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Your HEALTH IS IN YOUR HANDS

My friend Mary was scheduled for surgery to address a chronic condition she has struggled with for years. It caused severe discomfort and Mary was ready for relief. A month before her surgery, she started feeling better, the pain was gone and her range of motion improved. I asked her if she had cancelled the surgery and she didn't think she could. She was afraid that if she cancelled it now, her insurance wouldn't cover it if she needed it later. This struck me as odd.

Another friend of mine disliked the primary care physician (PCP) assigned to her by her HMO. She developed a concerning infection and swelling in her knee, but couldn't get in to see her doctor for two weeks. Throughout her treatment, he would cancel appointments, not return calls, and made her feel bad for requesting a prescription change when her medication seemed ineffective. I asked her why she didn't change doctors and she said her HMO wouldn't let her. Now that, I thought, is crazy.

So I did some research and spoke with a few local health care providers about the prevalence of these scenarios and realized that many people rely on their doctors and insurance companies to be their advocates. What seems forgotten is that -- when it comes to health care -- YOU are the customer. You pay good money for your insurance (or have paid for it throughout your life) and your doctors work for YOU.

Finding a doctor you like should be your first priority. This is especially important with your PCP as he or she is the one to oversee your care when other doctors are involved. If you develop a chronic condition, your team of doctors usually grows, creating opportunity for lack of information, misplaced records, and duplication. According to a recent report in the *Journal of the American Medical Association*, your state of well-being can actually decrease as the number of doctors you see increases due to overtreatment and poor coordination by multiple practitioners and health care systems.'

When it comes to managing our own health, what can we do to help achieve successful and satisfying results?

Remember, YOU are the customer.

Insurance and health care are services you purchase and for which you pay. You are the customer. Regardless of your type of insurance coverage (or lack thereof) know that you have treatment options and it is in your best interest to know what those options are by asking questions.

Understand your condition.

Being diagnosed with an illness can be scary and overwhelming. But those feelings often subside when you have a full understanding of the condition. "If you don't understand what your doctor is telling you, ask for clarification," says family physician, Dr. Ed Ruiz of

Continued on page 7



Making a Difference in Our Schools. Improving nutrition in schools is no small task. It requires the motivation, inspiration and action of a hard working team to instill long-lasting change.

In this year's Healthy Lifestyle Challenge, schools competed against valley cities, companies and organizations for the "Best of the Best" award. The goal for each program was to improve the health, physical fitness, and overall well-being of those within their organization.

Each entry was unique and the results impressive, and top honors went to two participating schools. "Best of the Best" was awarded to the Palm Springs Unified School District (PSUSD) for its top-notch nutrition program and the "Advocate Award" was presented to Marta Shand, Nutrition Services Site Supervisor--Desert Sands Unified School District (DSUSD).

PSUSD's nutrition program targets students, staff and parents and includes: a "wellness policy" with guidelines for acceptable foods to be sold on campus and limiting fund raising to healthy items; a Chef in the Classroom program; after school cooking clubs; parent cooking classes; district-wide walking programs; teacher "Lunch & Learns"; and in-class Harvest of the Month curricula.

Continued on page 3

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Happy Holidays!

The season is here and with it comes new and eventful change. We talk about change a lot in this issue – positive change that is making a difference.

We introduce you to three women contributing to the improved health of our Valley schools, and the benefits that UCR's new School of Medicine will bring to our community. We, of course, discuss lifestyle changes that can improve your individual health, and review the benefits that occur when medical doctors and natural medicine come together for whole person care.



We talk about change that needs to occur with America's sugar high and the effect it is having on our youth. We even provide simple practices that can help you avoid sugar overload this holiday season (and the winter cold that often comes with it!).

We also introduce you to yoga instructor Jayne Robertson who was looking for a way to make a difference. She became passionate about a cause, overcame personal trepidation, and exceeded all her expectations in raising funds and traveling to work in a community in crisis. Jayne is certainly creating change.

We commend all of you who take action to create positive change in your life. Whether it is for you, a loved one, or a community, positive change matters. So keep up the good work!

As always, we thank you for reading *Desert Health*® and look forward to seeing you out and about this holiday season!

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We welcome local health related news stories:
Please submit proposed editorial via email as a Word document with a bio and hi resolution photo of the writer. All submissions are subject to approval and editing at the Publisher's discretion and may or may not be published. Article and advertising deadlines are the 15th of the month prior to publication.

Community photos on health & wellness: We invite you to submit photos that portray health and wellness in the Coachella Valley. Email high resolution photos (minimum 300 dpi) to News@DesertHealthNews.com with photo caption and credit. Submitted photos may be published free of charge by Desert Health and will not be returned.

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Addition to the Sept/Oct Issue

We received great feedback on our Health Is A Choice feature on yoga in our last issue.

In that article, we stated that yoga "originated... as a therapeutic practice used by early healers."

We understand that many believe yoga originated as a spiritual practice as stated in Patanjali's Yoga Sutras, and agree that this statement should not be overlooked.

Thank you to those who brought this to our attention. And congratulations to those who were inspired by the article to give yoga a try! It is the practice of a lifetime and never too late to start.




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Health Is A Choice

Continued from page 1

The interactive programs that Shand and her team implemented at DSUSD target students with a focus on healthy eating as part of students' daily lives. Programs such as Breakfast and a Movie, Football Breakfast, Color Me Breakfast, and Grab n' Go Breakfast emphasize the importance of this daily meal. Shand initiated running clubs and created and taught healthy afterschool programs such as Nutrition Bites, Cooking it Up and Earth Day at the elementary level. She brought local farmers to schools and secured a Farmers Market Cart offering fresh fruits and vegetables as part of the student lunch program.

Nutritional change is happening in Coachella Valley schools. *Desert Health*® is proud to feature three individuals who are significant contributors to this change: Marta Shand, Nutrition Services Site Supervisor – DSUSD; Dr. Lenea Pollett, Nutrition Education Program Coordinator – PSUSD; and Hayden Ross, Healthy Schools Program Manager, Coachella Valley from the Clinton Foundation's Alliance for a Healthier Generation.



Marta Shand

Nutrition Services Site Supervisor–Desert Sands Unified School District

Shand has worked for the district for 5 years making significant strides in their nutrition services program.

She has a degree in nutrition and her career has included patient service management in hospital administration. She oversees 33 schools and has a point person at each school.

Shand is most proud of the fact that the image of nutrition services has changed. "We are no longer 'the mean lunch lady.' We have degrees in the field and professional backgrounds. We treat this like a business and our primary job is to serve our customers, the students. If we can create a fun environment

and make our customers happy, while forming a connection with healthy food, then we have done our job."

Shand credits the district's leadership, which supports her ideas, for making things happen. With the program's growth, Marta now has help from a second site manager recently hired. Her goals are to keep moving forward, and to increase awareness and participation. "And to keep our customers happy."

Fun Fact: The most popular healthy food offered at her schools? Jicama sticks served with a little chili powder and lemon.



Dr. Lenea Pollett

Nutrition Education Program Coordinator–Palm Springs Unified School District

Dr. Pollett has a degree in public health and has worked in education for 25 years. She was a professor of nutrition for 15 years before working with the Department of Public Health's Network for a Healthy California. Pollett helped the department launch this program statewide and later moved into research and evaluation. Two years ago, she joined PSUSD bringing the most effective programs with her.

Dr. Pollett credits her district's leadership for alleviating bureaucracy and allowing programs to take place in a timely and efficient matter. She likes working at the school level -

in the classroom, with staff, and with afterschool programs - because she feels that the impact she is making can last a lifetime.



Hayden Ross

Healthy Schools Program Manager, Coachella Valley–Clinton Foundation's Alliance for a Healthier Generation

Ross has a master's degree in physical education and sports administration. She began her professional career as a PE teacher moving into curriculum development where she trained teachers on new programs to keep kids active and moving. She worked in one of the nation's largest districts, Clark County in Nevada, where she was also the point person for the Alliance for a Healthier Generation.

"I saw the significant progress and impact the Alliance was able to make in schools and was excited to become a part of it." She joined the Alliance in September and is overseeing 60 of the 74 K-12 schools in all three valley districts. The program will

roll out to all schools in year two. "Our training and professional development is very hands on and we want to ensure that I am an active resource for each and every school along the way."

The Alliance's program includes three trainings with each school district which start this month. Among the attendees are school principals and an appointed 'wellness champion' who will be Ross's point person. The first training provides an overview of the Healthy Schools program and how to develop a school wellness council. "We have found that it is best practice for the schools to develop a diverse and well-rounded student wellness council to carry on their wellness goals." They also review each school's inventory - where they are and where would they like to go. The second training focuses on each school's goals and shares the Alliance's framework for success, and the third training celebrates successes and reviews areas of improvement.

Together, these individuals and Coachella Valley schools' nutrition services teams are positively impacting 77 schools and over 70,000 kids!

2012 Coachella Valley Health Collaborative's Healthy Lifestyle Challenge Awards

"Best of the Best" Award was presented to the Palm Springs Unified School District for its top-notch nutrition program.

"Health Advocate Award" was presented to Marta Shand of the Desert Sands Unified School District for her work in promoting healthy programs, activities and nutrition.

"City vs. City" Challenge between Mayor Pougnet of Palm Springs and Mayor Glen Miller of Indio was awarded to Indio.

Participation in this year's program by individuals, companies and organizations more than doubled to 1,823 and total steps were 512,093,590 or 241,098.67 miles! For information on how you can get involved in the 2013 Challenge visit www.mywellsite.com/cvhc or contact Gary Jeandron, project director, at (760) 341-2883.

The 2012 Healthy Lifestyle Challenge was sponsored by Desert Oasis Healthcare, Desert Regional Medical Center and Desert Health®.



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Fridays:

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December Seminar Dates

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How Will UCR's New School of Medicine Benefit Valley Residents?

The Desert Healthcare District (DHCD) recently made a significant investment in the new School of Medicine at the University of California, Riverside. This investment will pay enormous dividends for the Coachella Valley in expanded access to primary medical care and new programs to improve health outcomes in underserved communities.

The decision to grant "preliminary accreditation" to the UCR medical school was recently made by the national accrediting body for M.D. education programs. This means that the school will enroll its first students in August 2013. The DHCD grant to UCR – \$5 million over five years – was pivotal for the medical school to secure additional non-state funding and successfully reapply for accreditation.

The launch of the UCR medical school demonstrates the power of leveraging grant funds of the Desert Healthcare District to create transformative progress in meeting the healthcare needs of District residents, according to Kathy Greco, chief executive officer of the District. "We are so pleased and proud to play such a significant role in creating the state's first new public medical school in more than four decades. This medical school will not only benefit Coachella Valley residents, but will also develop innovative new ways of improving the health of underserved communities that will potentially serve as national models," she said.

Desert Healthcare District funds are supporting four critical objectives of the UCR School of Medicine – establishing a UCR primary care medical practice in the District; developing residency training in partnership with Desert Regional Medical Center; launching a telemedicine infrastructure; and expanding the school's student pipeline programs into medicine.

Less than a year into the project, the school has established a family practice clinic called UCR Health with two new clinical faculty medical school members, Dr. Tahany Habashy and Dr. Andrew Alexander. Recruiting is underway for additional family medicine physicians and internists. An additional five physicians are expected to join UCR Health in the next six months.

Parallel to development of the clinical enterprise, the UCR medical school is developing residency programs (post-M.D. training required for physicians to become board certified in specialties). The principal determinants of where physicians practice are where they grew up and where they finished training. So establishing residency training programs is a major focus of the medical school to expand the physician workforce in the Coachella Valley.

