of our community, whether living with HIV or not." D.A.P. knew it needed to do more for the general population ... while still remaining the local "go-to" health care provider for people living with HIV/AIDS.

Being a Look-Alike required the same standards of care and scope of service as being granted full status; however, FQHC full status made D.A.P. eligible for grant funds, along with the Look-Alike's more equitable reimbursement rate for Medicare/Medi-Cal. Both funding sources allowed for increased staff to provide services – medical, dental, and behavioral health services, as well as case management, eligibility assistance, and health education and outreach – to an expanded base of patients and clients.

The need for services was already great, based on 2010 Census figures, for those living at or below 200% of Federal Poverty Level and uninsured. But 2014 Census figures showed even greater need. By the time D.A.P. was granted full "330 Grantee" status as an FQHC by the U.S. Department of Health & Human Services (HHS) in August 2015, an estimated 24,545 within D.A.P.'s target population, as defined by HHS, were in need of services.

Between Look-Alike and full status, D.A.P. established a coalition of community partners, launching Get Tested Coachella Valley as the nation's first-ever, region-wide HIV testing initiative. The campaign was recognized by the Clinton Health Matters Initiative in early 2014. Near the end of 2015, Brinkman presented the program on the grounds of The White House to highlight Get Tested's success in helping our region get closer to the "90/90/90" targets outlined in the National HIV/AIDS Strategy for the U.S. (Updated to 2020):

- 90% of people living with HIV knowing their status, with
- 90% of those who know their HIV status being on treatment, and
- 90% of people on HIV treatment having suppressed viral load.

"These are exciting times for Desert AIDS Project," Brinkman concluded. "While we fervently hope that someday people will come to us to be cured of their HIV, rather than for its care, we plan to be here for as long as necessary to provide primary care while helping put an end to HIV/AIDS, once and for all."

For more information visit [www.DesertAIDSProject.org](http://www.DesertAIDSProject.org) or call (760) 323.2118.

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The Palm Desert High School Health Careers Academy junior class participated in a job shadow day on March 16. Three vans transported 43 students to 20 medical-related locations including JFK Memorial Hospital, Eisenhower Medical Center, medical clinics, dental offices, senior centers, JW Marriot Desert Springs Resort & Spa, and even animal care facilities. The students volunteered for six hours at these sites.

"The experience was unforgettable," says Ashley Young who volunteered with two friends at the Joslyn Senior Center. "I had no idea what to expect; however, once we got there, we were warmly welcomed and immediately given tasks. The three of us met with some very down-to-earth seniors and absorbed their wisdom through their heart-touching stories."

Nydia Aguayo had an eye-opening experience at JFK Memorial Hospital. "Getting the opportunity to shadow a phlebotomist was a life-changing experience," she said. "It allowed me to see what a day in a hospital looks like. Meeting new people and seeing all the different departments was just absolutely amazing."

"Knowing I was helping someone become strong and healthy again brought a smile to my face," said Paola Ayon adding that she likes the way it feels to serve other people. "That is when I realized the medical field is for me."

Miguel Espinola learned more about what it takes to work in health care. "I was once confused about what I needed to do to achieve my goals," he said. "But after absorbing the advice from medical professionals, I know the reality of what is expected from me, how to get there, and most importantly, why I love the field!"

This real world exposure gave students a glimpse of the variety of possibilities in health care. Through the Health Careers Academy, students learn through a prism of career preparation in a three-year "school within a school." In addition, they learn how to take vital signs and perform CPR for core studies. They also earn first aid certificates and learn about medical specialties and terminology, infection control, and HIPAA privacy and security, as well as portfolio building and interviewing skills. As seniors, students are assigned to intern at a professional site.

Editorial written by student, Ashley Young. The Palm Desert High School Health Academy is always seeking new opportunities such as guest speakers, volunteering, and internships. For more information, please contact [ronaldo.paiz@desertsands.us](mailto:ronaldo.paiz@desertsands.us).

Palm Desert Health Academy job shadow day participants





"I Need a Drink!"  
Middle-aged women and alcohol

By Pam Salvadore with medical review by Shannon Sinsheimer, ND

So many things change as women age. Our bodies, our minds, our purpose, all appear to go through a major change between the ages of forty-five and sixty. Perhaps the biggest of the female changes is that of menopause, the end of a woman's reproductive ability. Currently, the average age for menopause is fifty-one. During peri-menopause, the years leading up to menopause, one of the primary goals of the female reproductive system is to drastically reduce estrogen levels. When a woman enters into full menopause, estrogen levels have fallen by 75-90%, resulting in the infamous menopausal symptoms we all dread - hot flashes, night sweats, and sleep interruptions, to name a few.

New symptoms, such as "brain fog" - that muddled feeling that requires great effort just to concentrate - are also coming into focus as being decidedly related to reduced estrogen levels. Adding insult to injury, as menopause settles in, women also lose water from within their systems, one of the most important components of metabolism in the human body.

Given these sometimes harsh changes, it's no surprise that a woman may crave a cocktail as a means of relief, which begs the question: How does alcohol consumption affect women as they go through peri-menopause and menopause?

The simple answer is that alcohol changes the impact of our hormonal balance. First, alcohol cannot be stored in the body; therefore, it becomes a priority for metabolism. However, alcohol does not require digestion, as it is simply absorbed into our systems, meaning it moves through our bodies more rapidly than regular food.<sup>1</sup> Our body reacts to alcohol similarly to how it reacts to sugar, and quick jolts of sugar to our system wreak havoc with our hormones, especially insulin.

Insulin, a hormone released by the pancreas whenever blood sugar rises, is the hormone responsible for sugar metabolism. Insulin is like the traffic cop telling all the excess sugar created by alcohol in our blood to move straight to the nearest fat cell. Insulin then tells that fat cell not to open its doors and burn the fat as energy until all the other nutrients in our system have been metabolized. End result: you're stuck with excess fat cells.

So while a woman's endocrine system is trying to drastically reduce estrogen levels in the years leading up to menopause, we tend to make it harder on our bodies by drinking alcohol and providing more places for estrogen to accumulate, creating mixed messages in our systems. On the one hand

our bodies are going through these incredible symptoms of estrogen loss - night sweats, hot flashes, etc. - while on the other hand our fat cells are concentrating estrogen within their walls and releasing it when and if the body burns the fat. In the end, we have a state of confusion in the form of uncontrollable spikes and dips in estrogen levels that only stand to amplify menopausal symptoms. Of note is the fact that a woman's metabolism also slows down in menopause. We do not burn the fuel provided by food as quickly or efficiently and that can lead to weight gain.

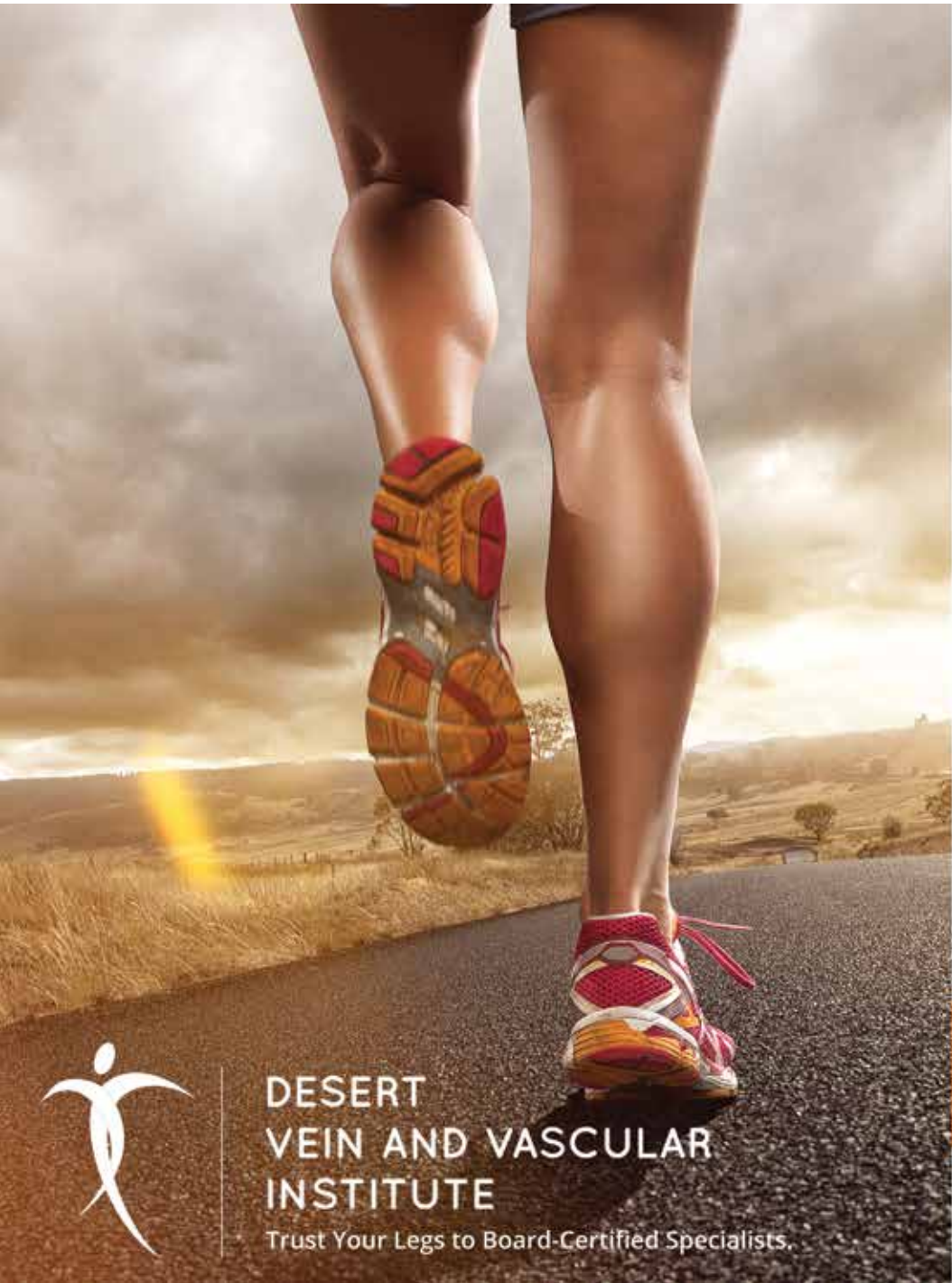
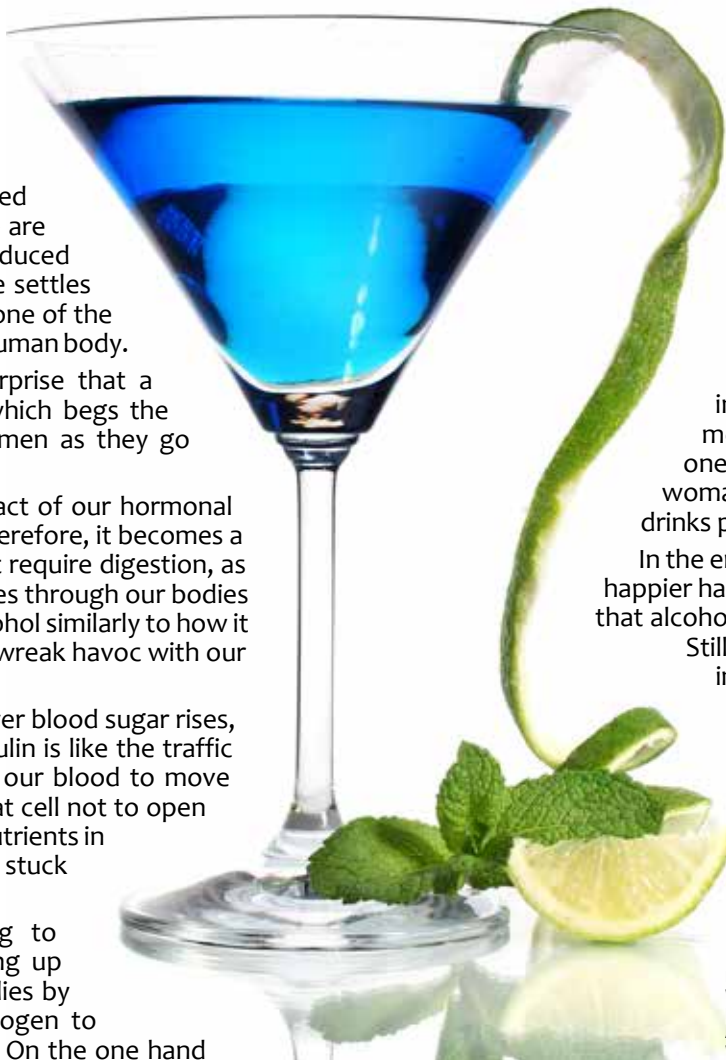
How much you drink makes a big difference as well. It's one thing to enjoy a glass of chardonnay on a warm summer evening, another to down the entire bottle.


Studies have shown that moderate drinking (defined as one 5-ounce glass of wine per day) can actually have beneficial effects on women's health including a lower risk of heart disease, type 2 diabetes, dementia, and stroke. However, increase the amount you imbibe and your risks also increase drastically. According to a recent *Healthline* article, heavy drinking during menopause can increase a woman's risk of developing cancer, heart problems, liver disease, and osteoporosis. A more specific study by Jasmine Lew, a researcher at Howard Hughes Medical Institute, found that alcohol consumption did indeed increase the risk of breast cancer in post-menopausal women and the risk is dose dependent: one drink per day increases a postmenopausal woman's risk of breast cancer by 7%, whereas three drinks per day up the risk to a whopping 51%.<sup>2</sup>

In the end, anecdotal reports find that some women feel happier having a drink at this stage in their lives; others find that alcohol immediately triggers hot flashes and sweating. Still more find that regular alcohol consumption impedes their ability to maintain healthy sleep habits. As with anything in nature, we are all unique. Find the right balance for your body and do your best to stay rested and comfortable during this physically tumultuous time.

Contributing writer Pam Salvadore of La Quinta is a nutrition journalist. For more from Pam visit her blog [pamsalvadore.wordpress.com](http://pamsalvadore.wordpress.com).

References: 1) Byrd-Bredbenner, C., Moe, G., Beshgetoor, D., & Berning, J. (2013). *Wardlaw's Perspectives in Nutrition* (9th ed.). p 258-259 New York, NY: McGraw-Hill Education; 2) Barnes, Mary Ellen, PhD, and Ed Wilson, PdD,MAC. "Menopause and Alcohol Abuse." *GoodTherapy.org Therapy Blog*. EdwardWilson Ph.D., MAC, 2008. Web. 18 Apr. 2016.





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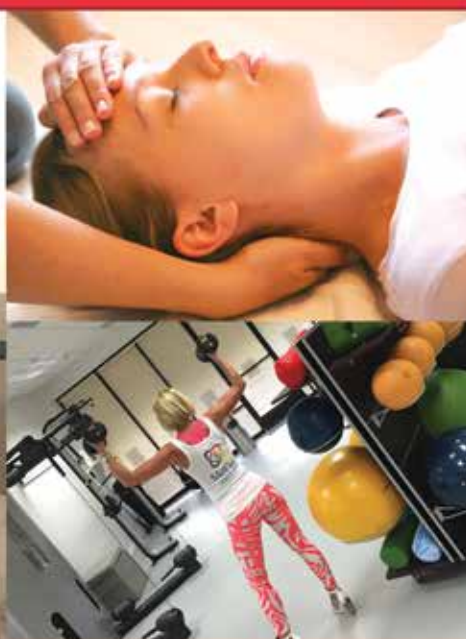
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## Shakti Fest 2016

### May festival celebrates divine feminine energy

Shakti Fest returns for its sixth year May 13-15 at the Joshua Tree Desert Retreat Center. Organized by the producers of Bhakti Fest, this springtime festival celebrates the divine feminine spirit, described in Hindu philosophy as the 'dynamic force which moves the universe.'

The festival features celebrated yoga teachers, musical performances, wisdom workshops, and a healing sanctuary. The 2016 musical lineup includes inspiring Kirtan (a.k.a. chanting) artists Jai Uttal, Donna De Lory, Larissa Stowe, Saul David Raye, Govind Das & Radha, Girish, Prema Hara, Jaya Lakshmi & Ananda, Spring Groove, Prajna Vieira & the Mukti Kirtan Ensemble, and Amritakripa. The centuries-old practice of devotional chanting is considered to connect humans with themselves, the universe, and spirit.



Govind Das & Radha will perform at the festival this year.

"When we started Shakti Fest as our spring celebration six years ago, we had no idea it would become such a beloved event," said event founder and producer Sridhar Silberfein. "It's wonderful that we are able to honor the spirit of the universal mother right around Mother's Day."

World-class yoga teachers are the heart of Shakti Fest, and spring in Joshua Tree is a beautiful time to practice indoors and out. Teachers this year include Shiva Rea, Mark Whitwell, Saul David Raye, Sara Ivanhoe, Mas Vidal, Laura Plum, Kia Miller, Tymi Howard, Leeza Villagomez, and desert favorite Kristin Olson leading energy invoking sessions in a variety of yoga styles.



Festival goers enjoy an early morning yoga class.

Workshops this year will cover topics including Ayurveda, spiritual nutrition, tantric energy, astrology, Vedic science, healing trauma, bhakti art, Hindu mythology, and hoop dance. Speakers include Michael Brian Baker, Jeffrey Armstrong, Syamarani, Lorin Roche, Ph.D. and Mirabhai Devi.

The historic Joshua Tree Desert Retreat Center is the oldest and largest retreat center in the western U.S., located on a sacred site replete with a walking labyrinth. On-site festival accommodations include retreat center spaces, yurts, camping, and RV parking. The Shakti Fest Eco Village also offers natural food vendors, yoga clothing and gear, jewelry, art and collectibles.

Shakti Fest takes place May 13-15 at Joshua Tree Desert Retreat Center. For tickets and additional information visit <http://shaktifest.bhaktifest.com>

## Fasting for Good Health

By Jessica Needle, ND

Fasting, the complete abstention from food and beverages other than water, has been practiced for millennia because of its physical and spiritual benefits, as well as out of necessity in times of food scarcity. Positive effects of fasting include initiating cellular repair, reducing inflammation and lowering blood pressure and glucose. Fasting also increases longevity, prevents cancer and reduces neurodegeneration.

Despite the numerous benefits, people are often reluctant to engage in fasting due to the discomfort of being hungry, the loss of muscle mass when practiced on a prolonged basis and the inconvenience of reduced energy to accomplish daily tasks. A growing body of evidence shows that fasting or restricting calories just 1-2 days per week can jumpstart your metabolism and provide many of the benefits of a longer fast without the unpleasant side effects.

One way to ease into fasting is to choose one or two days per week to refrain from eating. You may eat as much food as you like on the other days of the week but you should, of course, make healthy food choices. For people with a significant amount of weight to lose, fasting every other day is a recommended strategy. This is called intermittent fasting and is a good choice for people who find it difficult to adhere to a low calorie diet. If you follow this routine regularly, hunger will diminish on fast days once your system gets used to it.



Fasting 1-2 days a week has been shown to provide significant health benefits.<sup>1</sup>

Calorie restriction follows the same pattern as intermittent fasting, but instead of abstaining from food entirely, you eat 500 calories 1-2 days per week. You can achieve this by skipping breakfast and only eating in the afternoon and evening, resulting in a fast of approximately 16 hours. Contrary to expectations, research shows that people do not binge on food following a calorie-restricted day, so calorie intake overall is lowered.<sup>1</sup>

Short-term fasts induce a mild stress response which is beneficial to the body, unlike chronic uncontrolled stress. It is likened to plants producing more antioxidants when they are exposed to drought. In humans, the changing nutritional conditions result in less visceral fat, increased human growth hormone and lowered inflammatory markers such as homocysteine and C-reactive protein. This translates into a higher resting metabolic rate and less foundation for disease.

Intermittent fasting is safe to undertake without supervision for generally healthy adults. People in weakened states of health should not fast without first consulting a health care practitioner.

Dr. Jessica Needle is a naturopathic doctor practicing at Optimal Health Center in Palm Desert and can be reached at (760) 568.2598.

Reference: 1) Klempel MC et al, Nutr J. 2010 Sep 3;9:35. doi: 10.1186/1475-2891-9-35.



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Can We Talk?  
The psychology of communication

By Barbara Pedalino, PsyD

I know you believe you understand what you think I said, but I am not sure you realize that what you heard is not what I meant. – Robert McCloskey

Do you struggle to be understood, yet often feel misunderstood? Communication is a basic skill, yet there are some subtle nuances that can raise your odds for success.

The dilemma of how to best communicate seems timeless because it prevails throughout generations. Consider the infant who cries for food, a diaper change, or comfort. The toddler who says “cookie” meaning that he sees a cookie or wants a cookie? The child who talks about her pet—a dog? cat? turtle? The preteen who demands what he wants. The high schooler who says parents don’t understand. Young adults who believe there is only one perspective—theirs. Married couples who struggle with men from Mars and women from Venus. Senior adults who resign themselves to “this is just how life is.”

There are three basic concepts to regard for effective communication:

- 1. What do you want to communicate?
- 2. Why do you want to communicate this? What is your motivation? Do you want to impart information, explain, persuade, argue, or criticize?
- 3. Is the person you want to communicate with receptive? It is important to recognize who might be closed to hearing what you want to discuss.

In this world of complex technologies, people often miss essential communication skills that are developed through human connection, reciprocity, eye contact, and emotion.

- There is research that links social isolation to stress, disease and early death.
- In answering the following questions, you may clarify some of your roadblocks to communication:
- I feel free to express myself when...
  - Sometimes I withdraw from communication when...
  - One way I make it difficult for others to talk to me is when...
  - When I try to talk about things that are important to me...

To raise your odds for successful communication, try these proven building blocks:

- **Lead with empathy.** Begin your conversation with words that show you care about and understand the listener. *You sound frustrated, disappointed, excited, proud...* Even if you guess the wrong emotion, you have still conveyed empathy and the listener is more apt to hear your words.
- **“I” language.** Start communication that focuses on what you are willing to do or how what the other person did or said affected you. Rather than say, *You confused me*, which sounds like you are pointing an accusatory finger, try *I felt confused* when you...
- **Active listening.** We often think of communicating as talking but it also includes active listening. Openers like *I wonder if...*? engages, rather than tells someone what s/he should do. Active listening also includes eye contact, clarification, and a setting free from distraction.
- **Choices.** Offering two choices that are both okay with you has the benefit of reducing defensiveness while forgoing control.

Like any other skill, the art of successful communication is a process to build upon.

Dr. Barbara Pedalino is a licensed clinical psychologist in Palm Desert whose interest in self-esteem spans all ages. For more information visit [www.drbarbpsychologist.com](http://www.drbarbpsychologist.com) or contact her at (760) 702.0878.



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What Happened to East Valley Solar?  
By Joshua Bennett

If you had a choice to buy your electricity generated by coal, natural gas, nuclear, wind or solar power and they all cost the same price, what would you choose?

The overwhelming majority of Coachella Valley residents think solar power is not only the best choice, but also the future of energy. However, if you live in the East Valley and Imperial Irrigation District (IID) is your utility, solar power is no longer a viable option for your household. Recently, without warning, IID brought the consumer’s right to choose solar power to a grinding halt. This decision by IID not only affects the consumer but also a rapidly growing solar industry that has created hundreds of local jobs.

As disappointing as this news is, IID is well within their right to make this move. Net metering or (NEM) is the concept on which solar energy relies since currently there is no mainstream technology for storing solar energy. NEM is an agreement that mandates that utility companies give credit to the consumer for their excess solar energy generated by the consumer’s home or business solar system during each monthly billing cycle. On March 3, 2016, IID announced that they have met their 5% NEM cap. This means that any new interconnection applications for solar power are no longer eligible to receive credit for their solar energy, thus rendering the option of solar power for your home or business impractical.

Due to Greenhouse Gas Emission standards, IID needed to integrate 50 megawatts (MW) of solar to their infrastructure. The 5% cap number is based upon 1000 MW of peak demand placed on the grid. This means the one instantaneous moment in time in which load on the grid is the greatest - for example the hottest day in July. The surprising part of this situation is that the 5% cap number was forecasted to be achieved through the years of 2017-2020.

So here we are a full year early and the NEM subscription has been filled. Just as soon as the ecologically responsible option of solar power was gaining popularity in the East Valley, it was gone leaving many scratching their heads.

People in the IID district who already switched to solar will continue to receive credit for their solar power for the next 20 years. This makes homes with solar power even more desirable going into the future. Unfortunately, everyone else is on the outside looking in, until IID offers either an increased cap or a revised version of NEM.

Southern California Edison (SCE) also has a 5% NEM cap which, at the current rate of new applications for the program, is nearly filled. Unlike IID, SoCal Edison will offer NEM 2.0 but the successor version will not be as favorable for consumers as version 1.0 as the new parameters of the program will limit the number of people who will qualify for solar energy.

Josh Bennett is a NABCEP trained solar consultant with Solar City. He has a passion for sharing environmental sustainability education and can be reached at (760) 534.3978. Additional information on your utility’s NEM program parameters can be found on their website.

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## Managing Digestive Conditions

By Amanda Beckner, CN, HHP, Ph.D.