Grant funds are also supporting development of a smart classroom in the District to connect residents and faculty to educational programs originating from the UCR campus. Telemedicine carts funded by the grant will be installed at locations in the District to link patients to physicians at other sites and to specialists outside the District. Finally, the District is supporting expansion of the school's pipeline programs that prepare more middle, high school, and college students from the Coachella Valley for careers in medicine.

While not directly supported by grant funds, the District's support of the medical school is also enabling UCR to work collaboratively with a variety of organizations in the Valley including the Health Assessment Resource Center (HARC), the Desert AIDS Project, and the Coachella Valley Economic Partnership Workforce Excellence Programs.



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Diet, Lifestyle and Your Eyes

By Jennifer Hui, MD, FACS

Our eyes are the windows into our bodies and give important clues to our overall health status. Age related macular degeneration (AMD) is the leading cause of significant, permanent vision loss in individuals over 60. Approximately 1.5 million Americans have AMD, and roughly 7 million have an early form of the disease.

AMD causes loss of central vision. There are two forms of the disease: dry and wet. In AMD, the macula is damaged by protein deposits, growth of abnormal membranes, and bleeding under the retina. The macula is the central portion of the retina which is responsible for fine vision. The resulting scarring leads to loss of this central vision, making it difficult to recognize faces. Many factors are associated with AMD, including exposure to cigarette smoke (increases risk of disease 400%), obesity, high blood pressure, high cholesterol, increased dietary fat intake, low levels of antioxidants, exposure to shorter wavelength (higher energy) light, and age. We can modify many of these factors, and also decrease the risk of AMD with supplements and a balanced, healthful diet.

Nutritional supplementation is one area of strong interest in AMD studies. The AREDS (Age Related Eye Disease) Study found a 25% reduction in progression from stage 3 or 4 disease to advanced AMD disease if participants took the recommended doses of antioxidants and specific minerals (5000 IU Vitamin A, 500 mg Vitamin C, 400 mg Vitamin E, 80 mg zinc, 2 mg copper). Another study found a correlation between the incidence of atherosclerotic heart disease and AMD. Further research has found those who consumed meat 10 times or more per week are almost 50% more likely to develop AMD than those who ate meat less than 4.5 times per week. This relationship is found even when controlling for obesity and smoking. The authors feel that meat may result in oxidative damage that is toxic to the retina.

Two studies in particular have focused on nutrition and AMD. One evaluated diet and the other focused on blood levels of nutrients. Both found that up to 90% of vision loss caused by macular degeneration may be prevented if an optimal diet is adopted. Antioxidants, which are found in many fruits and vegetables, play a vital role in reducing damage caused by free radicals. Free radicals are unstable molecules which cause cellular damage. Free radicals are formed when the body is exposed to toxic insults such as cigarette smoke, ultraviolet radiation or in those with a higher percentage of body fat and lower levels of antioxidants.

Carotenoids are a subset of antioxidants which have been studied in AMD. Those who consume a diet rich in carotenoids had about 40% less disease than those who consumed very little carotenoids. Lutein and zeaxanthin are two specific carotenoid compounds that have been found to be the most beneficial. They are thought to filter the more harmful short wavelength light rays, thereby reducing toxic damage to the macula. A study of the dietary habits of 4,519 Americans was conducted over 6 years and found that those in the top 20% of dietary consumption of lutein and zeaxanthin had a 35% less chance of developing AMD than those in the lowest 20% of consumption. Carotenoid compounds give fruits and vegetables their yellow color.

In the Coachella Valley, we are fortunate to enjoy a rich variety of antioxidant-containing fruits and vegetables year round. Antioxidant rich fruits include blueberries, blackberries, strawberries, raspberries, plums, oranges, red grapes, cherries, kiwi fruit and pink grapefruit. Antioxidant rich vegetables include garlic, kale, spinach, brussel sprouts, broccoli, beets, red bell peppers, onions, corn and eggplant.


Within the large Baby Boomer population, the incidence of AMD is expected to increase. The good news is that with modification of lifestyle and dietary habits, much can be done to prevent the development of macular degeneration, and stave off progression in those already diagnosed.

Increased consumption of antioxidants is one effective, proactive method. It helps us feel more energetic and rejuvenated.

Carotenoids are an important subset of antioxidants, and their levels can be quantified with an optical scanning device. After placing your hand in front of a low-energy blue light, your Skin Carotenoid Score (SCS) can be painlessly measured in less than two minutes. This convenient scanning tool can help measure your progress and success in making positive lifestyle changes that will help combat AMD.

Dr. Hui is the founder of The Eyelid Institute in Palm Desert. She is an Oculoplastic surgeon with a special interest in cosmetic/reconstructive eyelid surgery and anti-aging treatments. An Oculoplastic surgeon is a physician with combined training in Ophthalmic Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery (Oculoplastics) and Ophthalmology who has unique abilities to perform a variety of delicate procedures around the eyes. Dr. Hui can be reached at 760.610.2677

Sources: 1) Harvard Women's Health Watch May 2009; 2) JAMA 217 (1994):1413-20; 3) Eye Disease Prevalence Research Group (2004); 4) The Age-Related Eye Disease Study Research Group (2001); 5) AREDS Report No. 8. Arch Ophthalmol 119:1417-1436; 6) Am J Epidemiol. 1995;142(4):404-409; 7) Invest Ophthalmol Visual Sci. 2001;42(1):265-74; 8) Elaine Chong American Journal of Epidemiology, April 1, 2009; 9) John Paul San Giovanni Archives of Ophthalmology October 2007; 10) Lili Zhao and Burgunda V. Sweet Am J Health-Syst Pharm—Vol 65 Jul 1, 2008 from University of Michigan; 11) Nutrition and Lifestyle Interventions in the Prevention and Treatment of Common Eye Diseases; 12) Neil Nedley, M.D. (2012, Loma Linda CA); 13) Harvard Womens Health Watch May 2009; 14) Seddon JM, Ajani VA, Sperduto RD, et al. "Dietary carotenoids, vitamins A, C, and E, and advanced age-related macular degeneration." JAMA 217 (1994):1413-20; 15) Eye Disease Prevalence Research Group (2004); 16) The Age-Related Eye Disease Study Research Group (2001) A randomized, placebo-controlled, clinical trial of high-dose supplementation with vitamins C and E, beta carotene, and zinc for age-related macular degeneration and vision loss. AREDS Report No. 8. Arch Ophthalmol 119:1417-1436; 17) Vingerling JR, Dielemans I, Bots ML, et al. Age-related macular degeneration is associated with atherosclerosis. The Rotterdam Study. Am J Epidemiol. 1995;142(4):404-409; 18) Curcio CA, Millican CL, Bailey T, et al. Accumulation of cholesterol with age in human Bruch's membrane. Invest Ophthalmol Visual Sci. 2001;42(1):265-74; 19) Elaine Chong American Journal of Epidemiology, April 1, 2009; 20) John Paul San Giovanni Archives of Ophthalmology October 2007; 21) Lili Zhao and Burgunda V. Sweet Am J Health-Syst Pharm—Vol 65 Jul 1, 2008 from University of Michigan; 22) Nutrition and Lifestyle Interventions in the Prevention and Treatment of Common Eye Diseases Neil Nedley, M.D. (2012, Loma Linda CA)



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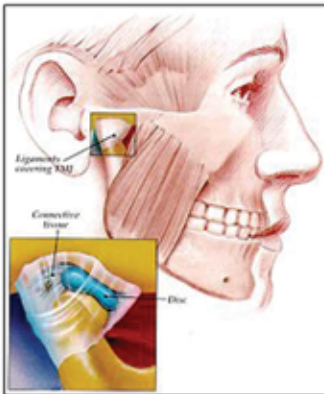


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Identifying the Cause of Chronic Headache Pain

By Leonard J. Feld, DDS

In my 39 + years of practice, I have worked with hundreds of patients who have suffered from chronic headaches and migraines. Their common solution is to relieve symptoms with pain medication that "makes their headache go away." But it does not solve the cause of their condition and soon their pain returns.



Often it appears that their repetitive actions are driven by misconceptions about the effectiveness and safety of pain medications. As stated by the FDA, "pain medications are safe and effective when used as directed. However, misuse of these products can be extremely harmful and even deadly." And most pain medication labels indicate that long term use is not recommended.

Following are a few misconceptions that I commonly address with patients:

Over-the-counter medications treat the cause of headaches.

Headache pills mask pain by telling your brain that the headache isn't there. They convince the brain that the pain is gone for a period of time. This is the reason that – after the medication wears off– your headache comes right back. The real cause of your headaches remains untreated and you continue to suffer.

Headache medication isn't harmful.

Many headache sufferers don't know that the medication they take is not completely safe. In fact, some side effects can be worse than the headaches. The pills that disable your ability to feel headaches are also disabling a little hormone in your body that's a messenger to your brain. If you disable the hormone from doing that one job, it will also be disabled from other jobs. Pain medication is also very hard on your liver and kidneys, and as previously stated, excessive use can be extremely harmful and even deadly.

Anxiety, stress and emotions cause headaches.

You may think that your natural level of stress is causing your headaches. Being stressed and living with these emotions is part of life. However, it is not the cause of migraines, facial pain and/or headaches. In fact, some of the associated body pain is probably causing (and/or enhancing) your stress and making it worse. Medication seldom increases the body's ability to respond to stress appropriately, and often decreases your body's natural ability to fight disease.

Your problem is where your pain is.

There are a large number of factors that can lead to headaches and they don't always start in the brain where you feel the pain. A proper diagnosis of the cause is of utmost importance for treatment and resolution. Specialists who standardly diagnose the cause of headaches and migraines include neurologists, pain management specialists, and as one of the most common causes of headaches is the temporomandibular joint (or TMJ), dentists with advance training in TMJ disorders.

Headaches that originate and/or are felt in the muscles of the face, forehead, back of the head or eyes, are vascular in nature. Many medical professionals blame vascular headaches on the trigeminal nerve which runs through the temporomandibular joint. Jaw misalignment or joint dysfunction can infringe on the nerve and cause headache pain.

For decades, medicine and dentistry have overlooked the TMJ as a potential source of problems. With today's new technologies and increased understanding, dentists with specific, advanced training in TMJ disorders can diagnose through targeted CT scans and MRIs, and can successfully treat the majority of these cases. In fact, if a TMJ disorder is determined, long-term relief is achievable 95% of the time.

You may have TMJ dysfunction migraines and headaches if you answer "yes" to any one of these questions:

1. Do you ever have headaches and/or migraines?

Possible cause: Pressure of the ball (condyle) of the jaw joint pushing on weak bone structure at the rear of your jaw.

2. Do you ever experience dizziness?

Possible cause: Lack of blood flow to the brain when blood vessels are obstructed by the misalignment of the jaw.

3. Do you ever have ringing in the ears and/or ear aches?

Possible cause: Pressure on the ear canal from the jaw.

4. Do you ever feel severe pain all over your head, or severe jaw and/or facial pain?

Possible cause: Pinching of the nerves that hinge at the rear of the jaw.

5. Do you ever have pain in your neck and/or shoulders?

Possible cause: Adaptation or compensating to relieve other pain; most TMJ sufferers experience neck and/or shoulder pain.

6. Do you ever have clicking or popping of your jaw joint (TMJ)?

Possible cause: Lack of cartilage at the rear of your jaw.

7. Do you ever hear grinding sounds?

Possible cause: Irregular bone surface at the rear of your jaw.

As Albert Einstein stated, insanity is doing the same thing over and over again and expecting different results. If you want to rid yourself of chronic headache pain, I recommend looking for solutions which will treat the cause, not the symptoms. A proper diagnosis by a medical doctor or dentist trained in pain management is the first step in treating the cause – not just the symptoms - of your headaches or migraines.

Dr. Leonard Feld is a TMJD specialist with offices in Los Angeles, San Jose, Phoenix and Indian Wells. He is the co-founder of the TMJ & Sleep Medicine Network (www.itsmn.com) and can be found at Indian Wells Smile Center. Call 760-341-2873 or you can visit www.DocFeld.com for more articles and information. Dr. Feld's philosophy is always a conservative, non-invasive, non-surgical treatment.



Your Health Is In Your Hands

Continued from page 1

La Quinta. “Don’t be afraid to say ‘tell me in layman’s terms, I don’t quite get it.’” Dr. Ruiz also recommends researching your condition online or at the library (using reliable sources) to increase your understanding. Make a list of questions and bring them to your next appointment with pen and paper to take notes. If you need extra time to ask questions, request that when you make your next appointment. Doctors are able to code double appointment time for insurance reimbursement. Advanced scheduling simply needs to be arranged with respect to other patients’ time.

Don’t become the victim.

“Many people unfortunately fall into ‘I’m sick’ mode with a diagnosis, which doesn’t help your body,” adds Ruiz. “It is important that you maintain a healthy diet and keep up with exercise because the healthier your immune system remains, the better your body will be able to overcome the illness.”

Coordinate your care.

You are the ‘Team Leader’ of your condition. For best results, take on the responsibility of managing all of the information, appointments, and processes. Create a binder. List all your medications and supplements; include a calendar to note doctor visits and medications prescribed. Ask each practitioner for a copy of your reports and labs, or a CD of CT Scans and MRIs. Having all this information at your fingertips is beneficial for both you and your doctors, and allows you to maximize each appointment. This is especially beneficial for snowbirds and those who travel.

Keep your PCP informed.

Primary care physician Dr. Thomas Reynolds M.D. of Palm Desert states, “A specialist I send you to may send you to another specialist and I may not be informed of that visit or sent reports. If you go to urgent care or emergency, call your PCP the next day so he or she can request your records.” Your PCP is the one to tie it all together for you and the better informed he is, the more he can help you.

Involve your family.

Second hand medical information doesn’t always translate well. “Involving family improves your care because it paints a clearer picture for everyone,” adds Reynolds. “We encourage family to attend appointments and get involved.” Or, bring a recorder to appointments (available on most smartphones) so others can hear the information directly from your doctor’s mouth.

Follow up and follow through.

“Doctors are task oriented, and timely tests, labs and appointments are scheduled accordingly for a reason—to keep your progress moving forward,” adds Ruiz. He advises that you follow through on all instructions and document your progress.

Each of these things will help your entire medical team – and most importantly YOU - move forward towards a healthier tomorrow.

Reference: 1) Orly Avitzur, MD “Too many doctors can spoil your care,” Consumer Reports on Health, Aug 2012, p11

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Is It a Cold, Allergies, or Sinusitis?

By B. Maya Kato, MD

The differences can sometimes be subtle. Common to all three problems is irritation and inflammation of the lining of the nose and sinuses, causing nasal congestion, runny nose, and facial pressure.

Sinonasal allergies result when certain substances, typically airborne allergens, gain access to the body through the throat and nose, and stimulate the release of histamine. The histamine, and other chemicals released by the body, cause the lining of the nose and sinuses to swell, resulting in increased mucus production and congestion.

Itchiness of the nose, eyes, and throat can be symptoms of allergies, and are similar to those of the common cold, which is caused by viruses. Symptoms of a cold may also include a sore throat and cough. Colds typically last 7-10 days in duration and resolve without antibiotics.

Both allergies and colds cause inflammation of the mucous membranes of the nasal passages and sinuses. This can cause the drainage openings of the sinuses to close off, resulting in sinusitis. If symptoms have lasted for over a week, the nasal drainage is greenish in color, and you have developed a fever, then you may have developed sinusitis. Antibiotics may be required to treat sinusitis. An otolaryngologist can diagnose sinusitis by looking into the nasal passages and sinuses.

Treatment

Over-the-Counter: Relief from many symptoms of allergies, colds and sinusitis is available without a prescription. Over-the-counter (OTC) decongestants and anti-histamines can be very effective; however, you should consult your physician to make sure

that they are right for you. One very safe and soothing method of treatment is a simple salt-water (saline) flush or spray. This is a recommended mainstay of treatment for those suffering from sinonasal allergies, as it is an effective way of removing the irritant (allergen), thus preventing swelling and nasal congestion.

When to see a doctor: If symptoms persist for several weeks, and no improvement is seen with OTC meds, consult your physician or otolaryngology specialist. The otolaryngologist can determine if the problem is allergies or sinusitis, prescribe antibiotics if necessary, and determine whether there is an anatomic problem, such as a septal deviation, that is contributing to the condition.

Treatment for Allergies

Allergies affect some 20 million Americans. They represent an abnormal immune response to an environmental protein that is ordinarily tolerated. Symptoms are initiated by inhalation of dander, pollen, mold spores, or other antigens. Typically, trees pollinate and cause symptoms in the spring, grasses pollinate in the summer, and weeds, such as ragweed, pollinate in the fall. Allergens, such as house dust mites, cockroaches, animal dander, and molds, can cause symptoms year-round.

There are three mainstays of treating inhalant allergies:

- Allergen avoidance
- Pharmacotherapy
- Immunotherapy

Allergen avoidance: Avoidance of exposure to the specific substance that one is allergic to. For example, house

dust mite sensitivity requires control of bedroom dust, special carpet cleansers, HEPA filter, etc.

Pharmacotherapy: This includes antihistamines (oral or nasal topical), nasal steroid sprays, decongestants, topical nasal cromolyn, or oral antileukotrienes. This form of therapy is often done before allergy testing. If symptoms respond well, the medication is continued as needed, and allergy testing may not be necessary.

Allergy Testing: Allergy tests are performed using either skin tests or blood tests. There are two types of skin tests: scratch testing and intradermal testing. During a scratch test, a drop of allergen is scratched on the surface of the skin. If a patient is allergic, redness and swelling will appear at the site. If the scratch test is inconclusive, the physician may perform an intradermal test where small amounts of allergen are injected into the surface of the skin. Both types of skin tests are relatively painless.

Immunotherapy

Immunotherapy increases an individual's tolerance to the substances that provoke the allergy symptoms. Typically, immunotherapy involves weekly allergy shots. This treatment is a mainstay of therapy; however, it has some intrinsic downsides: injections and weekly trips to the doctor's office.

Sublingual Immunotherapy

In a new alternative therapy called sublingual immunotherapy, drops of the allergen solution are placed under the tongue. The solution is given in increasingly stronger doses for four months, and then levels off. Widely used in Europe and endorsed by the World Health Organization, sublingual



immunotherapy is available in the United States; however, it is not covered by insurance nor officially approved by the FDA.

Sublingual immunotherapy has been shown to improve allergy symptoms, decrease the need for medicine, decrease asthma attacks, and decrease the chance of developing asthma in allergic children. The approach is particularly useful in treating children or those fearful of needles. It can be done at home and (like injections) must be continued for 3-5 years to maximize long-lasting effects.

Dr. Kato is the founder of The Ear Institute in Palm Desert. Her top priority is improving the quality of life of her patients. Dr. Kato can be reached at: 760-565-3900.

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Hear well, Balance well, Be well.



Top Four Methods to Prevent Blood Clots

By Luke Gentry, PT, DPT, OCS

Blood clots are part of our natural healing process. Yet they can also negatively affect our bodies leading to serious health conditions and even death. Over 100,000 Americans die from blood clots each year.¹

Blood clots occur when there is an accumulation of particles in the blood that stick inside the blood vessel. This accumulation can be caused by: slow blood movement, blood vessel damage or injury, or a buildup of plaque.¹ Blood clots found in veins are called Deep Vein Thrombosis (DVT) and most commonly form in the legs, arms and groin. Occasionally, they break loose and cause life threatening complications such as a Pulmonary Embolism (PE).⁶ Therefore, it is important to be aware of your body and have a good understanding of how to prevent blood clots.

Movement for Life

Research shows that prolonged inactivity, a sedentary lifestyle or a period of immobilization (especially after surgery or an intercontinental plane ride), can significantly increase the risk for blood clots; therefore, simple body movement can improve blood flow and lessen the chances for blood clots to form.¹⁻⁴ Movement can consist of walking or simple ankle movements if required to sit for a long period of time.^{1, 3-4} The goal should be to move (at least once) every hour of every day.

Know Signs and Symptoms

Blood clots are not always easy to detect; however, the most common signs and symptoms of deep vein thrombosis clots is surface skin that is red, hot, swollen and tender to the touch.^{2,5} Pulmonary embolisms on the other hand reflect nonspecific increase in heart rate, shortness of breath and fatigue.⁵⁻⁶

Plan Ahead

Blood clots have been shown to be more common in individuals with a

history of cancer, or recent surgery. Also, individuals older than 60 and females taking birth control can be at higher risk.¹⁻⁴ If you are at high risk, make sure you plan ahead and are in continual contact with your physician for appropriate medical management. If the doctor prescribes blood thinner medications, make sure you take them as prescribed.

Live Healthy

Several risk factors such as smoking, being overweight or dehydrated, have shown to increase probability for blood clots.^{1-4,6} Regular physical activity and a proper diet (with emphasis on reducing salt) can reduce the risk for blood clots.^{3,6}

Understanding what blood clots are and how to prevent them can reduce your risk by up to 75%.⁴ Therefore, if you are having surgery, or you are over 60 and/or overweight, or simply planning travel that requires a long plane ride, make sure you have an open discussion with your doctor and your physical therapist on risk factors and what type of medical management and movement is best for you to reduce the possibility of forming blood clots.

Luke Gentry received his Bachelor of Human Kinetics with emphasis in Kinesiology at Trinity Western University and his Doctorate of Physical Therapy from Azusa Pacific University. Luke has continued his education completing an Orthopedic Residency and becoming a Board Certified Orthopedic Specialist. Luke can be contacted at: Avid Physical Therapy (760)202-0368, luke@avidphysicaltherapy.com.

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Sleep Apnea – A Risk Factor for Eye Health

By Greg Evans, OD

Eye doctors are now on the look out for sleep apnea in patients with normal-tension glaucoma. Normal-tension glaucoma is the diagnosis in 1 out of 3 new glaucoma patients. Early diagnostic tests such as ocular coherence tomography and frequency doubling visual fields have helped increase early diagnosis of normal-tension glaucoma.



In patients with sleep apnea, the drop in blood oxygenation and perfusion during sleep is thought to contribute to additional optic nerve damage. If the appearance of the optic nerve indicates glaucoma, and/or if the patient has hypertension and/or admits to excessive daytime sleepiness, I often recommend that a sleep study be conducted.

According to the Center for Disease Control (CDC), 60% of American adults over 60 have hypertension or pre-hypertension, and an even higher number are overweight. Most startling -- the CDC reports that 36% of Americans are obese.

“Sleep apnea has been linked to normal tension glaucoma, floppy eyelid syndrome, and keratoconus.”

– Dr. Evans

Being overweight is proven to contribute to sleep apnea. Sleep apnea patients have a higher incidence of a collagen abnormality in the eyelid called floppy eyelid syndrome (FES). The decreased oxygen intake during sleep in sleep apnea patients is thought to lead to decreased tissue elasticity. FES is commonly associated with obesity and most patients with sleep apnea are overweight.

Sleep apnea patients commonly have another eye condition called keratoconus. It is also a collagen dysfunction corneal condition. In a recent study of keratoconus patients who had no prior diagnosis of sleep apnea, 47% were determined to be at high risk for development of this.

For patients with both sleep apnea and normal-tension glaucoma, a more aggressive monitoring of their glaucoma is highly recommended.

Dr. Evans is the founding owner of Evans Eye Care in Palm Desert and can be reached at 760.674.8806.