Colitis, acid reflux, diverticulitis, and IBS (irritable bowel syndrome) are conditions with symptoms often managed through medication. While it is unlikely that medication will get to the root of the problem and fix the condition, you can often help your body heal all of these diseases simply by correcting your diet.

Symptoms are like a warning light on a dashboard alerting you of ongoing damage. The more pain, the more damage there is. And while medications may alleviate the pain, they may also allow the disease to continue to spread, often resulting in new and different symptoms. That is how one's medication to treat a condition can multiply into three, four, five or more prescriptions. It is unfortunate, but time after time, I see people locked inside this cycle of symptom and pain management versus disease control.

Even though these conditions are different, in holistic healing, they are treated very much the same when it comes to foods to consume and foods to avoid.

Let's consider diverticulitis. Diverticula are pea- or grape-sized protrusions in the intestinal wall. Without sufficient fiber to soften and add bulk, constipation will occur and stools become harder to pass. This pressure creates weak points in the wall of the colon. Symptoms can be mild to chronic and usually are accompanied with sharp pain on the left side of the abdomen, diarrhea, constipation, nausea, and/or bloating. Drinking 64 to 80 ounces of water and consuming adequate amounts of fiber correctly in the diet are essential to controlling this condition.

Colitis can quickly turn into diverticulitis if not treated correctly. With colitis, the mucous membrane lining the colon becomes inflamed and develops ulcers which can cause bloody diarrhea, gas, pain, bloating and many times hard stools. When the colon muscles are working extra hard to move the stools, the mucous lining of the colon wall can bulge out into a pouch-like projection (diverticula).



Digestive conditions are best managed long-term through diet and nutrition.

Irritable bowel syndrome (also known as spastic colon) can affect the entire gastrointestinal tract from the colon to the mouth and can be accompanied by, or result in, acid reflux. As in the above two conditions, food greatly affects the pain threshold. The normal muscular contractions of the digestive tract become irregular which interferes with the normal movement of food and bowel movements. This in turn leads to the accumulation of mucus and toxins in the intestines which in turn can cause an obstruction in the digestive tract, trapping gas and stools and causing bloating, pain and constipation.



A daily dose of papaya and/or peppermint can aid in healing and digestion.

Foods to avoid with digestive conditions include alcohol, caffeine, carbonated beverages, red meat, citrus fruits, grapes, some melons, corn, iceberg lettuce, white skinned potato (red skinned potatoes are fine), red tomato (white or purple skinned tomatoes are fine), onion, peppers, cucumber (some conditions can have peeled and cored cucumbers), chocolate, white refined simple carbohydrates and sugars, fried foods, spicy sauces, all dairy products (use rice, coconut, goat, sheep or almond milk, yogurt and cheeses), and nuts and seeds (creamy almond butters or sunflower seed butters are fine).

Food additives such as silicon dioxide, magnesium stearate, titanium dioxide, sorbitol, sucralose, mannitol, and food dyes should also be avoided. In severe cases of any of these conditions, wheat and gluten can initially be eliminated and added back once the condition is under control.

It is recommended that you eat papaya every day as it aids in healing and digestion; peppermint (the herb, not the candy) aids in digestion and healing as well.

Remember that water is essential to keep you hydrated and to help the body heal. Drink 64 ounces of healthy, fresh water daily.

Dr. Amanda Beckner is owner of Your Body Code, Inc. in Palm Desert which specializes in personalized nutrition and wellness programs. For more information visit [www.yourbodycode.com](http://www.yourbodycode.com) or call (760) 341.BODY (2639).

Sources: 1) Your Body Code by Dr. Amanda Beckner CN,HHP, PhD Copy write 2009; 2) The Merck Manual 15th edition copy write 1987 by Merck & Co., inc.; 3) Human Life: Its Philosophy and Laws, by Herbert M. Sheldon, Mokelumne Hill Press 1979; 4) Minerals, Supplements and Vitamins: The Essential Guide, by H. Winter Griffith, Da Capo Press 2000

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## Let Me See Your Tongue

### The traditional Chinese medicine diagnosis

By Diane Sheppard, Ph.D., L.Ac.

One of the most commonly used methods of assessing a patient's condition in Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) is tongue diagnosis. I keep a chart showing different tongues in the lobby of our clinic and patients often ask why it is so important.

In TCM, your tongue is a reflection of what is going on inside your body. The tongue is a copious flow of blood, electrolytes, mucus, and enzymes. It is a very sensitive organ and its appearance changes with physical changes in the body, so much so that in Chinese medicine, the tongue is considered a "map" of the internal body. TCM divides the tongue into five zones that correspond to the five internal organ networks - heart, lungs, spleen/stomach, kidney/bladder/intestine, and liver/gallbladder. These also correspond to the meridians used in acupuncture.

When we ask you to stick out your tongue, what are we looking for? First is color. A healthy tongue is light red with a thin white coat and has a moist luster. Tongues can be bright red, pale or purple and even blue. The tip can be red and the body can have spots or papillae. Next is shape. Is it thin, thick, wide, short, long, pointed or rounded? Is it flabby or have tooth marks or scalloped edges? Does it quiver or is it deviated (crooked), or swollen in one area? Are there any cracks? Finally, there is the coating. Is the tongue wet, greasy, dry or lightly moist? The coat can also be thick or thin, white or yellow, can be smooth or look like cottage cheese, or can appear to have no coat.

A practitioner may also lift the tongue to see whether the underside has large or small veins and the color of those veins.

A few of the more commonly seen conditions include a thick, pale tongue that is swollen with scalloped edges, which indicates cold dampness within the body. This tongue is often associated with symptoms like loose stools, bloating, fatigue, cold, and excess worry. If this is what your tongue looks like, you should emphasize warming foods and herbs such as soup, lamb, beef, leeks, nuts, fresh ginger, rosemary, and cinnamon, along with moderate amounts of wild and basmati rice, barley, buckwheat, rye, and amaranth to drain dampness from your system. Avoid foods that enhance cold in the body such as those eaten straight from the refrigerator, such as ice cream, bananas, cold drinks, grapefruit, watermelon, sour food, and raw vegetables.

A red tongue with a yellow greasy coating is related to damp heat and can show up in irritability, rashes or pimples, easy sweating, thirst, and constipation or smelly stools. If your tongue looks like this you should avoid spicy, rich and greasy foods, alcohol, sugar, and limit your meat consumption. Instead eat poached or grilled fish, steamed vegetables, turnips, artichokes, salads, seaweed, wild rice, watermelon, cucumber, and asparagus. Drink dandelion and/or detox teas.

Of course, there are many combinations of color, shape and coat, with different appearance on different parts of the same tongue. TCM practitioners can use these factors to not only diagnose imbalances, but to direct treatment which may include dietary changes, acupuncture and herbs. So that is what we are doing when we ask you to stick out your tongue.

Diane Sheppard is the founding owner of AcQpoint Wellness Center. She is a licensed acupuncturist with a Ph.D. in Oriental Medicine and can be reached at (760) 775.7900. [www.AcQPoint.com](http://www.AcQPoint.com).

## A New Perspective on Massage Therapy

By Kathleen Shyptycki CMT, HHP

There was a time when we would go to our local massage establishment, read through a menu of massage modalities and choose the one type of massage we thought was best for us. At the end of the massage, we would label our experience as exceptional, great, good, indifferent or just terrible. With a new approach to massage therapy we can better manage and tailor our outcome from the massage treatment.

An "integrated approach to care" perspective allows the skilled massage therapist, with input from his or her client, to create a session which best fits the client's specific needs. This approach may use a single modality or a blend of several.

There are four main categories of care using this approach: therapeutic change, condition management, relaxation or comfort care, and body/mind awareness.

For example, neck and shoulder pain, a common condition caused by a number of situations, is a typical reason to seek massage therapy. Using an integrated approach to care, let's explore how leveraging a session outcome would be more powerful than simply selecting a type of massage.

### Therapeutic Change

A client with pain and/or limited movement of the neck and shoulder is seeking massage to specifically alleviate and change their current condition. Their condition can be caused by many factors including injury, accident, or repetitive use. The condition has not caused permanent damage. In this model,

Effective treatment includes a plan based on condition and goals.

proper use of multiple massage techniques, plus a focus on client goals through multiple sessions, would be the ideal approach to achieve therapeutic change.

### Condition Management

A client seeking condition management typically has a condition within the shoulder and neck that is permanent, such as fused disks, leaving limited range

Continued on page 14



A combination of massage styles can better serve individual needs.



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Zaynah, an acupuncturist and nutritional counselor with a focus on pain management, women's health and weight loss.

Teri, a physical therapist specializing in craniosacral therapy and visceral manipulation. Her studies at the Upledger Institute and her 20 years of experience bring new techniques and treatment options to our clinic.



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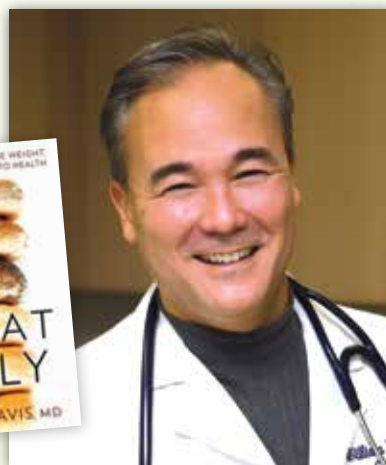
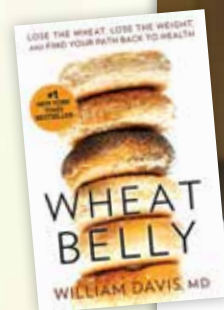


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Evening Host  
KMIR's Janet Zappala



Guest Speaker, *Wheat Belly* Author  
William Davis, MD

## 2016 Desert Health® Wellness Award Finalists

**Who will take home “The Welly”?**

### Individual

**Kae Hammond**  
Dementia Help Center

**Jay Nixon**  
Thrive Fitness Studio

**Alexa Palmer**  
Health Educator and Author

### Non-profit

**Gilda's Club Desert Cities**  
**Health Assessment and Research  
for Communities (HARC)**

**Well in the Desert**



### Integrative Practitioner

**Tina Louise Moreno, RCP, RRT**  
Desert Regional Medical Center

**Joseph E. Scherger, MD, MPH**  
Eisenhower Medical Center

**Diane Sheppard, LA.c., Ph.D.**  
AcQpoint Wellness Center

### Business

**Harvest Health Foods**  
**Next Level Fitness**  
**Somatherapy Institute**  
**School of Massage**

### Youth Award

**Valeria Chavez & Esther Ramirez**  
Coachella Valley High School Health Academy

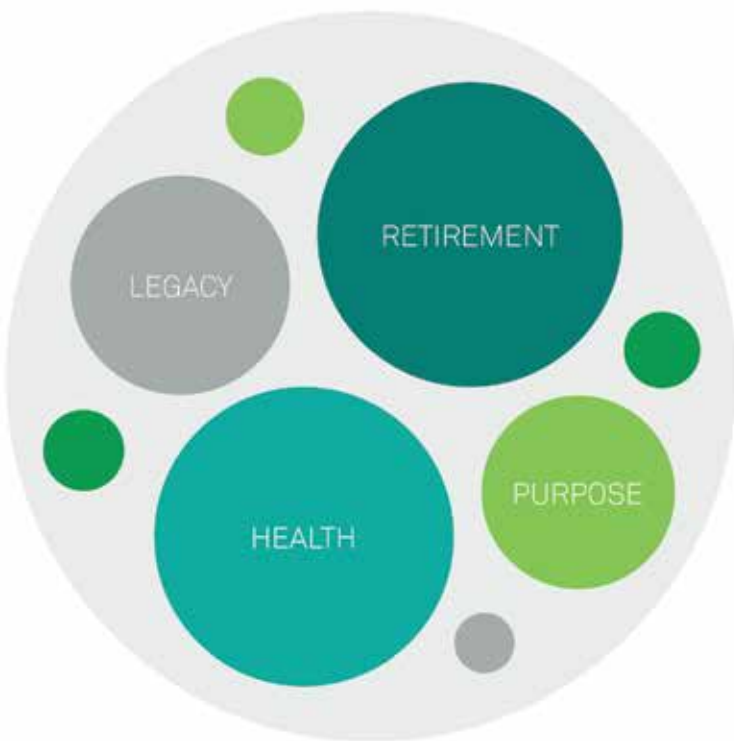






# Desert Health® Wellness Awards

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## Guest Speaker



### William Davis, MD

He changed the way many throughout the world view “healthy whole grains” with his *New York Times* bestseller, *Wheat Belly*, now available in over 18 languages.

Fans know Dr. Davis as a passionate educator who shares facts from the heart with humor and simplicity. He is also a cardiologist and consummate researcher who advises with care and conciseness. His goal: to empower people to take their health into their own hands.