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The Gentle Adjustment

By Lawrence E. Le Roy, DC

Chiropractic is from Greek words which mean "done by hand." It is grounded in the principle that the body can heal itself when the skeletal system is correctly aligned and the nervous system is functioning properly. To achieve this, the doctor of chiropractic uses his or her hands as an adjusting tool to perform specific manipulations of the vertebrae.¹

The simple theory of chiropractic is to remove interference caused by a misalignment of the vertebra, otherwise referred to as a "subluxation." Spinal manipulation performed by chiropractors is safe. The popping noise that is produced when an adjustment is given is simply trapped gas that is released from the joints. The treatment usually improves range of motion and often provides immediate pain relief.

When considering chiropractic, which is one of the most popular alternative therapies currently available, one should take into account the variety of styles and methods that are used by different practitioners. Each method and/or technique is effective in its own right. You simply need to find the technique with which you are most comfortable.

The "gentle adjustment" is usually administered with a hand-held instrument in lieu of manual adjustments. The world's most popular instrument-adjusting technique is known as the Activator Method. Developed by Dr. Arlan Fuhr, the Activator is a small handheld spring-loaded instrument which delivers a small impulse to the spine. It was found to give off no more than 0.3 joules of kinetic energy in a 3-millisecond pulse. The aim is to produce enough force to move the vertebrae but not enough to cause injury or pain.² The Activator and the associated Activator Adjusting Instrument represent the only instrument-adjusting technique with clinical trials to support their efficacy.³ They are generally regarded as a "softer" chiropractic technique.

The initial chiropractic appointment consists of a consultation to establish one's medical history and an examination to determine the possible cause of current symptoms. It is customary to have x-rays taken if deemed necessary. The atmosphere should be relaxed and non-invasive, and the goal is to determine what type of treatment is best for the patient considering condition and comfort level. The length of actual treatment varies from case to case. Generally, longer-term care is required for those who have had a chronic back-related condition or have other concurrent health problems.

If you are seeking an alternative form of health care to surgery or pain medication, then chiropractic may be a suitable route to consider. It has been well documented that many back pain patients greatly benefit from the care and expertise of a Doctor of Chiropractic. The key is to find the doctor and chiropractic technique that is best-suited for you.

Dr. Le Roy is a licensed doctor of chiropractic with over twenty-seven years of experience. He offers a variety of chiropractic techniques include the Activator Method and spinal decompression. Dr. Le Roy is located in La Quinta and can be reached at 760.771.4800.

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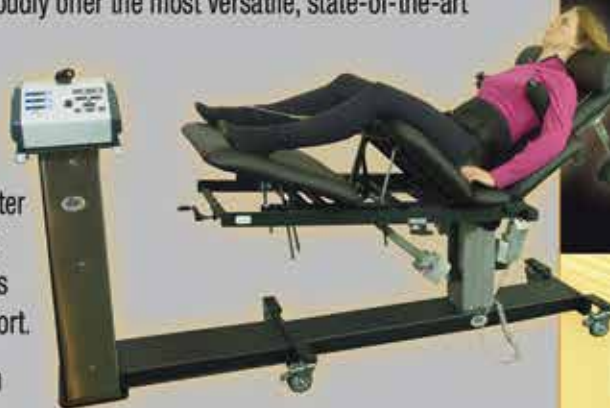
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Banish The Embarrassment... Let's Talk About Hemorrhoids

By Joseph Thornton, MD, FACS, FASCRS

I realize that talking about hemorrhoids is not polite cocktail conversation. With that in mind, I use every other opportunity I have to educate the public on this too-often embarrassing subject. My 30 years as a board certified colon and rectal surgeon qualifies me to speak on the subject. Hopefully I will demystify some of the commonly held beliefs, reduce the discomfort associated with hemorrhoid talk, and possibly keep you off of the operating table.

First of all, let's look at a few numbers. Hemorrhoids are one of the most common ailments found today according to the American Society of Colon and Rectal Surgeons. More than 50% of the population over the age of forty experience hemorrhoids at some point in their life. But that does not mean the younger folks are off the hook.

Occupations that require long periods of being seated such as pilots, truck drivers, and accountants, as well as weightlifters, are susceptible. Women know they are a nuisance that often accompanies late stage pregnancy and post partum periods.



Pineapples contain the anti-inflammatory agent bromelain

Another important number is that 100% of the patients that I see with hemorrhoid symptoms have tried over-the-counter remedies before seeking medical attention. It is very important that you get an accurate medical diagnosis. Not all patients presenting with anorectal pain, discomfort, itching, bleeding, and swelling, have hemorrhoids. Anal fistulas, prolapsed rectum, and, of course, anal or colon cancer, may show symptoms in a similar way. I cannot stress enough the importance of regular colonoscopies after the age of fifty and candidly discussing any hemorrhoid symptoms with your family physician.

There are many things you can do to help with your own anorectal health. Even if you

are prone to hemorrhoids, you can take steps to avoid them, or find a bit of relief:

- Drink plenty of water—48-64 oz per day should be your goal
- Get active for at least thirty minutes a day
- Try to minimize the time spent sitting on the toilet
- Increase your fiber intake to at least 30+ grams a day

There are many reasons to eat a fiber-rich diet and helping your stool is just one of them. Fiber helps satisfy appetites by giving a feeling of fullness. Insoluble fiber from wheat bran and whole grains passes through the digestive system quickly, helping with regularity and reducing the risk of colon diseases. Fiber helps your heart too. Soluble fiber from oats, dry beans, grains, some fruits, and vegetables may help decrease cholesterol levels and reduce heart disease risk.

The treatment of hemorrhoids via alternative measures has not been well developed. It deserves a much closer look. Delisting of drugs by the FDA in the late 70's led to a flood of drugs delisted to the category of supplements, and the growth of the natural health food industry.

One of these delisted drugs was bromelain. Bromelain is a naturally occurring anti-inflammatory supplement that is marketed as an aid to digestion. The anti-inflammatory properties make it ideal for treatment of hemorrhoids. It has the added benefit of being administered in pill form, thereby making it easier for people to manage the problem. Bromelain is not recommended for anyone allergic to pineapples or taking blood thinners or anticoagulants. The supplement



Psyllium is naturally fibrous

originates in the stalk of the pineapple plant and has been used to treat a number of medical conditions. I find it very helpful in treating the symptoms associated with hemorrhoids.

Similarly, witch hazel has been used for many years to treat various conditions. Most people think of it as an astringent, but it is by far the most commonly available product for hemorrhoids in health food stores. Combining witch hazel and bromelain works as a powerful solution in addressing the problems of hemorrhoids.

Psyllium has also been used for years to treat hemorrhoids. It decreases the issues of constipation and diarrhea, both of which can aggravate hemorrhoids. I tested a combination of these 3 ingredients in my clinical practice and found results far better than expected. Patients taking these ingredients before surgery started canceling their hemorrhoid procedures. Anecdotally, I realized this combination is an effective all-natural alternative for the treatment of hemorrhoids.

Patient satisfaction of 97% has been reported when this all-natural alternative treatment is used in conjunction with correct diagnosis. Do not try to diagnose and treat yourself. See your doctor. Make sure that the doctor does an exam of the anorectal area, and get a colonoscopy if you are over 50.

Banish your embarrassment—we need to be talking about hemorrhoids.

Dr. Joseph Thornton is a board certified colon and rectal surgeon. He has been practicing in Las Vegas, NV for the past 34 years and is the Founder and CEO of TUSHM.D. LLC. He can be reached at thedoctor@tushmd.com



Dr. Joseph Thornton



Witch hazel is more than just an astringent

Most people don't understand what I do.

Since childhood, I could see people's energy (or 'aura'). It appears in different colors and brightness surrounding the body. I have studied the ancient practices of Reiki and Qi Gong to understand how to use this gift to help people heal and to bring out their very best.

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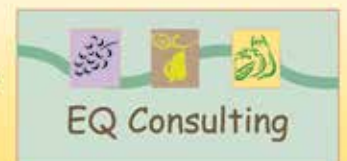
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Ginseng, The King Of Herbs

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

Ginseng is one of the most renowned of all herbs. There are several varieties of ginseng, and most common are the eleven species of *Panax ginseng*. The word *panax* means "all heal" in Greek, (think of panacea) and ginseng was so called because of its healing properties. In Chinese, the herb is called *ren shen*—literally "man root"—because its shape resembles a man's body and legs. This perennial shrub is native to China, Siberia, Korea, Japan and North America.

Prized since antiquity by both Asians and Native Americans, Chinese emperors were willing to pay for ginseng with its weight in gold. Demand for the root afforded Korea a thriving export business that dates back to the third century A.D. In the sixteenth century, Korea cultivated the world's first farmed ginseng root.

The active compounds found in the root are called ginsenosides, a class of steroid glycosides, and triterpene saponins found exclusively in the plant. Ginseng is considered an adaptogen, a metabolic regulator that increases the ability of an organism to adapt to environmental factors, and to avoid damage. Research indicates that it may also reduce cholesterol and help prevent cancer, as well as ease hot flashes in menopausal women and normalize menstruation in others.

Ginseng has been used to treat an astonishing variety of ailments, from Alzheimer's disease to diabetes to gout, but it is best known as a stimulant, tonic, and aphrodisiac. It is said to improve memory, increase energy, fight fatigue, restore vitality, prevent illness and headaches, strengthen the body and ward off infection. Ginseng is also used for upset stomach, diarrhea, coughs, excessive perspiration, impotence, and

frequent urination. Because it calms the spirit and builds up energy and the immune system, it is considered a potent anti-aging herb.

Today, most ginseng is farmed. The varieties and quality can vary greatly. Very old wild roots, considered the most potent, can be expensive - in excess of \$1,000 per ounce! Ginseng is available as roots (whole and sliced), powders, teas, capsules, tonics and tinctures. It is used in many different forms, including as a popular ingredient in Asian cooking.

Notoginseng, the main ingredient in Yunnan BaiYao (a ginseng medicine), is not an adaptogen like other *panax* species, but a hemostatic that can stop bleeding and supports blood production. Because of its ability to reduce pain and heal wounds, it was carried by every North Vietnamese soldier during the Viet Nam conflict, and made the formula world famous.

As with any powerful medicinal herb, precautions should be observed. It is best to avoid during pregnancy and lactation. Check with your cardiologist or herbalist before taking and do not give to small children. Ginseng may lower blood sugar levels and interact with anti-diabetic medications. Avoid combining with blood thinners, such as warfarin, and with other CNS stimulants. As a stimulant, it's not recommended for use at night, especially if you suffer from a sleeping disorder such as insomnia.

Diane Sheppard is a licensed acupuncturist with a Ph.D. in Oriental Medicine. Dr. Sheppard trained in both China and the U.S and is now a staff practitioner at Eisenhower Wellness Institute. She can be reached at AcQPoint Wellness Center in La Quinta. 760-775-7900 www.AcQPoint.com

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Increasing Flexibility Has Never Been So Easy! A Look at Fascial Stretching Therapy

By Lauren Del Sarto

Imagine lying on a soft table with your eyes closed focusing on breathing in and out while someone else does your stretching for you. This is one of the many benefits I discovered with Fascial Stretching Therapy (FST).

Fascia is the most prevalent tissue in your body. It is the continuous band of fibers that runs from your foot (the plantar fascia) to the base of your skull. FST Practitioners say that the condition of your fascia directly affects the health and function of your joints and muscles, and plays an important role in your posture and movement. Tracy Smith, a certified FST therapist in La Quinta, says that "Over time, tight fascia will exert abnormal pressure on joints, nerves and muscles, creating immobility and pain. You can re-train fascia memory by stretching the fibers and loosening their grip in target areas." According to Smith even old injuries may see improvement after only one FST treatment.

"It surprised me," said Hideaway golf pro Cody Shining who suffered a broken collar bone at 17 and was unable to extend his left arm all the way up beside his ear. "After my first FST session, I gained full range of motion. It amazed me – and improved my golf swing." Shining feels less restricted and is now able to extend his club to a more vertical position.

Fasciae are similar to ligaments and tendons in that they are made of collagen. Ligaments connect bone to bone, tendons join muscle to bone, and fasciae surround

muscles and/or other structures binding some together, and permitting others to slide smoothly over each other.

According to Smith, traditional stretching, while good for the muscles, does not release and stretch these encapsulating fibers. She adds that FST, which uses straps, outward circular motions, and stretching while muscles are relaxed can release impingements and break up scar tissue.

I tried FST and am sold. It was very relaxing having someone else do the work and the results exceeded traditional stretching and yoga. I felt taller and was able to rotate my normally stiff lower back to what felt like 180 degrees. I can imagine what it can do for the golf swing! Golf pro and Smith client, Scott McCarron notes improvement after his sessions. "My golf swing has more power with less effort."

If you are looking for an easy, effective way to improve your flexibility and joint mobility - or maybe just your golf swing - I recommend giving FST a try.

FST therapists are certified by the Stretch To Win Institute (AZ) and must have existing therapeutic credentials to enter the program. Tracy Smith practices at the Hideaway and at AcQpoint Wellness Center in La Quinta and can be reached at 760.409.9289.



Certified FST therapist Tracy Smith stretches a client

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Living Wellness

with Jennifer DiFrancesco



The Intuition of Fall... In Nature and in Each of Us

I just returned from Park City, Utah. As a desert native, I've never fully witnessed the changing of the seasons. There is something profound that takes place when one is able to look at a valley of aspen trees transforming their green palette of leaves into the vivid autumn colors of orange, red, gold and brown. It can also be a time for self-reflection and a time to look at nature, its rhythms and what the orchestration of the environment in perfect synchronicity tells us about our own choices and transformations.

As days grow shorter, and nights grow longer and cooler, biochemical processes in deciduous trees begin to create transformation. The tree pulls its nutrients from many sources just like us. Sunlight helps manufacture sugars through the chlorophyll in the leaf, creating green pigment. The soil houses organisms vital to the forest ecosystem, and fallen leaves become the food of the earth. The tree taps water through its roots which transpires into the air through its leaves, and the tree captures carbon from the air and gives off oxygen. When the tree prepares in fall to go into hibernation for winter, the veins in the leaves close off, preventing the sugars, chlorophyll and green color to spread. The trapped sugars that have no place to spread promote the production of other trace elements that react with the sun to produce a spectacular array of autumn colors, before falling to the ground. Trees could not survive without this annual cycle of shedding and replenishment from the leaf. The many beautiful interrelationships that are so visible in looking at an autumn landscape cause us to learn about ourselves.

What annual cycles do we pass through, and how are we replenished each and every day? Nature has a seasonal cycle. In many ways we humans do the same—intuitively wearing warmer clothes when winter comes – yet when certain elemental conditions exist, do we listen and respond accordingly?

We are very much like the tree. We pull nutrients from the sun, that which we ingest, and the steps we take to protect and treat our bodies. We feed ourselves psychologically by those with whom we associate, by what we tell ourselves and by the actions we take each day. There is a lot we can learn from the tree and it behooves us to take time in the fall before the changing of the season to ponder all these variables.

As desert dwellers, we cannot watch the magnificence of fall trees; however, we should take time to look at fall pictures, to imagine the phenomenon of nature's cycles, and to practice some personal introspection. Reflect on the cycles in your own life and the choices that you make each day that affect your personal growth and health outcome.

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The Doctor's Dilemma in Today's Medicine

By *Carrol Magder, RN, LLB, DSD and Dolores Zitomer, RN, BSN, MSN, FNP-C*

Quality versus quantity has always been a dilemma for physicians, but even more so in today's medical environment. Health care providers now have major decisions to make which will have long and far-reaching effects for how you, the patient, will be treated.

A primary care physician's practice serves approximately 2,000 to 4,000 patients. A doctor is mandated to treat his patients to the very best of his ability, but medicine is a service industry and there are a limited number of hours that a physician can dedicate to caring for patients.

And, so, what is the answer? How can the physician solve the quality-quantity dilemma?

A steadily increasing number of physicians are attempting to incorporate both boutique and traditional medicine under a single practice. The premise underlying the boutique concept is to accept a limited number of primary care patients. Of these patients, a small number are transitioned into the boutique milieu and would receive extended and enhanced health care services for additional fees. This model appears to be more advantageous to physician and patient alike, rather than attempting to convert the entire primary care service model into that of a boutique practice. Patients are initially offered the choice of which model they wish to follow.

Wellness-conscious Americans favor longer appointment times; same day, evening and Saturday appointments; total care coordination as well as preventive and proactive diagnostic screening. This population is beginning to rely upon complementary health professionals such as therapeutic massage specialists, personal fitness trainers and relaxation

modalities including yoga and meditation to address acute as well as chronic health problems. They rely on wellness and life coaches who, along with their medical team, support them on their journey to optimum health. All this can be accomplished through the boutique medical model with a wellness component.

But what is the cost? It has to be affordable to be available to the majority of patients. How can this be accomplished? There has to be a balance reached between physicians' needs and patients' resources. This will vary from practice to practice and will, necessarily, take some research and negotiation on the part of the patient. The cost to the patient should reflect the anticipated needs and expectations of that individual.

The days of "the old country doctor" are gone. Medicine, by necessity, has become big business. The rapidly increasing trend of boutique primary care practices illustrates the "supply and demand" principle.

The boutique practice model can provide the physician with the opportunity to offer quality care. Extended wellness services and a realistic financial commitment can provide the patient with access to an individualized health care program that is implemented under the direction of their preferred physician. For many doctor-patient partnerships, this is a win-win situation that brings a personalized level of service back in to modern health care.

Carrol Magder and Dolores Zitomer are team professionals at SACKS Wellness Center & Family Practice in Indian Wells. They can be reached at 760.779.9100, info@DavidSacksDO.com or www.DavidSacksDO.com



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Diagnosing and Treating Food Sensitivities

By *Shannon Sinsheimer, ND*

It seems common now to hear the phrase "I can't eat that. I'm allergic," when out with friends and family. Although people have always had food allergies and sensitivities, the prevalence of negative food reactions has increased significantly over the past ten years. The major causes of negative food reactions are food quality, digestive health, stress, and individual nutritional status. As the food supply has changed and stress levels have increased, so have physical responses to food.

What are Food Sensitivities?

Food sensitivities are reactions to foods that are not life threatening, such as anaphylaxis, or as severe as hives and vomiting. Typically food sensitivities manifest as a headache, body pain, congestion, cough, abdominal bloating, change in bowels, change in mood, fatigue, or sleep disturbance. It is often very hard to correlate these symptoms with one particular food because, food sensitivities can appear anywhere from 1-72 hours after the aggravating food is consumed.

How Do You 'Find' Your Food Sensitivities?

Food sensitivities can be diagnosed through an elimination diet or by a specific blood test. I recommend a food sensitivity blood test because it is comprehensive and accurate. It is much easier to evaluate 100 different foods through a test versus food elimination. Food sensitivities can vary in severity and the test accounts for this by giving a range or degree of sensitivity to each food.

Why Are We So Sensitive to Food Now?

Our food supply has changed drastically over the past few decades with the introduction of new plant hybrids, genetically modified foods, food heavily laden with pesticides, and animals fed hormones and antibiotics. These changes in the basic plant structure and alterations with genetic modifications have affected the way we digest and process these foods. With regular and systemic use of pesticides, herbicides, hormones, and antibiotics, we now are also dealing with heavy toxin burden in our food, which affects our body's reaction to those elements. To put it very simply, when we alter the natural structure of foods, we alter our own body systems through continuous ingestion. One of the most common results of these changes are food sensitivities and negative food reactions.

Can You Cure Food Sensitivities?

There are certain foods that one will always be inherently sensitive or allergic to. However, many food sensitivities are manifestations of poor digestive health, low quality food choices, nutritional status, high stress, and poor sleep. To rid the body of food sensitivities, one must improve digestion with the use of probiotics, digestion specific anti-inflammatories, agents that rebuild healthy digestive tissue, and digestive enzymes. Improving stress management skills and sleep quality will also decrease general inflammation in the body and improve digestion. Food quality plays a role in the increase of food sensitivities. Food choices that include genetically modified foods, bleached wheat, non-organic food, and prepared foods, will increase sensitivities. Eating a diet rich in fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and clean proteins will decrease negative food reactions.

Food sensitivities can be evaluated through a simple blood test and addressed with diet, lifestyle, and supplement modifications. Treating food sensitivities can take some time, however, the end result is a healthier body and better relationship with food.

Dr. Shannon Sinsheimer is a licensed naturopathic doctor at Optimal Health Center in Palm Desert and can be reached at (760) 568-2598.



Genetic Testing: A Cornerstone in Modern Preventative Care

By Lucy Rojo, ND

When the topic of genetic testing comes up most people think about determining diseases, paternity or a criminal's identity. With the completion of the Human Genome Project in 2004, genetic medicine has evolved exponentially. The advances in human genetics allow for preventive health care advice to suit each individual's unique genetic profile. Patients can now partner in their own well being, a necessary shift that requires limited expense. Commercial analysis of genetic information aids personal decisions about nutritional needs and lifestyle modifications to help reach wellness goals. This level of testing is not diagnosing disease, but instead offering information to help guide supplementation, food choices and lifestyle activities which can enhance beneficial—or minimize problematic—traits.

Our DNA library is made up of about 30,000 genes and has fueled widespread interest in the coded information therein. DNA contains all the instructions required to make cells. Genes are short segments of DNA. When cells replicate, mistakes are often made and a gene that was originally supposed to code for something specific instead codes for something else. A single molecular change is called single nucleotide polymorphisms (SNPs). While most variations are harmless, others can influence a body's response to its environment. By identifying your own unique gene variations, you can customize lifestyle approaches and nutritional supplementation to maximize your genetic potential and promote optimal health.

Researchers have identified genes associated with various body systems that can be altered by diet and lifestyle activities. The cholesterol metabolism gene CETP can predict the response of fat molecules to dietary changes.¹ Variations in the Vitamin D receptor gene VDR has been associated with bone health and is adaptable to diet.² Variations of the IL-6 gene have revealed how nutrition, particularly fish oils, can modulate immune function in the inflammatory response.^{3,4} Other SNPs

include antioxidant and detoxification pathways and glucose balance.

With genetic testing, comes an awareness of the interaction between diet and genes. This results in new ways to optimize and take responsibility for one's health. By looking at the influence of diet and genes, testing provides powerful resources to use nutritional molecules to influence genetic variations and the biological system as a whole.⁵ However, public access to genetic tests and associated nutritional and lifestyle advice are posing legal and social controversy. Consumer directed marketing of genetic tests has become fertile ground for overcharging, false claims, and unproven dietary supplement recommendations.⁶ Regulation is needed to keep individuals safe from unscrupulous business activities with regard to genetic information. Therefore, consult your wellness doctor when evaluating tests.

Where does the advent of genetic testing leave the consumer? Can it help you make better choices? Will you use the information to determine how best to enhance your personal health? Technology has afforded the ability to optimize health via nutritional intervention.⁵ Information gleaned from genetic testing is ushering a new era of individualized medicine allowing consumers options for preventive self-care based on scientific data.

Dr. Lucy Rojo is a licensed, natural medicine doctor working with Robert Steinberg, M.D. in Palm Desert. Desert Integrative Medical Center can be reached at 760.340.2260.