First published in 2011, *Wheat Belly* takes a scientific look at the genetic modification of the world's wheat production and the effect it is having, not only on our bulging bellies, but also on the rise of chronic disease worldwide. Davis provides a thought-provoking and carefully researched case for eliminating wheat from our diets for long-term weight loss and relief from the record-setting epidemics of obesity, diabetes, and other “modern” health conditions like MS, lupus, acid reflux and even cancer.

The movement Davis helped create is gaining momentum and causing those who have written the rules thus far—the agricultural industry, leading health organizations, and food industry giants—to take note. The new demands come from consumers who are sharing their viewpoints, wheat-free lifestyles, and astounding success stories on improved health through the powerful means of social media.

We are privileged to have Dr. Davis join as our guest speaker at this year's Desert Health® Wellness Awards.

## A Special Thank You



With sincere gratitude, I would like to thank our *Desert Health®* print and event sponsors. We would not be here without them. Thank you to our Executive Committee, Donna Sturgeon, Lisa Ford, and Margot Nelligan, who had the challenging job of selecting finalists and winners. Our exceptional presentation is made possible by graphic designer Heather McKay; Advanced Web Offset printing; videographer Cole Gibson; The team at Modern AV; Liz Gardner of Best Promotions; Signature Party Rentals; and Sharon, Steve and the team at Indian Wells Golf Resort. Special thanks to Doug Morin and the CV Volunteers in Medicine Board, and Jason Tate and our Indio High School Health Academy volunteers. Last, but certainly not least, the *Desert Health®* team of Heather, Doris, Rich, Scott, Jo Ann, Ben – and with moral support, my husband Tommy. *From the bottom of my heart!*

*Lauren*

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## Evening Schedule



Thank you for joining us Wednesday, May 18.  
We have an exciting evening planned for you!

### The Pavilion at Indian Wells Golf Resort 44-500 Indian Wells Lane

Complimentary valet parking is offered  
(self-parking is also available)

- 6:00 p.m.** Registration opens and we encourage all to arrive 6:00-6:30 p.m. for the golf cart ride to the venue.
- 6:00-7:15 p.m.** Reception featuring complimentary beverages, wine, and beer, Align Your Future Putt for Prizes sponsored by Integrated Wealth Management, live music, appetizers, and silent auction
- 7:15-8:00 p.m.** Dinner featuring Mediterranean, Paleo, Vegetarian, and the “new” American Classics dining stations
- 8:00 p.m.** Guest Speaker William Davis, MD, followed by Q&A
- 8:45-9:30 p.m.** Awards Presentation

Prizes will be presented for the Align Your Future Putt for Prizes and all guests will receive a complimentary Desert Health® tote filled with wellness offerings.

We encourage you to purchase tickets in advance as the event is expected to sell out. We also recommend express checkout for the silent auction to expedite item pick up at the end of the evening. Credit card transactions are secure and your card will not be run if you don’t receive a winning bid.

Thank you for your support.  
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La Quinta Cliffhouse • Coachella Valley 4-H Club  
Cuistot Restaurant • Dementia Help Center  
Desert Serenity Float • DISH Creative Cuisine  
Eisenhower Wellness Institute • Grill-A-Burger • Jim Bartell  
Julie’s Hallmark • JW Marriott Desert Springs  
Kinetix Health & Performance Center • Lisa and Mark Haistings  
LiveWell Clinic • Massage Envy of the Desert  
Michael Sonner • Mo’tus Floatation & Wellness Center  
Norma’s Italian Kitchen • Optimal Health Center  
Pacifica Seafood Restaurant • Peter Mikulak • The Springs Club  
The Steakhouse at Agua Caliente Resort & Spa  
Two Bunch Palms • Wilma & Frieda’s Café  
Wine Vault of the Desert • Your Body Code



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# Desert Health® Wellness Awards

Moving health and wellness forward

## All 2016 Nominees



**Congratulations to all those nominated by their peers and supporters for the Second Annual Desert Health® Wellness Awards.**

**Thank you for all you do in moving health and wellness forward in our community!**

### Individual

**Duanne Besso**

Founder, WELL & PHIT programs

**Kae Hammond**

Founder, Dementia Help Center

**Laura Laffranchini**

Owner, Harvest Health Foods

**Jenna Le-Comte-Hinely, Ph.D.**

CEO, HARC, Inc.

**Jay Nixon, CPT, CNS**

Founder, Thrive Fitness Studio

**Alexa Palmer**

Health Educator and Author

### Business

**City of La Quinta  
Wellness Center**

**Massage Envy  
of the Desert**

**Desert Medical  
Fitness Academy**

**Matrix Fitness**

**Next Level Fitness**

**Egg Café La Quinta**

**Palms Athletic Club**

**Evolve Yoga**

**Somatherapy Institute**

**Harvest Health Foods**

**Sun City Community**

**The Vintage Club of Indian Wells**

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**Palm Springs Scottish Rite  
Childhood Language and  
Learning Center**

**Piranha Swim Team**

**Gilda's Club Desert Cities**

**Susan G. Komen  
Inland Empire**

**The Well in the Desert**

### Integrative Health Care Practitioner

**Nicolas Baumann, DDS**

Palm Desert Smiles

**Jill Gover, Ph.D.**

The Center Palm Springs

**Tina Louise Moreno, RCP, RRT**

Desert Regional Medical Center

**Joseph E. Scherger, MD, MPH**

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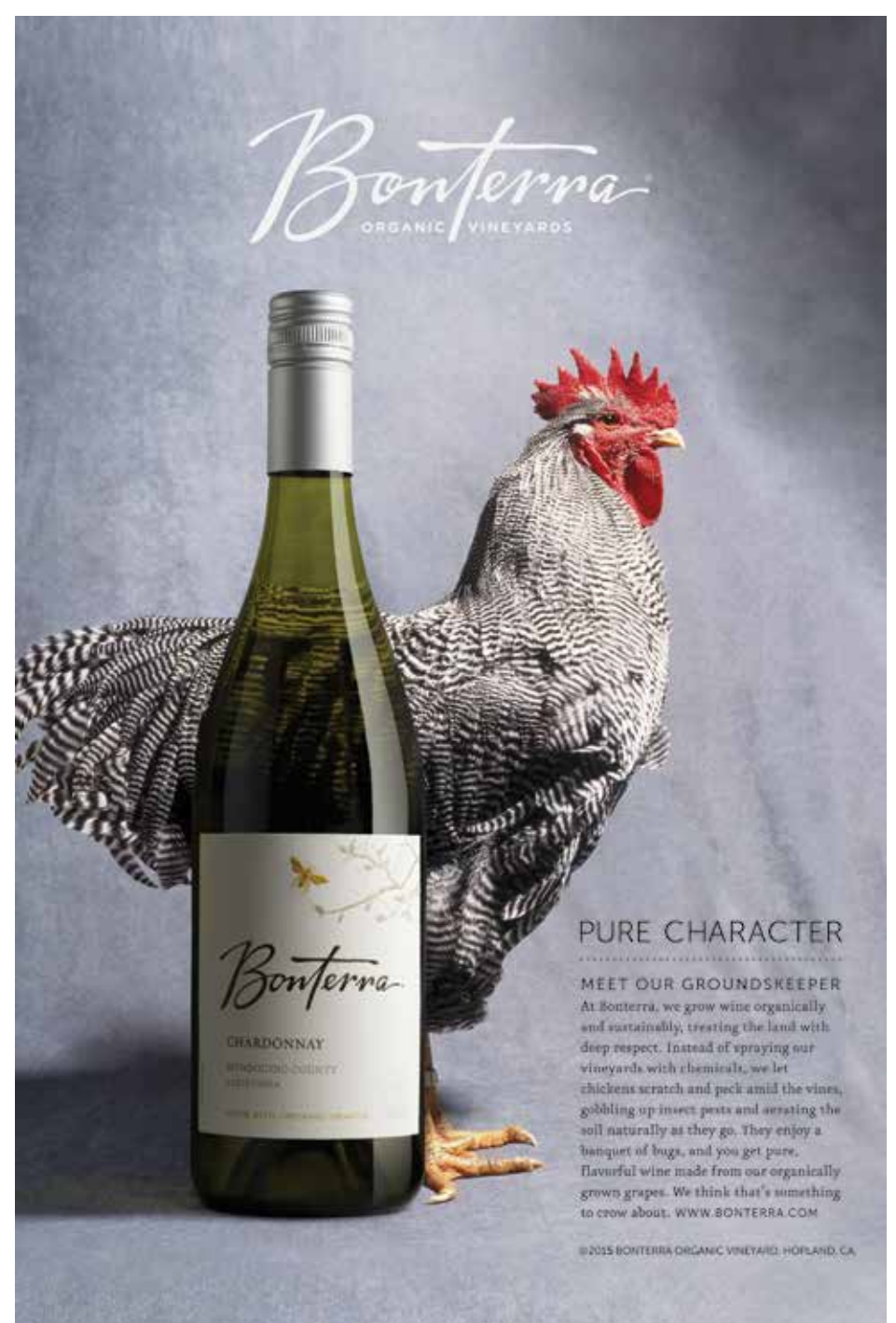
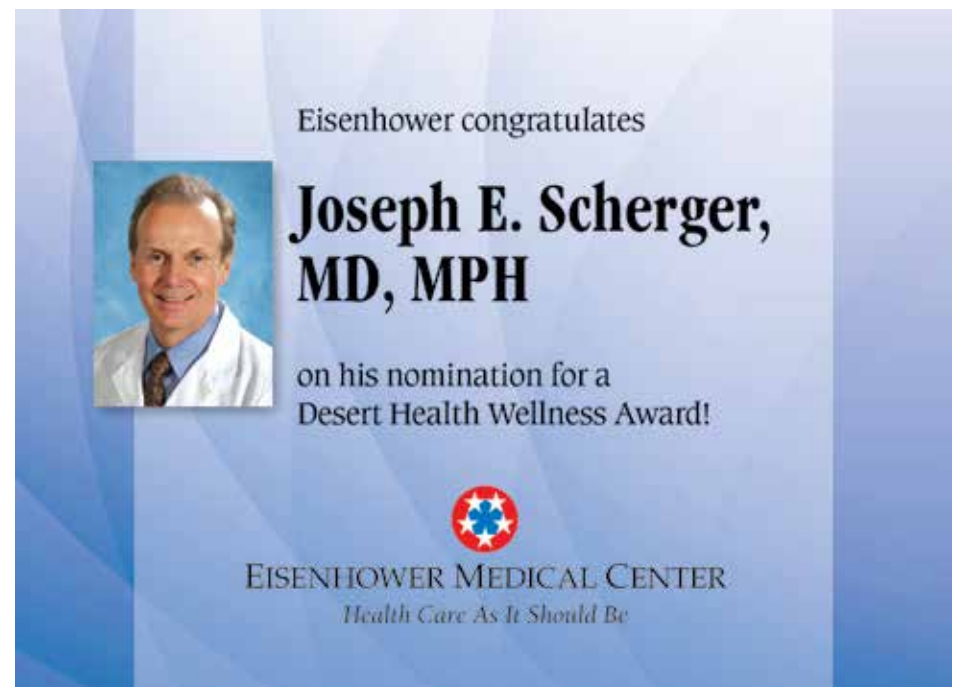
### Youth Award

**Nominees and Honored Winners**

**Valeria Chavez & Esther Rameriz**

Coachella Valley High School Health Academy

**A special thank you to all nominators who helped shine the light on these deserving nominees.**







Is Our Environment Making Us Fat?  
The connection between toxins and weight gain

By John R. Dixon, DC, CCN, Dipl. Ac.

Obesity is rising steadily around the world. More than one-third of American adults are obese. Of even more concern is that obesity quadrupled in teenagers in the last 30 years. The role of environmental chemicals in obesity, and obesity-related conditions such as type 2 diabetes and metabolic syndrome, has garnered increased attention.

Medical experts have maintained that diet and exercise are the major players in the obesity epidemic. However, there is increasing evidence that chemical toxins can disrupt metabolic processes and predispose some people to gain weight. Chemicals known as obesogens can alter certain aspects of human metabolism, disrupt normal hormonal activity and alter fat cell deposition by increasing fat cell size and numbers. Obesogens are also known as endocrine disruptors. This means they interfere with the chemical messaging signals of hormones by blocking receptor sites on cell membranes.

The World Health Organization has identified about 800 chemicals that are known or suspected to be endocrine disruptors. Research conducted for the past thirty years at the National Institutes of Health Sciences has shown that fat tissue acts as an endocrine organ. It is capable of releasing hormones related to appetite and metabolism. Some obesogens adversely affect hormones that control appetite, satiety, food preferences, and energy metabolism. The average person is likely to have more than 500-1000 times higher levels of toxic chemicals in the fat compartments of their bodies than in their serum. This includes all fatty adipose tissues and the brain.