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A Brave New World: The Benefits of Integrative Medicine in the World of Chronic Disease Care

By Sonja Fung, ND

There is a trend in health care of “conventional” medical practitioners and “alternative” care professionals working together. This practice provides the best of both health care worlds in a fully integrated model of medicine that not only addresses the acute disease process and symptom management, but also treats the causes of underlying chronic disease. Integrating a holistic perspective in to traditional medicine can provide a full spectrum of health and healing.

The Takeover of Chronic Disease

Our society is experiencing a sharp increase in the number of people who suffer from complex, chronic diseases, such as obesity, diabetes, heart disease, cancer, mental illness, and autoimmune disorders like arthritis and inflammatory bowel diseases. In 2005, the Center for Disease Control (CDC) reported that 1 in every 2 Americans has at least one chronic disease. Think about how that number has increased in the last 7 years. Chronic disease treatment costs account for more than 75% of the United States' health care expense. In 2008, the U.S. spent 16.2% of its GDP (\$2.3 trillion) on health care. This exceeds the combined federal expenditures for national defense, homeland security, education, and welfare. The U.S. spends over twice the amount of any other country on resident health care.

Yet the medical model we have been following is not meeting the needs of the majority of the patient population, and is costing us in more ways than just our wallets.... It's costing us our health.

What is “Integrative Medicine”?

The term “integrative medicine” is used to describe the combination of conventional and alternative approaches that address the biological, psychological, social and spiritual aspects of health and illness. It is based upon a model of health and wellness, as opposed to a model of disease. Conventional medicine, as it is practiced in the United States, provides health care that limits a full-spectrum of treatment options, particularly regarding preventative health care and the treatment of chronic disease. While conventional medicine excels at managing acute injuries and disease processes, integrative medicine addresses the root cause of the disease, especially chronic diseases. The integrative medicine model maximizes the strengths of “alternative” therapies and those of conventional medicine, while minimizing weaknesses of each discipline.

Some of my most successful cases are patients who utilize integrative medicine. Most of my cancer patients receiving standard medical treatment also receive a



combination of weekly IV nutrients along with a specific daily supplement regimen, modified food plan, and stress management. Their recovery time from surgery and/or chemotherapy shortens, and their energy and muscle mass remains stable.

The Winds of Change

More and more medical centers and physicians are introducing a new shift in the treatment of chronic disease by integrating multiple healing disciplines under one roof. This collaborative approach to patient care utilizes an integrative medical model that is safe and evidence-based. It's not about replacing drugs for herbs or supplements, but taking into account the unique genetic makeup of each individual, and the factors such as environmental exposures to toxins. It is based on the single premise of treating the whole person.

A small pilot study on diabetic patients found that integrative doctors (naturopathic doctors or holistic-minded medical doctors) were able to reduce office visit numbers by more than 50% while effecting positive health changes such as weight loss and reduction of medication.

By utilizing integrative medicine, doctors can effectively prevent and treat chronic disease, as well as ease our national economic burden, one patient at a time.

Dr. Sonja Fung is a primary care doctor of naturopathic medicine and co-owner of the Live Well Clinic, whose new integrative clinic is located at 78900 Avenue 47, Ste 102, La Quinta. For more information call 760-771-5970 or visit www.livewellclinic.org.

Sources: Center for Disease Control

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Young Lives at Risk: Understanding Childhood Obesity

By K. Douglas Thrasher, DO

Childhood obesity is reaching epidemic proportions and the statistics are alarming. It can lead to many serious health issues, including high cholesterol, high blood pressure and pre-diabetes. Of greatest concern is that research shows one of every three children in the United States is now considered overweight. Health care professionals are working diligently to educate parents about what they can do to help their children get moving and eating right.

Being obese or overweight is determined by an individual's Body Mass Index (BMI), which uses height and weight to determine if a person is normal, underweight, overweight or obese. This is calculated by taking the child's height in inches, multiplying that by itself and dividing that number into the child's weight in pounds. Multiply that number by 703 and the result is the child's BMI.

In adults, a BMI between 20 and 25 is ideal, 26 to 30 is overweight and greater than 30 is obese. For most children younger than 18 years of age, we use the graphs developed by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) which can be found at <http://www.cdc.gov/obesity/childhood/basics.html>. An ideal BMI for a youth is less than the 75th percentile.

While determining the causes of childhood obesity is complex, what studies have shown is simple: children are burning too few calories for the amount of calories they are consuming. And, the question is... why?

Heredity, watching television, nutrition and family influences all play a role in childhood obesity. For instance, if both parents are overweight, the children have a 75 percent chance of being obese. If one parent is obese, the probability is 25 to 50 percent. However, if parents

change their eating habits, children are more likely to change their eating habits also. In fact, an obese child who is counseled by physicians and parents can develop a normal BMI and carry healthy eating habits into adulthood.

One of the biggest causes of childhood obesity is a sedentary lifestyle of watching television, surfing the web and playing video games—activities that don't require much physical movement. It is estimated that American children who watch the most hours of television have the highest rate of obesity. Encourage your kids to get outside and play.

A healthy focus on nutrition is of vital importance in combating childhood obesity. Unfortunately, hectic work and school schedules—in addition to rising food costs—have resulted in a decline in healthy balanced meals, and a rise in fast food meals. It is important for parents to make healthy meals a priority and healthy foods easily available. Meal planning, reducing snacks and establishing an eating schedule for the whole family will help.

Children learn by example. Make healthy eating and regular exercise a part of your life, and they will probably follow. Make healthier food choices—instead of serving whole milk, opt for 2%, and then gradually switch to skim milk.

Childhood obesity is a societal problem influenced by what children are eating and how families are living. It's a problem that can be dealt with today by making small but important changes.

Dr. Douglas Thrasher is Director of the Center for Family Medicine at Eisenhower's George and Julia Argyros Health Center in La Quinta. The center can be reached at 760-773-1460.

Sugar In America

By Bronwyn Ison

If sugar is your vice, this time of year is sure to gratify your sweet tooth. October kicks off the season with three little words ("trick or treat") delivering delightful gobs of goodies. November perpetuates the trend with pumpkin pie and candied yams. And all of this leads up to the grand celebratory month of December marked by my personal favorite, our family's traditional homemade fudge.

If you indulge in entertaining your palate during these three months, you may consume all the sugar your body needs for the next six months.

America is notorious for serving foods high in sugar. According to Dr. Mehmet Oz, the average American consumes 130-150 pounds of sugar per year. During your lifetime, you may consume as much as 3,550 pounds of sugar.



Dr. Oz also reports that in the 1700's the average person consumed 7 ½ pounds of sugar per year. That's 20 times more than our ancestors!

It is no wonder that both adult and, as Dr. Thrasher states in his neighboring article, childhood obesity is on the rise. Health care costs are increasing as are type II diabetes and heart disease—all due to poor diet choices.

And proper diet choices begin at home.

You may be surprised to learn that 50 percent of the sugar we consume today comes from high-fructose corn syrup in fat-free foods and regular soft drinks. One can of regular soda contains 45 grams of sugar or more. Fast food, fruit drinks, dairy desserts, candy, cookies, and some whole grain snacks are also culprits. Your idea of

a healthy snack may not actually be that healthy. Be sure to read the labels to learn fat and sugar content.

Since the 1970's, food manufacturers have been told that the food they produce has too much fat. Food manufacturers responded by removing the fat and replacing it with sugar. All along they were thinking they solved the problem, yet they created another.

According to pediatric endocrinologist Dr. Robert Lustig of UCSF, studies reveal that sugar can be as addictive as cocaine. He states that sugar causes a euphoric effect that triggers dopamine, the chemical that controls pleasure in the brain. Cocaine has been known to create the same reaction. Although this may seem a conjectural statement, America is addicted to sugar.

How do we turn things around? Awareness is the first step and fortunately many healthy alternatives are now readily available. Stevia and Xylitol are satisfying sweet replacements because of their low glycemic levels, which means they are absorbed slowly and have minimal impact on blood sugar.¹ Stevia is a good additive in small quantities and Xylitol, which is the same texture as cane sugar, is great for baking. Give them a try.

We all like a sweet treat every once in a while and no one is perfect. Just be selective, choose wisely, and avoid overindulging. Packing on the pounds prior to the New Year is routine for most Americans. Breaking that habit starts with each of us – and at home. Set your New Year goals now and you'll feel better, stronger, and healthier come January.

Cheers to a happy and healthy 2013!
Bronwyn Ison is a Yoga instructor, mother of two and owner of Evolve Yoga. Public Yoga classes are conducted at Empire Polo Club. For more information call (480) 332.1951 or visit www.e-volveyoga.com

References: 1) <http://www.organiclifestylemagazine.com/healthy-sugar-alternatives/>



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Local Ingredients and a 'Partnership for a Healthier America'

A Winning Combination at Lantana

A Desert Health Review

When deciding where to eat out, we don't often think of going to a hotel. It's different in the desert, where we have many world-class restaurants inside world-renowned resorts.

Located inside the Hyatt Regency Indian Wells, *Lantana* is one such hidden gem. It serves wholesome, local and thoughtfully sourced food. Executive Chef Chris Mitchum has created a menu filled with organic fruits and greens from valley farmers who seasonally grow items at his request. Mitchum also uses citrus from trees on property and grows herbs there as well.

Mitchum was raised on fresh produce harvested from his family farm, which inspired his road to culinary school. These grass roots combined with 25 years of working at Hyatt Resorts worldwide result in fresh offerings such as warm chickpea salad with a zucchini, tomato, and squash blossom fritter; strawberry and beet salad with purple haze goat cheese, poached rhubarb and black sesame chips; and a medjool date salad with almonds, cucumber, lemon, feta and olives – and those are just the 'first takes'!



Strawberry and beet salad with goat cheese, poached rhubarb, and black sesame chips



Jidori chicken tagine with 7 jewel cous cous

The entrée choices allow you to create your own plate from an array of proteins including sustainable seafood and all-natural certified Angus beef, and sides such as roasted broccoli, or barley mushroom pilaf. Or you can select a 'composed' meal from the chef's selections.

My favorite was the Jidori chicken tagine which was bursting with flavors and spiced with apricots, coriander and almonds. It was very moist and served over cous cous with lemon and green olives. My husband had the short ribs which were very tender and full of taste. The ribs are smoked for 2 hours and then cooked sous-vide style

for 72 hours, in a low temperature water bath sealed in airtight plastic bags which cooks the meat more evenly, keeping it juicier.

For younger guests, *Lantana* offers creative and healthy kids' meals. The Hyatt has joined the Partnership for a Healthier America and offers nutritious meals created "For Kids. By Kids." Meals are tasted, tested and approved by kids to not only meet the Partnership's standard for nutrition and quality, but to also be interactive and fun.

Breakfast includes 'top you own tacos' with a whole wheat tortilla, scrambled eggs and fun toppers, and a strawberry-banana organic yogurt smoothie. Lunch offers a 'shake your own salad' with roasted chicken, vegetables, brown rice and yogurt basil dressing, or a sunbutter, jelly and banana sandwich served on whole grain bread with a side of strawberries. Sunbutter is an alternative to peanut butter with the same consistency, but made from sunflower seeds. This twist on the old PB&J is a yummy combination!

According to Mitchum, the most popular item on the kids menu is the 'create your own pasta.' Kids choose a pasta (gluten-free option available), tomato or cheese sauce, a protein including turkey meatballs or shrimp, and a vegetable (broccoli, spinach, zucchini, carrots or peas).

But are the kids enjoying it? "Parents and age are the primary factors. If the parents care, then the kids are all over it," states Mitchum, "and those over 11 seem to enjoy it the most. I feel strongly that as culinary professionals, it is our responsibility to try to steer diners – and even kids – towards healthier choices." And Hyatt agrees as it now offers "For Kids. By Kids" in all of their full-service hotels and resorts throughout the US, Canada and the Caribbean.