Chemical pesticides in food and water, particularly atrazine and DDE - a DDT breakdown product - have been linked to increased BMI (body mass index) in children and insulin resistance. Certain pharmaceuticals, such as the diabetes drug Avandia (rosiglitazone), have been linked to weight gain in humans as have a handful of dietary obesogens, including the soy phytoestrogen genistein and monosodium glutamate.

Obesogenic chemicals called phthalates and organotins have also been found in designer handbags, wallpaper, vinyl blinds, carpet, toys, flame retardants, vacuum cleaner dust, air fresheners, laundry products, cigarette smoke and personal care products.

Another suspected obesogen is bisphenol A (BPA), which is found in the lining of some canned foods and credit card receipts. BPA has been shown to program fat cells to incorporate more fat and become very large. It also increases abdominal fat and glucose intolerance.

Another group of chemicals called persistent organic pollutants are difficult to avoid. These chemicals are persistent in the environment and are able to last several years before breaking down. They have been shown to cause damage to the energy producing parts of the body called the mitochondria and are associated with insulin resistance and metabolic syndrome. They include flame retardants found in mattresses, pillows, computers, wall insulation and many other products.

Here are things you can do to reduce your exposure to toxic chemicals:

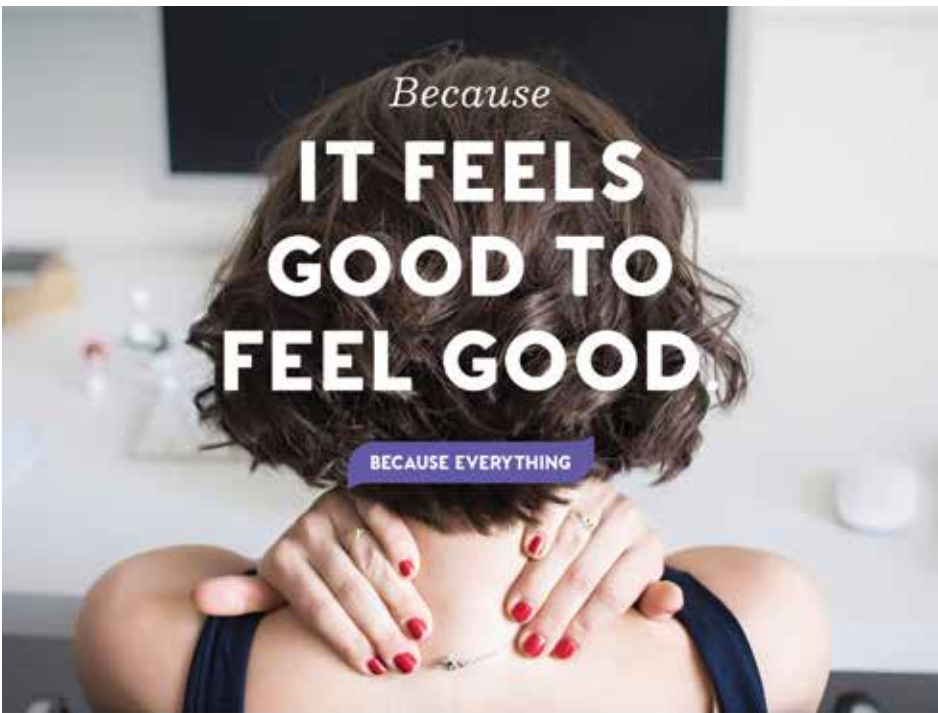
- Choose organic products when possible and make foods rich in antioxidants (fruits and vegetables) a main part of your diet.
- Consider purchasing a quality air purifier for your home or work.
- Avoid scented products (air fresheners, fabric softeners and personal care products) as these may contain phthalates.
- Avoid food with artificial colors and flavors.
- Beware of canned goods. Some cans are lined with bisphenol-A and bisphenol-S, both of which are considered to be hormone disruptors.
- Avoid eating food heavily wrapped in plastic if possible.
- Parents should avoid lawn chemicals and prevent their children from playing on lawns that use such chemicals.

Consider the following measures to detoxify stored toxins in body fat compartments:

- Infrared sauna therapy is being used by doctors treating victims of toxin exposure from the Gulf War, Agent Orange exposure in Vietnam and 9/11.
- The infrared sauna therapy is combined with Niacin (vitamin B3) to mobilize fat and free up toxic chemicals locked in all lipophilic fatty tissues and in your brain.
- For added elimination, use substances like activated charcoal and zeolite clay which will help pull the toxins from your blood and your GI tract.
- Glutathione supplementation (oral, intravenous, transdermal, or precursors such as N-acetyl cysteine or NAC) has been used extensively by functional medicine practitioners for toxic chemical elimination.
- Functional laboratory testing to measure body burdens of toxic chemicals (www.GPL4U.com/ GPL-TOX test).

Dr. John Dixon can be reached at the Natural Medicine Group (760) 345.7300.

Sources: 1) www.ncbi.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3279464 2) PubMed 235772225 3) PubMed 19914351



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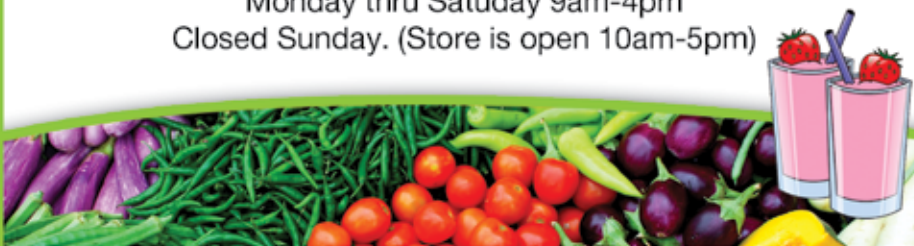
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## A More Energized Coachella Valley

By Christopher Knippers, Ph.D.

The highly intelligent, yet humorous, humble, and deeply spiritual psychologist and medical researcher Dr. Joan Borysenko recently spoke to an inspired audience at Michael's House Outpatient Services as part of their Open Door Speakers Series. The subject on this magical, balmy Palm Springs evening was how to renew your vitality after becoming exhausted from giving too much of yourself in your passion to help others. This burnout affects most people at some time in their lives, but especially those in the service professions.

Everyone has some natural "gift." Whatever you do that gives you fulfillment and at the same time benefits others in any way is likely your gift. It can be in the realm of personal relationships, business, creativity, or any number of other areas of life. The problem is, regardless of your gift, everyone at some point feels like they have nothing left to give. This is now known as "burnout."

Everyone reaches a time in life when they don't want to do what used to make them happiest. They may feel tired, a lack of joy, desperate to relax, maybe even irritable. It is especially the "natural givers" of this world who reach that place most often, and it is sometimes mistaken for depression. Dr. Joan shared with the group highly effective yet simple ways to replace burnout with the joy of practicing your gift with a sense of energy as detailed in her research-based book *Fried: Why You Burn Out and How to Revive*.

The following is my interpretation of Dr. Joan's talk for my own life. First, it is important to recognize that you have been giving too much of your natural energy away. Next, recognize that in order to continue letting your gift contribute to others, and at the same time give yourself fulfillment, you need to stop and recharge your battery.

We all love our little pocket computers (we still call them "phones") because they serve us so well in so many ways; yet, they all need to be recharged on a regular basis. You need to recharge at least as often as you recharge that phone, because you do so much more than that little computer. Give yourself permission to recharge – and do it before your battery is totally drained.

Dr. Joan taught us that the part of the brain that is active when we are in a state of happiness (the prefrontal cortex) can be activated by practicing meditation. Meditation is simply relaxing your body and your mind without the use of chemicals. People who meditate for at least 20 minutes a day report a much greater degree of happiness than the general population. In brain research studies, meditators show highly

increased activity in the prefrontal cortex. Learn to meditate for at least 20 minutes a day by finding a quiet place, closing your eyes, taking 3 deep breaths, thinking about the muscles of your body relaxing from head to toe, then thinking about a peaceful place you have been. It can be that simple. Even when your mind wanders, simply come back to thinking of the peaceful place and continue your meditation.

Dr. Joan also recommends deep breathing, as this activates chemicals in the brain (called GABBA) that suppress feelings of anxiety. If you get to feeling anxious at work, this is a simple way to

take just a couple of minutes to calm down. Close your eyes and take a few deep breaths. Your brain will suppress the stress signals and you will become calmer.

Another major part of avoiding burnout is to give yourself permission to say, "no." And, remember that "no" is a complete sentence. It requires no explanation to the person to whom you are saying it. Dr. Joan instructed us

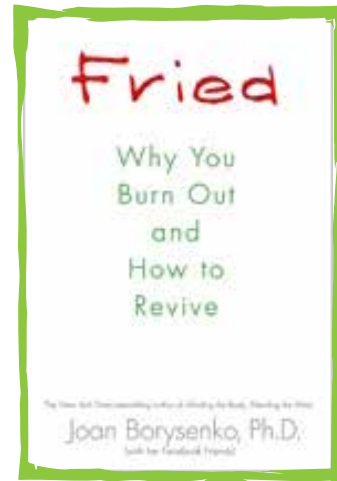
to "disappoint at least one person a day." Otherwise, you are not really taking care of yourself, but rather you are too focused on meeting others' needs instead of listening to your own needs.

Keep in mind that unless you are taking care of yourself, you are not going to be your best at sharing the natural gifts that you have. Just as the flight attendant always announces on the plane to "put your oxygen mask on first, before assisting a child," in the same way, recharge your own battery on a regular basis before you try to be of use to anyone else.

Take just 20 minutes a day to take a few deep breaths and meditate. Breathe deeply anytime you start

to feel stress. Learn to say "no" when you are not really in a position to meet someone else's needs. By doing these simple things, you will experience the joy that comes from continuing to discover and practice the gifts that you have to help others. You can continue sharing your gifts more effectively, and you can contribute to a more energized Coachella Valley.

The Open Door Speakers Series is presented by Michael's House Outpatient Services and is free and open to the public. The next event takes place November 4 at 5:30pm at the Courtyard in Palm Springs, 515 North Palm Canyon, with Recovery Buddhist, Noah Levine. The outdoor evening promises to bring valuable insights to the people of the Coachella Valley in their personal growth. For more information, contact Renee Baribeau (760) 464.2138 or Renee.Baribeau@FRNmail.com



Author Joan Borysenko recently spoke as part Michael's House's Open Door Speakers Series.



Knippers and Dr. Joan



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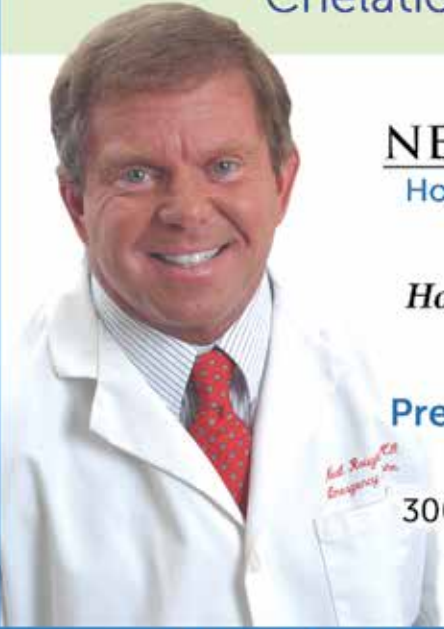


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# THE Paradigm Shift in Medicine Today

By Jeralyn Brossfield, MD

Biography Becomes Biology

Have you ever audited yourself on the way you plan for your most precious gift: your health? We tend to spend time planning our financial strategy, our travel, our social life, but few of us create a health strategy for ourselves.

With the growth of the functional medicine movement, I have pondered its basic premise: build whole-person health by addressing the underlying causes of disease. Applying this same premise to my individual health strategy opened up some insights for me personally about how to set my own health goals and methodology.

Looking for and addressing the underlying causes of disease or dysfunction provides clues to where to start in creating a health strategy. I often ask people to tell me their health story, starting with the lives of their parents before they were born. Events, exposures and experiences create chemical and cellular patterns and memory in our bodies that often exhibit as symptoms much later. I often think of my job as solving a puzzle, or connecting the dots. I saw a patient recently with severe itching for the past 3 years. When we went through her health story, we realized that one of her medications was changed to a generic form 3 years ago. Now we have investigated the additives in that generic form of a medication that she had tolerated previously, and found that she has an intolerance to one of the binding agents in the pill. Without this kind of sleuthing, a traditional approach would have been to prescribe an anti-histamine or steroid, but the originating factor would have continued.

Louise Hay, best-selling author of *You Can Heal Your Life*, describes how our mind and body are connected and that the root cause of illness is our life experiences and our thoughts about them. I find this concept empowering because it offers us the option to revise our own story and thus our own health outcomes. When we partner our own perspectives with a caring investigation of our story, the result is truly “functional medicine” with the power to transform our lives.

If you would like to perform your own health strategy audit, I suggest the following steps as a possible mechanism:

- Write out your health story starting with the environment and events occurring while you were in-utero.
- Write out a list of health challenges and a list of health triumphs that have occurred in your life.
- Look for a health practitioner who will think through your story with you.
- Identify causative factors that have led to your challenges and triumphs.
- Seek ways to address and heal the underlying causes of disease or challenges.
- Assess whether you can include more of the actions that caused your health triumphs.
- Create a plan with specific actions and due dates to reach your health goals.
- Work with an accountability partner or coach as you work your plan.

Dr. Brossfield is the medical director at the Eisenhower Wellness Institute and can be reached at (760) 610.7360.

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# Treating Interstitial Cystitis

## Stem cells show promise for painful bladder syndrome

By Elliot B. Lander, MD, FACS

Painful bladder syndromes are very complex and often poorly understood. Yet, they are a significant public health concern and contribute substantially to health costs and poor quality of life.

Painful bladder symptoms may include frequency, burning, and urgency to urinate as well as pelvic pain and interference with sexual function. The most severe of the painful bladder syndromes is interstitial cystitis (IC) which is a dreadful condition that has no effective treatment and no known cure. It occurs mostly in women and affects 8-12 million Americans. Patients who have IC often describe it as a “severe urinary tract infection that never goes away.” Cultures and routine testing often fail to yield a cause for the problem and the average time from onset of symptoms until diagnosis is four years. Subsequently, many patients suffer silently from IC which is known for its profound and devastating effect on the health and quality of victims’ lives.

The exact cause of IC is unknown. One common and compelling theory suggests that the defect appears to be related to an insufficient lining to the bladder wall made from glycosaminoglycan (GAG) and known as the “barrier.” When the barrier is deficient, the bladder is exposed to acidic urine which has a toxic effect on the bladder lining.

Currently one of the only FDA-approved pharmacological treatments is oral Elmiron, a weak analog of heparin and one of the GAGs. It is commonly considered that the active agent in this drug helps form a new barrier; however, Elmiron has shown no significant benefit over placebo in most modern trials.

Many clinicians will use heparin-like agents mixed with steroids and anesthetics placed into the bladder as an instillation. Another treatment offered is bladder hydro-distension which is the forcible administration of water into the bladder under anesthesia to stretch the lining. Unfortunately, this is harmful in many cases. Other interventions include diet modification, behavioral therapy, physical therapy, and neuromodulation. Surgical treatments can include laser eradication of mucosal lesions and ulcers, spot injections of lesions, and even partial or total bladder removal.

Most of the current management of IC focuses on pain management; however, some researchers are attempting to repair the problem on a cellular basis by introducing growth factors that signal GAG formation, or using immunosuppressive agents to mitigate IC. California Stem Cell Treatment Center has been studying IC to evaluate the effects of autologous fat-derived stem cells. They have used cell therapy on an investigational basis to mitigate IC symptoms in 51 patients. The stem cells are used systemically to modulate the immune system and also regionally to heal the bladder and pelvic floor.

Their data was presented at the Western Section American Urologic Association meetings in 2013 and 2015. Results indicate that pelvic pain scores decreased from an average of 7.2 to 2.9 (on a scale of 1-10) and more than 4 out of 5 patients had a 50% or more decrease in bladder symptoms of frequency, urgency, and burning.

Stem cells from fat continue to show clinical efficacy in many degenerative, inflammatory and auto-immune conditions.

Elliot B. Lander, MD, FACS, is co-founder and medical director of The Cell Surgical Network® and Medical Director of the California Stem Cell Treatment Center in Rancho Mirage and Beverly Hills. For more information on stem cells visit [www.stemcellrevolution.com](http://www.stemcellrevolution.com) or call (800) 231.0407.

# Less Stress, More Joy

By Kiran Dintyala, MD, MPH, ABIHM

Life is about growth, balance, and passion. Life is supposed to be lived peacefully and joyfully. Alas! How often we are stuck in the stresses and strains, losing ourselves completely in the maze of life... too often. Stress hinders growth, leads to imbalance and breeds dispassion. So, it is very important that we prevent stress and burnout.

Most people think that it's very difficult to lead a stress-free life. Truth be known, it is quite the opposite. It is very difficult to lead a stressful life. What a paradox! There are simple things one can do to nurture peace and joy in life.

Many years ago, I accidentally stumbled upon certain principles and techniques that helped me calm down in the midst of chaos and take control of my life situation. Eventually, that paved a pathway to a successful career and a happy life.

As a physician, every day I see many patients who suffer from stress-related diseases. Stress is associated with the 5 leading causes of death – heart disease, cancer, lung disease, cirrhosis, and accidents. In fact, stress is the foundation for many chronic diseases, and 80% of our health care costs stem from the burden of chronic diseases. So, it's obvious that if one can prevent stress and promote wellness, not only will health and happiness be their grand prizes to claim, but it will also save them a lot of money!

So, what can we do to lead a stress-free life? The first step starts with the understanding that stress is created

from within and acknowledging that we can do something about it. We have a fair degree of control over our destiny and it is well within our power to make choices that promote our mental well-being.

The central truth that helps you dissolve all the stress, puts you at ease with yourself, and helps you find peace and joy in your life is that ‘all stress is an illusion that is created through your own insecure thoughts.’ When you realize that truth, you automatically will become stress-free.

Let us say you dreamed that a tiger has attacked you during sleep and you scream out of fear. But the moment you wake up and open your eyes, the dream, as well as the tiger, vanishes and with a sigh of relief you realize that it is not real. The same applies when you realize that you are creating your own stress by misuse of your own thinking; you will suddenly realize that all stress is an illusion. With a sigh of relief, you realize that it is not real and stress suddenly disappears. You will feel a sense of peace, joy and security.

That is what happened to me when I realized this central truth. I hope to help you see the same truth that I saw so that you can lead a stress-free life as well!

Dr. Kiran is a physician and stress management expert and can be reached at [Dr.Kiran@StressFreeRevolution.com](mailto:Dr.Kiran@StressFreeRevolution.com). (860) 375.0446. For more on how to live with less stress and more joy, please visit [www.StressFreeRevolution.com](http://www.StressFreeRevolution.com).



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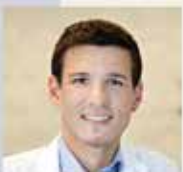
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Prebiotics: Fertilizer for Your Digestive Garden

By Brian J. Myers, ND

Probiotics have really stepped into the spotlight in the past few years. New research linking gut health and pathologies like depression is proving what naturopathic doctors have been saying for a long time – the gut-brain connection is not to be ignored.

By extension, gut health is of prime importance. To be clear, probiotics are a necessarily important staple in everyone's nutrition; their name alone highlights that fact: pro = good and biotics = bacteria. While probiotics do more to regulate our immune system and increase the quantity of beneficial bacteria, they don't do much to change the diversity, which is of equal importance. So how does one increase bacterial diversity and why is that diversity important?

Your digestive system can be compared to a garden. Before planting a garden it is important to optimize the soil with fertilizer to help grow the right plants. In this example, probiotics are the plants and the fertilizer is prebiotics. Prebiotics are a source of food for probiotics to grow, multiply, and thrive in the gut. Essentially they are fertilizer for the microbiome within our gut; primarily found in our large intestine and colon.

Prebiotics are special plant fibers that meet the following classification:

- Resists gastric acidity, hydrolysis by mammalian enzymes, and absorption in the upper gastrointestinal tract;
- Is fermented by the intestinal microflora;
- Selectively stimulates the growth and/or activity of intestinal bacteria potentially associated with health and well-being.

In other words, our body itself doesn't digest these fibers, which are also referred to as either soluble fibers or resistant starches. Instead, our microflora, or beneficial bacteria, digests them; they are food for your flora. Examples of these foods are mostly plants and include asparagus, Jerusalem artichokes, bananas, leeks, yams, onions, and chicory, to name a few. Prebiotics, as well as probiotics, are also found in breast milk.

Health benefits of increased prebiotic consumption have been linked to increased magnesium and calcium absorption, improved symptoms of Irritable Bowel Syndrome (IBS), beneficial changes in cholesterol profiles, decrease in lab values associated with type 2 diabetes, and increased butyric acid, which helps regulate metabolism, inflammation, and stress resistance. Meanwhile, long-term use of medications such as proton pump inhibitors (PPIs) and nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs) have been shown to have a negative effect on the quantity and diversity of our gastrointestinal microflora, so use of those should be evaluated closely.

There is plenty to keep in mind when preparing your meals. Making sure to provide foods that promote microbiome diversity is important for your overall health on many levels, so be sure to get a healthy serving of prebiotics!

Dr. Brian Myers is a naturopathic primary care doctor with a focus on pediatric and family medicine at Live Well Clinic in La Quinta. For more information, go to [www.livewellclinic.org](http://www.livewellclinic.org) or call (760) 771.5970.

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## Improving “The Sway” in Your Swing

By Michael K Butler B.A.; P.T.A.; CSCS\*D; RSCC\*D NMT

Golf makes many physical demands on the body. We therefore need to spend the necessary time conditioning ourselves so that we can play 18 holes day after day and not worry about pulling a muscle or incurring an even more severe injury.

One of the top five problems that many golfers experience is sway, meaning they don't rotate their hips or trunk during the backswing, so they end up having excessive lateral motion of their lower body. If you have this problem, you might experience reduced power, reduced speed in the lower body, and postural instability.

When a sway issue is suspected, a common test performed by the golf fitness professional is to test the mobility of the ankle. If the ankle has limited eversion (the inability to stay on the inside of the foot) during the backswing, this will most likely identify the problem. Science has shown that all athletic moves start from the ground up. If there is lack of flexibility in one joint such as the ankle, there might be a stability issue either above or below that. As golf fitness professionals we are trained to look and test all the joints from the ankle all the way up to the neck, to see if there is a problem somewhere else before we can make a diagnosis of the problem joints.

The next issue to look at is hip mobility, which is easy to test, but not so easy to treat in isolation. A lack of trail leg internal rotation can cause a definite sway issue during the backswing. In other words, if you can't keep both feet planted on the

ground when you are going through the backswing, the hip cannot fully rotate, causing a disruption in the chain and therefore causing issues with the swing.

Weak glutes and over used hamstrings can cause a poor lower body base and can lead to sway. Because most Americans sit for a good portion of the day, their glutes are already shut off, so when they play golf, they wonder why they can't hit the ball with authority or accuracy. Sound familiar? Teaching yourself how to activate your glutes while relaxing your hamstrings is key. Try lying on your back on a flat surface, straighten out your legs, then place one hand under each butt cheek. See if you can contract your glutes into your hands without tightening your hamstrings. When you achieve this lying down, then try to do it while standing.

Sway is easily identifiable and from a physical standpoint, there are corrective stretches and/or exercises to address the issue. If you are serious about your golf game, then I highly recommend making exercise and stretching part of your pre-game warm-up.

Michael is co-owner of Kinetix Health and Performance in Palm Desert. He holds a state license as a physical therapist assistant, national certifications of distinction through the NSCA as a strength and conditioning coach, Poliquin International state coach and as a Full Body Active Release Techniques Practitioner. He can be reached at (760) 200.1719 or at michael@kinetixcenter.com.



Exercise and stretching should be a regular part of your golf game.

## City of La Quinta Working for Wellness

### Summer Programs for Staying Active City of La Quinta offers both indoor and outdoor fun

Summer is settling in, and just because temperatures are heating up doesn't mean there aren't a lot of fun ways to get fit! In addition to a number of indoor activities at the City of La Quinta's Wellness Center, there are also options for staying active outdoors.

For instance, have you tried disc golf? This growing fitness trend involves a Frisbee or flying disc rather than clubs and a ball. A golf disc is thrown from a tee area to a target which is the “hole.” This inventive sport incorporates upper and lower body conditioning, aerobic exercise, and promotes a combination of physical and mental abilities with little risk of physical injury. Concentration skills can increase, as well, through mastering shots and negotiating obstacles. Players of limited fitness levels can start slowly and gradually increase their level of play as fitness improves. La Quinta even hosts disc golf tournaments at the Civic Center Campus, and the cost is only \$10. If you're looking for something new to shake up your fitness regimen, disc golf just may be your next adventure.