So there are just a few of the reasons to visit *Lantana*, not to mention the creative desserts which include a Cracker Jack ice cream sandwich and pumpkin custard ice cream pie (but remember only one bite!). *Lantana* also offers a magical setting... The inside ambience is light and bright – great for a breakfast meeting, family lunch or dinner – while the exterior patio offers a romantic location for outside dining with heat lamps and candles ideal for winter months.

If you are looking for a healthy alternative, put *Lantana* on your list this holiday season.

Lantana is located in the Hyatt Regency Indian Wells on Indian Wells Lane and serves breakfast, lunch and dinner. Hours are from 6:30am to 10:00 p.m. Dinners are \$18 - \$38. Reservations are recommended but not required. Please call 760-674-4165



Kids enjoying Lantana's healthy 'build your own' meals

Desert Events

Join *Desert Health*® at These Upcoming Events!

November 7 Holistic Health Experience—Eisenhower Wellness Institute

Sample some of the holistic health modalities practiced at the Eisenhower Wellness Institute including acupuncture, massage, guided meditation, tai chi, healing touch, and nutritional consulting. 1:30-4:30 at the Eisenhower George and Julia Argyros Health Center in La Quinta. FREE. Reservations required. (760) 610-7205. klouis@emc.org

November 9 Eisenhower's 'Longevity 101' Discussion & Health Fair

A fun and dynamic panel presentation on lifestyle secrets for a long and healthy life. Learn about a variety of approaches that have been studied and validated to improve fitness, health and quality of life. 12:30 - 2:00 Health Expo, 2:00 - 3:30 Presentations. Annenberg Center on the Eisenhower campus. FREE. Call (760) 568-1234 to RSVP.

November 11 One Love Coachella Valley

Enjoy yoga with a cause on the beautiful lawns of Mission Hills Country Club taught by a team of local yoga instructors. See Jayne Robertson's story on page 26 for more information. 11:30 - 1:30 at the Mission Hills Country Club. \$108 suggested donation. fitnessbeyond@aol.com. 760-333-2339.

November 17 & 18 Desert Woman's Show

Come out and enjoy something for every woman! This year's expanded event takes place in a new location, the Westin Mission Hills Resort & Spa in Rancho Mirage, and will feature presentations on health and wellness, fashion shows, and even a taste of the valley from a variety of local restaurants. 10a - 5p each day. \$15 admission per person daily (additional fee for taste of the valley). 760-285-3903. DesertWomansShow.com

December 8 & 9 Canada Fest

Be a Canuck for a day and celebrate our friends from Canada in the Coachella Valley. Enjoy good food, a beer garden, music, health and wellness and fashion shows. 10a - 6p each day at the Palm Springs Convention Center. \$10 admission daily. 760-202-4007. bettekingproductions43@gmail.com

January 12 thru 20 Humana Challenge Week

The festivities kick off with the Humana Wellness Walk & Healthy Fun Fair in La Quinta (Sat., Jan. 12); Humana Day at the Certified Farmer's Market in La Quinta (Sun., Jan. 13); Couples Challenge Pro-Am (Mon., Jan. 14); and the Bob Hope Legacy Pro-Am (Wed., Jan. 16). The Humana Challenge Pro-Am takes place Thursday - Sunday (Jan. 17-20). 888-672-4673. www.HumanaChallenge.com

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Humana Challenge Poised for Next Level of Success

In late 2011, Desert Classic Charities, the PGA TOUR, Humana and the William J. Clinton Foundation announced their collaborative plan to present a re-invigorated golf tournament to succeed the iconic Bob Hope Classic.

The new tournament had an expanded focus beyond world-class golf, and served as a strategic platform to establish and communicate new initiatives in health and well-being for residents of the Coachella Valley and beyond. Everyone involved – from internationally acclaimed golf pros, amateurs and celebrities, to volunteers, spectators and millions of viewers around the world – was challenged to take an active role in their own personal health and well-being.

In its first year, the Humana Challenge exceeded many of its goals and was named “Sports Event of the Year” by respected industry publications Sports Business Journal and Sports Business Daily. The new vision and supporting activities were a rousing success in terms of enhancing the event’s profile and participation, as well as activating healthy habits. Humana CEO Mike McCallister called it “A week of well-being with a side of golf.”

Early in the tournament week the Clinton Foundation hosted its hugely successful Health Matters conference, bringing together national, regional and local community leaders to identify strategies for promoting and improving individual health. The event, sponsored at the highest level by Desert Regional Medical Center, gained considerable national attention and set the stage for a wide range of local initiatives including promoting healthier meals in our schools and the construction of wellness parks which are vigorously moving forward.

Looking ahead to the 2013 tournament, President Bill Clinton and an impressive lineup of celebrities and pros will again be on hand for some great PGA TOUR golf and to promote vibrant well-being. *Desert Health*® will return to Bob Hope Square with a “Showcase of Local Health & Wellness” and everyone is encouraged to come out for the many activities planned.

The festivities kick off with the Humana Wellness Walk & Healthy Fun Fair in La Quinta (Sat., Jan. 12); Humana Day at the Certified Farmer’s Market in La Quinta (Sun., Jan. 13); Couples Challenge Pro-Am (Mon., Jan. 14); and the Bob Hope Legacy Pro-Am (Wed., Jan. 16).

The Humana Challenge Pro-Am play begins on Thursday, Jan. 17 and the Clinton Foundation will host the 2nd Annual Health Matters Conference on Tuesday, Jan. 15.

Don’t miss any of the action in January! Tickets and badges are now on sale with special advanced ticket prices through November. For tickets and more information, visit www.HumanaChallenge.com or call 888-672-4673.



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Challenge



January 14-20, 2013

You could say we’ve reimagined the idea of a golf tournament. Last year, the Humana Challenge launched a healthy living initiative as well as a new tournament format. Again this year, Humana, in partnership with the Clinton Foundation and the PGA TOUR, is challenging everyone – on and off the course – to actively pursue health and well-being. Join us January 14-20, 2013 for exciting PGA TOUR golf. Plus everything from nutritious food to an on-course family fit area and fun, interactive activities throughout Bob Hope Square.

Are you in? Rise to the Challenge, and put great health where it belongs. In your life.

Tickets go on sale November 1, 2012.

Go to HumanaChallenge.com or call 888.672.4673.



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Is It Time for Assisted Living?

By Reesa Manning

How do you know when loved ones are ready for assisted living?

Use these guidelines to help spot the telltale warning signs of aging and illness.

Rosalyn Carter once said: "There are only four kinds of people in the world—those who have been caregivers, those who are currently caregivers, those who will be caregivers, and those who will need caregivers." In light of the longer lives we all now enjoy, it's very probable that many of us, at one time or another, will have to provide support for an aging parent or relative.

Families are often slow to recognize that a beloved family member needs help with their everyday activities. Nor are they prepared for the financial burdens involved. But both the emotional and financial costs of caring for the elderly can be even greater if the signs of illness are not caught until later, rather than sooner.

Who's at risk?

An estimated 7 million older adults are having difficulty performing everyday activities and will need assisted living services this year, according to the National Academy on an Aging Society. That figure is expected to rise to 12 million by 2030.

Another study, by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, indicates that 65-year-olds face at least a 40% risk of entering a nursing home. According to the 2010 MetLife Market Survey of Nursing Home and Home Care Costs, the average annual cost of a semiprivate room in a U.S. nursing home is \$74,825. The American Council of Life Insurers estimates that the annual cost of nursing home care will rise to as much as \$200,000 in less than 30 years.

Anticipating the need for assisted living helps defray costs. Answering the following questions will indicate whether a loved one has retained the ability to live independently or whether intervention is necessary.

Independent Living Test

Medications:

- Are prescriptions not being refilled, resulting in failure to take medication when scheduled?
- Has taking medication become difficult due to poor memory or confusion? Evidence may include: pills taken together that shouldn't be, different pills mixed together in a pill box, or an over- or under-supply of pills.
- Have conditions previously under control become acute because medication is not being taken correctly?

Food and groceries:

- Based on past food habits, are the cupboards frequently empty or being filled with unusual foods?
- Is the food in the refrigerator often spoiled or kept long beyond the "use by" date?

Daily business:

- Is the mail being picked up and opened regularly, or is it remaining uncollected and/or unopened?
- Are credit cards or checkbooks being misused or not balanced as well as in the past?

Social contact:

- Has the amount of social contact changed dramatically, so that there are few public outings or limited social visits with close friends?
- Has the ability to drive deteriorated? Is there a fear of driving or a recent history of multiple minor accidents that is leading to isolation?

Living habits:

- Has there been a change in living habits, manifested in dress or appearance, or a decline in personal hygiene not related to physical disability?
- Is dress appropriate for the weather?
- Have housekeeping habits changed so that a normally neat and orderly home is now cluttered and not cleaned regularly?
- Are pets that were normally well cared for suddenly not being fed or cared for as they had been in the past?

Solicitations:

- Is there a sudden increase in ordering unnecessary items through mail or televised advertisements?

Calls to family members or health care providers:

- Has there been a marked increase in panicked calls to family or medical providers without apparent need?
- Have unnecessary calls been made to 911?

Think ahead

While it may be difficult to think of a parent or family member as needing assistance, it may be a greater disservice not to get them the care they need as early as possible. There are a number of resources available for those who are caring for an aging relative. These are just a few:

- Aging Parents and Elder Care (www.aging-parents-and-elder-care.com)
- American Association for Home Care (www.aahomecare.org)
- American Society on Aging (www.asaging.org)
- Caregiving (www.caregiving.com)
- Children of Aging Parents (www.caps4caregivers.org)
- National Alliance for Caregiving (www.caregiving.org)
- National Family Caregivers Association (www.nfcacares.org)

When planning your retirement, visualize your life all the way through and establish appropriate assumptions for each phase, including a final phase that may require several years of living assistance or nursing care. The bottom line is whether you are still working or already retired, you now need more than ever to have a sound financial plan to cover your retirement income needs.

Reesa Manning is a Senior Financial Advisor at Integrated Wealth Management, specializing in retirement and income planning. For more information, call Reesa at (760) 834-7200, or reesa@IWMgmt.com. Integrated Wealth Management is a Registered Investment Adviser.

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Easy Steps to Prettier Skin

By Karina Chung, Spa Director at Agua Serena Spa

As winter approaches, skin becomes cracked and dry from the warm summer days. Our bodies change with weather, and skin care regimens should be changed to boost complexion. Try these top 5 healthy approaches to transform your skin from dull to glowing in the winter...

Wear sunscreen, even if you work indoors. The most prevalent cause of skin cancer is sun exposure, causing premature skin aging. UV rays attack the skin and cause sunspots in over 85% of people. Utilizing SPF Sun Care is not an option anymore; it is a lifestyle. Most people don't wear enough sunscreen daily and select the wrong SPF. Try Coola's Organic Sunscreen in SPF 30 Cucumber to soothe and protect daily.

Skip the exfoliation and try a mask. Scrubbing too much may cause redness in the face from over-exfoliation. Try a facial mask, like tea tree, in the winter to soothe and kill bacteria from daily environmental aggressors. A purifying mask will help to restore and calm skin rather than irritate it. Try ingredients such as witch hazel, Kaolin and grapefruit to diminish pores and reduce breakouts. If skin is feeling dry, opt for a mask containing carrot seed oils, vitamin E and macadamia nut to plump and nourish depleted skin. Skincare powerhouse, hyaluronic acid, helps refine skin and helps it to retain moisture.