If traditional golf is still your game, La Quinta has the ideal way to try some of the Valley's premier courses through its Summer Golf Tour. This 13-week golf program allows participants to play championship courses like La Quinta Resort, Indian Wells Golf Resort, Classic Club and other top-rated courses. You do not have to be a La Quinta resident to join, and tour participants may pick and choose which courses they would like to play. Players may also choose to play in either single or team divisions, and plaques will be awarded to the top finalists in both divisions at the Golf Tour banquet. Register early to take advantage of the full tour.

The early morning hours are still perfect for hiking and biking, and La Quinta offers spectacular trails for both. Hikes are anywhere from a little over two miles to a little over seven, so you can choose what level/length best matches what you're seeking. Several trails start/end near Old Town La Quinta, and are complete with dog-friendly restaurants, a coffee house and bike rentals. La Quinta was ranked fifth in the top 45 hiking locations in the west by Sunset Magazine. Trails can be explored through guided hikes or by exploring with friends using map resources on PlayInLaQuinta.com.

Get out and play this summer. We hope to see you in La Quinta!

La Quinta is a HEAL City (Healthy Eating Acting Living) and creates wellness programs as a priority for its citizens and visitors throughout the year. Follow La Quinta on Facebook for announcements regarding upcoming summer programs and activities. For more information visit PlayInLaQuinta.com.

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### How to Get Your Child to Sleep

Healthy sleep habits in children are essential to their physical, mental, and emotional development. Children will show an improved mood, increased IQ, better grades, and seem all around happier with as little as 20 more minutes sleep per night. Establishing a bedtime routine helps parents and children get the extra rest they need. But as any parent knows, getting children to sleep in a timely manner for sufficient hours can seem impossible.

Children's sleep needs are dictated primarily by their age, and children typically require less sleep as they age. Here are recommendations from the pediatrician-led Nemours Center for Children's Health:

0-4 months:	14-16 hrs. in a 24 hr. cycle
4-12 months:	14-15 hrs., including 2-3 naps for 1-2 hrs. each
1-3 years:	12-14 hrs., including 1 nap for 1-2 hrs.
3-6 years:	10-12 hrs.
7-12 years:	10-11 hrs.
12-18 years:	8-9 hrs.

The most important tool to assist children to get to - and stay - asleep for adequate time is routine. The routine begins at dinner and continues up until the time the child is asleep. A routine will include all the same activities, at the same time, and in the same order each night. For example, dinner at 5:30pm, bath at 6:30pm, teeth brushing and pajamas after bath, in bed at 7:30pm, storytime together in bed, and lights out by 7:45pm. Routine establishes expected behaviors for both the parent and the child, reduces anxiety by anticipating what activity follows, and creates a diurnal sleep rhythm. It can take time for the child to respond to the routine in a positive way but with time (2-3 weeks), the child will begin to fight sleep less often and sleep longer hours with less interruption.

In addition to a routine, herbs and essential oils, and nutrition can help calm children into restful sleep. Children's herbal remedies that include oat straw (*avena sativa*), passion flower, chamomile, lemon balm (*melissa officinalis*), and/or valerian root induce relaxation and deeper sleep. A child-appropriate herbal remedy can be taken prior to bed for beneficial effects. Using a lavender essential oil-infused massage oil on your child's chest, a diluted lavender essential oil spray on the pillow and/or lavender infused children's bath soap can also help relaxation.

Limit daily fruit juice consumption, stop fruit/fruit juice all together by 3pm, and eliminate all added sugar products from the diet. Ensuring children eat at routine times throughout the day and creating balanced meals of protein, vegetables, and complex carbohydrates (i.e., not just buttered noodles) will keep children asleep longer and deeper. A routine is the most helpful aspect of good sleep, but herbal aids and diet can be very useful to help a child achieve relaxation.

Sleep routines and bedtime are one of the most frustrating habits for parents to create. Most parents will say that their children simply will not go to sleep and doubt the positive benefits of a routine for their child. However, the children that seem most resistant to routine are the children that typically benefit the most and, unfortunately, may take the longest to respond to the routine. In these cases, aids such as calming herbal remedies are nearly essential.

*Dr. Shannon Sinsheimer is state licensed naturopathic doctor with a focus on fertility, family wellness, and pre-conception health. She can be reached at Optimal Health Center (760) 568.2598.*

Sources: 1) [www.webmd.com/parenting/guide/sleep-children](http://www.webmd.com/parenting/guide/sleep-children); 2) <https://sleepfoundation.org/sleep-topics/children-and-sleep>

## Preventing Parental Temper Tantrums

By Amy Austin RN, Psy.D., LMFT

What parent hasn't had moments, days, even years of feeling like they could have parented better? The reality is, they could have parented differently. Most of us have a fantasy bubble that gives us a bird's eye view of a perfect life, encompassing everything we think we're not but should be.

Let's face it. Parenting is a full time endeavor, and no one dreams of the complexities of healthy parenting when the idea of pregnancy and having a baby is in the forefront of one's mind. That precious little baby grows up, gains autonomy, and wants a sense of independence that can at times be more trying than climbing Mount Everest.


One thing I know. There is nothing gained from an easy ride, but much to learn when situations and relationships are challenging. Therapeutically, there are "gifted" feelings for all feelings. Anger can lead to wisdom, loneliness to reaching out, fear to strength, guilt and shame to a healthier character, values, and spiritual connection. So much is learned through struggle. Discovering that we can come out the other side more emotionally healthy is empowering.

Here are a few tips for more genuine parenting practices:

- No one is the perfect parent, but rather a 'perfectly imperfect' parent with foibles and personality traits that could be valuable to share with your child/children.
- Stop all the explaining: justifying, rationalizing, minimizing, "overgeneralizing," "awfulizing," victimizing, and "catastrophizing." Constant explaining is a practice that is used when a parent can't bear not to be liked or loved. You might explain so much and so often that your child knows exactly when to tune you out. The child needs to learn that actions have consequences.
- We train our kids not to listen. "John, turn off the television and come to the table. Dinner is ready." No reaction from the child. A little louder now. Parents can repeat the scenario until the child gets the intention. The child might listen because they know that on the third time around, Mom or Dad means business. The answer is to say it once. If the request goes unnoticed, the consequence is consistent and firm, based on the child's age and stage of development.
- If a child is acting out, remove the child from the situation immediately. Consistency is key and can work wonders.
- Time outs can be utilized. If the child is three, the time out would be three minutes. The parent explains once the behavior that brought the child to the time out chair, they hug it out and it's a done deal.
- Parents can do much good by supporting and LISTENING, not judging or dismissing. Corporal punishment, in any form, just teaches kids to react impulsively and punitively; it is a temporary frustration release for the parent and is never appropriate.


Effective parenting with the awareness that no one is perfect and that it's okay to make amends to your child can lead that child and all of us to a life of purpose and authenticity that embraces us like a warm blanket, comforting when appropriate, and challenging when necessary during this roller coaster called life.

*Dr. Amy Austin is a licensed marriage and family therapist (MFC # 41252) and doctor of clinical psychology in Rancho Mirage. Dr. Amy can be reached at (760) 774.0047.*






## YOUR HEALTH MATTERS

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## Fiction Tells Real Stories

### Resources for Alzheimer's family caregivers

By Kae Hammond

"So now what do I do?" "Why are they behaving this way?" "Where do I find answers to all the questions I have?" These are outcries I hear from family caregiver/partner clients and audiences regularly. In addition to providing them a general overview and explanation about particulars, I offer my recommended reading list culled from the bookcases full of books I have read on these subjects over the past ten years.

Fact-based knowledge is required for families facing or living with Alzheimer's or other related dementia (there are 85-90 types). Fear is our greatest enemy and fear is based on ignorance. To successfully and *healthfully* live with these diseases, a family care partner needs to read, listen and learn to be informed and ahead of the monster's next move.

Here are some excellent books that provide professional insights and guidance and unravel many mysteries.

*The Alzheimer's Action Plan, The Experts' Guide to the Best Diagnosis and Treatment for Memory Problems* by P. Murali Doraiswamy, M.D., and Lisa P. Gwyther, M.S.W., is on the top of my list for anyone dealing with mild memory loss or early stage Alzheimer's to help preserve the highest possible quality of life, as long as possible.

*The 36-Hour Day* by Nancy Mace, M.A., and Peter V. Rabins, M.D., M.P.H., is often considered the bible for families living with Alzheimer's or other dementia. A word of caution—Dr. Rabin shared with me that too many readers of the book anticipate that everything he and Ms. Mace address will come to pass with their loved one and they live in fear and high anxiety. So a reminder, this is 'across the board' information.

I have highly recommended spouses read *Jan's Story, Lost to the Long Goodbye of Alzheimer's* by Barry Petersen, his courageous and gut-wrenching personal love story. What makes this a *must read* for spouses especially is that Barry lifts the veil from the social legacy which partners of spouses face.

Talented authors have woven tough subject matter into engaging fiction that addresses situations that may be in your future due to these diseases.

*Welcome to the Departure Lounge—Adventures of Mothering Mother* by Meg Federico is a bittersweet, highly enlightening story of a mother's decline and eventual death and a daughter's determined effort to make this difficult process as dignified and decent as possible.

I couldn't put down Auburn McCanta's award-winning fiction, *All The Dancing Birds*; nor could two of my friends. And this list should also include *Still Alice* by Lisa Genova; read the book or watch the movie on Netflix!

All of our lives are really made up of moments. Jolene Brackley wrote *Creating Moments of Joy for Dementia and Alzheimer's Caregivers—Family Members and Professional Caregivers*. I kept this journal on my nightstand for several years, and it was a blessing for me, as it has been for thousands. It's another *must have*.

Kae Hammond is founder and president of Dementia Help Center and author of *Pathways: A Guidebook for Dementia & Alzheimer's Family Caregivers*. She is a family caregiver coach, workshop leader, advocate, facilitator, keynote speaker and radio talk show host. For more information, call (877) 699.3456 or visit [www.dementiahelpcenter.com](http://www.dementiahelpcenter.com).

## Choosing Home Care

By Nikhil Mehta

One of most difficult decisions adult children make when caring for aging parents is where to turn for in-home care. The myriad of choices can be overwhelming. Essentially, there are three choices: private hire, domestic referral agencies and full service companies.

With a private hire caregiver, the family or older adult becomes responsible for all steps of the hiring process. They must advertise, interview, and conduct background checks. Once a caregiver is selected, the older adult or family member must negotiate schedule, salary and benefits. A written contract, signed by both parties, clearly outlining all of the duties and expectations, is imperative. Liability normally falls on the client's lap when it comes to payroll taxes, social security, unemployment taxes and workers' compensation cost. It is imperative to get a rider on your homeowner's insurance policy to protect your assets if anything should happen to the private hire in your home. Even though a private hire may be cost effective, the safety risk is the greatest when the older adult lives alone or has impaired judgment. The risk is greatly reduced when a family member or a geriatric care manager is able to supervise the caregiver.

Domestic referral agencies are essentially registries. A client calls for service and a caregiver is placed for a placement fee and sometimes an ongoing management fee. The referral agencies do not employ the caregiver; the client becomes the employer and, similar to a private hire, is responsible for payroll taxes, social security, unemployment insurance and workers' compensation. Some referral agencies have the client pay the agency and the agency then pays the caregiver, but the client is still considered the employer. Since referral agencies are not employers, they do not supervise the caregiver. This increases the safety risk. Like a private hire, it is important that a family member or geriatric care manager supervise and oversee the care.

Full service agencies employ the caregivers. They hire, screen, train and supervise the employees. As the employer, the full service agency is responsible for all payroll taxes, social security, workers' comp, and unemployment insurance. A good full service agency should be able to produce their liability insurance and carry a bond. In California, agencies are required to have a license to operate. Confirm that they are licensed as a Home Care Organization. Supervision is done by the agency, with some agencies providing care managers who directly oversee client cases, thereby lowering the risk to the consumer. The cost of a full service agency is normally higher than a private duty hire or a domestic referral agency due to these factors; however, the risk is essentially lower.

When choosing in-home care for yourself or an older adult, remember to take into consideration the risk level of the older adult and the familial involvement. Educate yourself on what service is best for your situation and then interview several individuals or agencies. Finally, don't wait for a crisis to begin searching for the best care for you or your loved one.

Nikhil Mehta is Owner/CEO of Home Care Assistance Palm Desert. For more information visit [www.HomeCareAssistancePalmDesert.com](http://www.HomeCareAssistancePalmDesert.com) or call (760) 345.0001.

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### 5 Ways Grains Interfere with Weight Loss

There are plenty of reasons why grains can impact your weight loss goals, aside from gluten. We are aware of the obvious benefits of swapping burger buns for whole grains or gluten-free options, but often grains, and wheat in particular, are overlooked as a hidden cause of resistant weight loss.

Let's take a look at why grain consumption can be related to the dreaded weight loss plateau.

**1) It's a blood sugar bomb.** The biggest influence on the body's ability to burn fat is blood sugar levels. Contrary to common belief, there is minimal difference between whole wheat and white flour. When grains, even gluten-free, are ground into flour from whole kernels, they become dense, quick digesting carbohydrates, causing a rapid rise in blood sugar. A rise in blood sugar tells the body to release high amounts of insulin, a 'fat storing' hormone which shuttles sugar into cells and the liver - and the rest into your fat cells. The constant presence of high insulin causes our body to switch from fat burning to fat storing mode. The key is to keep blood sugar from rising too much, too often by consuming lower carbohydrate meals.

**2) Wheat contains 'super starch'.** Today's cross-hybridized wheat contains high levels of the carbohydrate Amylopectin A. Due its fast digestibility, Amylopectin A can raise blood sugar higher than a candy bar. In studies, this super starch has been shown to specifically increase belly fat and lead to insulin resistance.<sup>1</sup>

**3) Inflammatory lectins.** Inflammation is a well-known hurdle of fat loss, and wheat has been well documented to have multiple inflammatory properties, one of which is the presence of lectins. Lectins act as a plant's defense against its natural enemies. The specific lectins found in wheat, wheat germ agglutinin (WGA), stimulate the synthesis of pro-inflammatory chemical messengers called cytokines.<sup>2</sup> Due to decades of wheat hybridization, there is increased concentration of these WGA lectins with the highest concentration found in whole grains.

**4) Endocrine disrupters.** Endocrine disruptors (ED) are chemicals that can interfere with the hormonal system. Xenoestrogens are a type of ED that have estrogen-like effects such as weight gain and have even been shown to increase breast tissue growth in men. Glyphosate, a well-known xenoestrogen, is one of the most highly sprayed toxic additions in our food supply, particularly in wheat crops. An estimated 85% of non-organic wheat crops are sprayed with glyphosate during harvest.

**5) Addictive appetite stimulant.** Gluteomorphins, named after "gluten" and "morphine," are opioid-like peptides formed during digestion of wheat. When we consume wheat and your immune system is compromised, these polypeptides can be absorbed into the bloodstream and cross the blood brain barrier, creating a drug-like effect in our brain that not only affects neurologic concerns, but can also cause addictive eating behavior, such as intense cravings and bingeing. This is why going low carb is difficult, and why we have a hard time giving up our favorite bread.

As you can see, there is much more to blame than gluten in grains that could be playing a role in preventing you from losing those last ten pounds.

Tiffany is a Certified Nutrition Consultant and Functional Diagnostic Nutrition Practitioner and can be reached at (760)285.1221 [www.GlutenFreeWithTiffany.com](http://www.GlutenFreeWithTiffany.com)

References: 1) <http://ajcn.nutrition.org/content/49/2/337.short>; 2) <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/19332085>



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## New Treatment for Varicose Veins

By Pushpinder (Makku) Sivia, MD

Chances are that you either have, or you know someone who has, varicose veins. That is because vein disease affects 1 in 4 adults. A common myth is that varicose veins (veins that bulge underneath the skin in the legs) are a cosmetic problem, but in certain situations they can lead to swelling and pain in the legs and even phlebitis (clots in the veins). In our valley, where shorts and skirts are year-round attire, unsightly varicose veins can cause embarrassment and force patients of both sexes to cover up their legs.

Until recently, many treatments for varicose veins including laser or radiofrequency ablation involved downtime and the necessity to wear compression stockings usually before and after the treatment. Wearing thigh high stockings in the desert summer is not a fun experience for the vast majority of my patients. Ablation is an effective treatment but can also lead to bruising and, although rarely, damage to the nerves in the legs.

Fortunately, there is now a procedure known as VenaSeal that safely treats varicose veins and does not require compression stockings. Also referred to as the “superglue treatment,” VenaSeal involves using a small amount of medical adhesive to treat vein disease.

In order to understand the benefits of this new technology, one needs to understand how varicose veins develop.

Varicose veins are bulging veins in the legs below the skin surface that form due to damaged valves in the veins. Blood usually is pumped out of the legs via one way valves in the veins. The valves can become leaky for various reasons: genetics, pregnancy, and standing on the feet for a long period of time. When performing the VenaSeal procedure, ultrasound is used to identify the vein, and a small amount of medical adhesive is injected into the vein. Within just a few minutes, the vein is sealed closed and blood is re-routed to the remaining veins in the leg. The glue itself is safe and has been used in the human body for various medical applications for over a decade. Once the procedure is completed, a small band-aid is applied over the catheter insertion site and the patient can resume normal activity. The procedure is performed in the office setting with no sedation required. Only a single injection of local anesthetic is required, and most veins can be treated in less than 30 minutes.

Benefits of the new treatment include no down time, and the procedure is safe and effective, with a 97% success rate. Rarely, temporary inflammation can occur at the procedure site, so it is always important to discuss risks and benefits of the procedure with your vascular surgeon. A quick ultrasound screening can determine if you are a candidate for the VenaSeal procedure, so stop hiding your varicose veins and show off your healthy legs!

Pushpinder (Makku) Sivia, M.D., is board-certified in vascular surgery and specializes in vein surgery. He can be reached at 1 (800) Varicose or at [www.DesertVeinSpecialists.com](http://www.DesertVeinSpecialists.com). He is also a member of Desert Doctors. For more information visit [DesertDoctors.org](http://DesertDoctors.org) or call (760) 232.4646.

## Living Wellness with Jennifer Di Francesco

### Cycles of Life and Lessons of Nature

The desert is an amazing landscape which can look barren and dry for months of the year and then in spring, vibrancy occurs. There is no better way to explore this beauty than through hiking.

This spring unveiled a burst of color on many plants like the beavertail cactus with bright fuchsia flowers which open to the sun each morning. Other desert plants such as the brittlebush, desert sand verbena and creosote are now in full bloom as well.

In addition to desert plants, hiking introduces you to many unique creatures like the blister beetle I recently noticed eating the copious yellow brittlebush flowers.

The blister beetle is a black and bright red-orange insect up to a couple of inches long. In the spring, a band of beetles will be dangling from the flower stalks on the brittlebush. When you learn the history behind their name, they become fascinating. When the beetle is threatened, it has the ability to pop a blood vessel in the joint of their leg, and a yellow fluid oozes out. When a predator gets a mouthful of this substance, it may be deterred from ingesting the beetle. In addition, this liquid can cause blisters on skin – hence the name. These interesting facts about the blister beetle caused me to think about our own reflexes and predispositions. The human species also has responses such as “fight or flight” which cause an increase in cortisone, or cortisol, in the midst of stress. If only we could pop a blood vessel like the blister beetle to avert all imminent stress!

Literally every nook and cranny of the desert holds a life lesson for us. Studying how every desert plant has been used by the Cahuilla Indians also uncovers more lessons of appreciation for both the Cahuilla culture and the plants themselves.

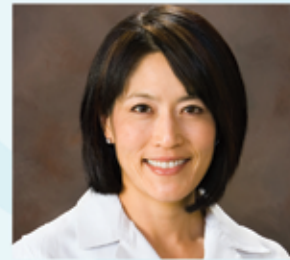
The creosote bush, which is one of the most predominant shrubs you see while hiking the desert floor, is just one example of the healing plants. Native Americans used its medicinal qualities extensively. This is one of the only bushes which stay green year round in the desert, producing yellow flowers with little fuzzy blossoms in spring. When it rains, the creosote is the most prevalently smelled plant in the desert air, emitting an intriguing earthy odor. The plant has been used to heal viral infections, as an anti-inflammatory medicine, and to treat the aches and pains of rheumatism. Cahuilla Indians crushed the leaves and boiled the plant until the steam rose or used it in a poultice. Likewise, nearly every other plant I passed on the hiking trail today was used medicinally in times past.

By learning about the cycles of nature and the healing power of plants on our desert floor, we can develop a reverent connection to the earth. Within each of us, there is a cycle of life stages, much like the seasonal cycles of nature. Be a silent observer of nature and marvel at the cycles of regeneration, hibernation and medicinal uses of the desert landscape.



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## BEAUTY Inside & Out

Ritu Chopra, MS, MD

### Breast Implants Then and Now

One of my favorite movies of all times is the 1997 HBO movie *Breast Men* with David Schwimmer and Chris Cooper. It was humorous and astonishingly accurate with regards to the evolution of the modern implant and the eventual controversy that enveloped it.

There is something new with breast implant design that just came out, but I want to present some history first. To know where we are going, it's best not to forget where we have been.

In the first half of the 1900s, injection of the breasts was tried. Paraffin, silicone and even the patient's own fat were injected into the breast for enlargement with poor results. These techniques were abandoned, and rightly so.

Next, solid sponges were tried. They didn't work because, as it turns out, the body likes to contract around and compress implanted materials. Compressible material such as sponges resulted in deformity and firmness. All these innovations (if you want to call them that) were before my time. They also pre-date the FDA, the government's watch dog for medications and medical devices. So we fortunately won't see these techniques reappearing.

Then we entered the modern age of breast enlargement.

The modern breast implant is a fluid- or gel-filled implant in a flexible plastic shell. It isn't compressible like a sponge, but it is soft, squish-able, and more realistic. Over the years the implant has gone through many changes, but the content of the shell and filling remain much the same. The shell is made of a flexible, silicone-based plastic trademarked as Silastic. The fill is made of a silicone gel, saline (salt water) or a combination of both. The combination implants, called "double lumen" have two chambers, one containing the silicone gel and an entirely separate chamber holding the saline. The saline chamber has a valve, so a variable amount of fill can be placed inside. Implants that are 100% filled with saline also have the valve for on-the-spot filling as well.

So that's the history. That's where we have been. So, what have we learned and what is the future for breast implants? What was the basis for the controversy regarding the safety of silicone implants all about? And most importantly, are they safe today?

The controversy arose in the early 1990s as a result of media hype and a melee of legal jockeying. It was prolonged in the U.S. courts for as long as the class action suits were yielding huge rewards (as depicted in the previously mentioned movie). But eventually the real science and epidemiological facts caught up with the junk science and hype. It was determined that there is no link between breast implants and all of the conditions that were alleged, and finally, breast implants were clear for use once again. An interesting fact: even while the controversy raged on in the 90s, breast augmentation operations became more popular than ever during that decade, performed more often than every other plastic surgery during that decade.

But even though it had been proven that breast implants don't cause cancer, arthritis or lupus, the techniques used were far from a perfect medical device. Problems with rippling, deflation, rupture and scar tissue persisted.

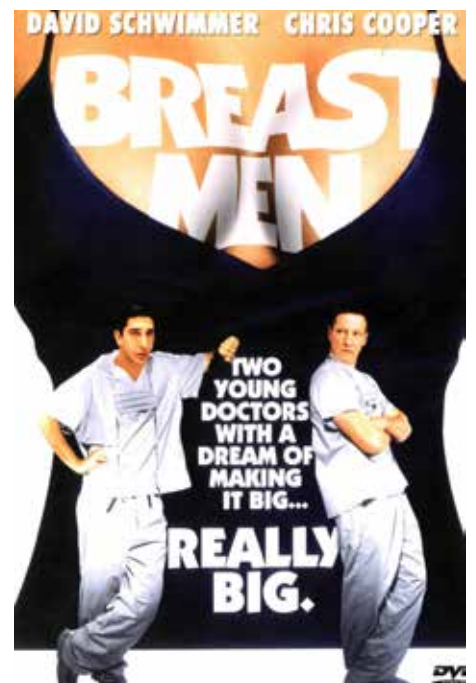
The world has been looking for a better implant, and two huge breakthroughs have been made recently.

The issue of rupture and deflation is addressed with the so-called Gummy-Bear implant. Simply put, it is a silicone gel implant that cannot leak. The gel is a cohesive silicone that sticks to itself. It does not flow, like water. It holds together whether or not the shell is intact. With this quality, the issue of leakage or rupture is over.

Even with this improvement, some people seek to avoid silicone altogether and use saline implants. Saline implants were notorious for a round, cupcake look but also created unnatural ripples. Not anymore. There is now a new saline implant with an improved profile and a shell within a shell within a shell that smoothes out the edges for a natural, even curvature - just like a real breast. It's called the Ideal implant and in my view, it's aptly named. I am very excited about the future of this implant.

Breast implant surgery is here to stay and with today's innovative implants and techniques, the results are better than ever.

Dr. Chopra is medical director of The Plastic Surgery Institute in Rancho Mirage and can be reached at (760) 568.2211. Please send your ideas and recommended topics for his column via email to [csmith@roxurgery.com](mailto:csmith@roxurgery.com).



Chopra refers to the movie *Breast Men* as humorous and astonishingly accurate with regards to the evolution of implants.





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