Take your vitamins! Add evening primrose oil capsules to your daily vitamin regimen as well as skincare products that contain vitamins. Doubling up on vitamins heals from the outside in and from the inside out. Vitamin E, C and primrose oils have the powerful hydrating and nourishing effects needed in cold winter months. Enjoy vitamin-C rich fruits like oranges, grapefruits and kiwi to help fight wrinkles and increase collagen production. Select vitamin C serums to boost, brighten and lighten dark spots.

Get 7.5 hours of beauty sleep daily. The longer you rest, cortisol levels (the stress hormone) decrease and enable collagen to reproduce. Sleep allows the body to heal. Those suffering from skin conditions will especially notice the difference after a good night's sleep. Skimping out on sleep may start a chain reaction leading to less exercise, bad food choices and dull skin. The best time to use antioxidant-rich face creams happens to be at night, when our skin regenerates and produces cell turnover.

Exercise four times a week to keep the oxygen flowing. Not only does your body produce endorphins with a sweat session, but your complexion benefits with a healthy glow. Those suffering from acne and dryness will notice a difference due to the oxygen which is sent to the skin after a workout. Cardio is a great way to boost confidence—and a clear complexion.

Staying healthy involves healthy nutrition, an active lifestyle, proper skincare regiment, sun protection, rest and relaxation. These five easy steps can make an impact on a first impression... your face! It's never too early or too late to begin healthy lifestyle choices.

Karina Chung is Spa Director at the Hyatt Grand Champion's Agua Serena Spa and can be reached at 760.674.4100.

Nature and Medicine Meet in Ordon & Chopra's RATIO

A Desert Health Review by Lauren Del Sarto

As Karina writes in her Beauty RX column, the best way to beautiful skin is through a healthy diet, sufficient sleep and exercise. Yet with so many 'miracle products' available, it's tough to resist a little extra help now and then.

When I noticed uncharacteristically dark circles under my eyes, I started looking for solutions. Intrigued by their promotional statement "where eastern and western medicine meet," I thought I would try RATIO Eye Serum by local doctors Andrew Ordon, M.D. (of The Doctor's fame) and Ritu Chopra, M.D., both tops in their field of reconstructive surgery.

What do Ordon and Chopra know about natural medicine? More than I thought. "My grandfather was a ayurvedic doctor," said Chopra, whose mother and grandmother maintained beautiful skin using botanical extracts, and piqued his curiosity to learn more.

"Four years ago, we realized there was no product on the market that bridged the two worlds," Chopra states, "and we've been working on it ever since." Ordon and Chopra combined proven western medical ingredients like glycolic acid, vitamin K, and DMAE, with eastern medicinals like turmeric, reishi mushrooms, prickly pear extract and arnica. Together these ingredients are said to activate healthy new skin cell development, increasing collagen production for fine lines and vitamin K production to decrease dark circles under eyes. The result is their RATIO line. "Prevention is the best medicine for beautiful skin," adds Chopra. "Now we have an effective product with natural ingredients that we know works."

So **does** it work? I used the product daily applying it either morning or night, and after 30 days, fine lines and those dark circles were significantly reduced. I was impressed with my before and after photos (and now I proudly share these naked, before coffee morning eyes with all of you!). You can definitely feel the active ingredients which tingle and feel very cool. One note of caution, avoid getting it in your eyes as (while completely safe) it does sting. They recommend a pea size application, but I used half that much to cover the areas of concern and avoid eye contact.

Chopra recommends 90 days for maximum results, so I'll definitely keep using it and look forward to trying the other RATIO products including an oxygenating skin wash, skin firming face serum and regenerating skin hydrator.

Product prices range from \$45 - \$80 or \$235 for the full line, and are available online at www.RatioSkinCare.com or at the Plastic Surgery Institute at 71-949 Highway 111 (at Bob Hope Drive) Suite #300 in Rancho Mirage. For more information contact 760.568.2211.



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Stay Healthy This Holiday Season

By Lew Bronstein CFT, CLPC, FPC

The holidays are here. And what often comes with holiday cheer is not-so-joyful weight gain, fatigue, cold and flu. So how do we enjoy our favorite time of year and avoid the accompanying ails?

Watch portion sizes.

First of all, we can be conscious of how much we are eating and drinking. Excess sugar in the amount of 25 grams (that's one 12oz Starbucks Gingerbread Latte!) can



suppress the immune system for up to 5 hours, according to noted author and pediatrician Dr. Bob Sears. This is especially evident in refined sugars as opposed to complex carbohydrates and the naturally occurring sugars in fruit. You can combat the negative effects of holiday treats by making sure to consume more of the good stuff.

Make a meal plan that nourishes your system throughout the holidays. 4-5 cups daily of fruits and vegetables are recommended by the Centers for Disease Control. The recommended serving size for meat, poultry and fish is approximately 3 oz, or about the size of a deck of cards.

Simply put, make sure to eat a little turkey and stuffing with your salad and veggies, not a little salad with your turkey and stuffing! Minimize the sugary and fatty treats to a bite versus full servings. Watch the portion sizes and eat fresh foods. Remember no treat tastes good enough to miss the fun because it made you sick!

Remember your exercise routine.

Exercise induces more oxygen to your system and helps your lymphatic system to cleanse the toxins. According to a Boston University study, the amount of adipose tissue (fat) in the human body can affect the immune system's ability to ward off bacteria, viruses and even tumors. So it makes sense to keep a leaner, healthier body to avoid illness. Cardio-exercise is instrumental in keeping your cardio-pulmonary system healthy. Strength training has a positive effect on posture and bone density.

Take charge of your fitness NOW. Don't wait until the New Year to begin. It is a lot easier to keep the weight off in the first place than to try to lose it later! So put on those walking shoes, get to the gym or take a fitness class... today!

Don't stress about the holidays.

Stress plays a major role in holiday illness. We worry about shopping for kids, spouses, significant others, family and friends. We have changing schedules and changing weather patterns, all which tend to lead to increased amounts of stress this time of year. According to the Cleveland Clinic, reducing stress will greatly benefit immune function.

Have a plan to deal with shopping, relatives, kids, and social schedules, and by all means, take some time to relax. Treat yourself to an Epsom salt bath, a massage or other relaxation therapy to keep yourself grounded during this busy time of year. You deserve good holiday health... and all throughout the year... cheers!

Lew Bronstein is a Certified Personal Fitness Trainer and Life Coach at Revitalize Life. You can reach him at 760.328.8080 or online www.revitalizelife.com



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Golfers! Train Like Athletes

For Improved Performance and Injury Prevention

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

Most people don't look at golfers as athletes, but when you break down the swing, the forces generated in hitting a golf ball are quite impressive. An average golfer will swing a driver at around 80mph, while a professional can reach 120-130mph. If the body isn't sequencing correctly, then those forces placed on the body have to be absorbed somewhere and it's usually in the spine. All too often we see breakdowns in the swing because there is not range of motion to rotate hips, shoulders and trunk, so we end up overusing our arms by coming over the top, swaying and sliding. One of the biggest complaints from golfers over 50 is that all of a sudden they are losing distance, yet they feel that their swing hasn't changed. Reduced power can be the result of a lot of swing faults, but can be helped with the right approach.



Sandi Young trains to improve her swing

Other factors that reduce power are poor posture, bad alignment at address, and tight, restricted muscles.

Poor Posture

If you ever watch a small child play you will notice how their spine has so much movement, this is because they have not developed any bad habits yet. As we age and start to attend school and carry heavy backpacks, our posture becomes compromised. We slouch which puts stress on the spine and hips, which then carries into adulthood and our day-to-day jobs. Many Americans have desk jobs and are required to spend their days sitting and slouching. Most golfers are weekend warriors

which means they spend their weekends trying to make up for lost time by playing as many holes as possible. By the end of the weekend, their backs, wrists and elbows are hurting.

Bad Alignment

Alignment issues are very common in golf and can predispose the golfer to physical problems down the road. Some obvious alignment issues include not bending forward from the hips but from the back, and rounded shoulders with tail tucked underneath the torso.

Tight, Restricted Muscles

Age, poor posture (as discussed), and not exercising or conditioning muscles correctly can all lead to restricted movement in the muscles and joints. Unfortunately, we as a country do not exercise enough and our everyday movement is limited.

Getting a thorough golf physical assessment and then starting a weekly exercise program is effective in addressing these issues and reducing the likelihood of injury. In my clinic I use the K-Vest 3d motion analysis system that gives valuable feedback to the golfer regarding numbers and angles during their swing. This data is collected, and with the physical assessment, they now can relate to what is actually happening with their body as it moves through their golf swing.

What happens with golfers who have had back surgery? These clients generally require special attention coupled with corrective exercises and stretching. Rehabilitation time may take longer, but the golfer will nearly always get back to golfing!

Golfers should train like athletes. He or she should use tailored work out plans throughout the year to maintain their overall fitness and strength. Golf really doesn't have an off season so this makes it challenging for strength coaches to design the appropriate programs for certain times of the year. Not all golfers are equal, and in order to build strength a coach must carefully consider the individual. A general rule of thumb is to strengthen what is weak, and stretch those muscle groups that are tight, in order to achieve balance. Then we move on to balance – with an eye on mastering the many unbalanced surfaces that a golfer may face when playing.

Because many golfers don't have time in their schedules to work out regularly, we prioritize the order, sequence and type of exercises that we give them to achieve optimal fitness. Below are a few foundational exercises that I recommend in a weekly regimen:

Deadlifts: An exercise that requires the ability to learn how to bend from the hips and sequence an order of movement from various muscle groups.

Pushing vs. pulling motions: I design pushing and pulling exercises into my program to achieve balance between muscle groups.

Front squats: This is a great exercise for a golfer to squat as deeply as they can safely demonstrate. The deeper the squat, the more one is using glutes, quads and hamstrings. This exercise also builds core strength and recruits scapular stabilizers and rotator cuff strength throughout the range of motion.

Rotational exercises: Like wood chops, medicine ball rotational lunges and high cable pulls, rotational exercise effectively activates many different muscles groups in 1 exercise.

Floor exercises: Exercises like kneeling opposite arm/leg, one-legged bridging, lower abdominal marching and prone cobra are great beginner exercises to develop core and glute muscles while sequencing movement patterns.

Mike Butler is co-owner of Kinetix Health and Performance in Palm Desert. He holds a state license as a physical therapist assistant, and national certifications of distinction through the NSCA as a strength and conditioning coach. He is a Poliquin International state coach and full body Active Release Techniques Practitioner. Mike can be reached at 760-200-1719; michael@kinetixcenter.com. www.kinetixcenter.com

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Small Exercises Bring Big Results

By Dixie Brubaker, PT

We know the value of common exercise like walking, running, swimming, tennis, golf, soccer, etc. But these simple activities are often out of reach for those living with Parkinson's. However, there are other exercises, not as strenuous, which can be valuable tools to improve a Parkinson's patient's activities of daily living (or ADLs).

With Parkinson's, the body is often stiff and slow moving in the morning. To first loosen up, try a trunk rotation while sitting on the bed. Turn to one side and reach across your body with the opposite hand. Move as much as you can without pain and hold it for a few seconds. Repeat on other side, and as often as comfortable each time you do the exercise.

Chair exercises can typically be a difficult task for anyone, and especially someone with Parkinson's. This may require assistance from a spouse or caregiver. To lessen the difficulty, slide forward to the edge of the chair. If still difficult, remind the person to "push back with your shoulders and scoot your bottom forward" to get in proper position. Then lean forward far enough to un-weight the bottom. Frequently, people use cues for "nose over toes." This allows someone to move his body weight forward and propel themselves up from the chair. If unable to do this independently, the caregiver and person can learn to move together to reduce the strain on the assistant. When sitting down, make sure to bend forward from the hips (sticking your bottom out behind you) to control seating motion.



Chair squats improve balance and strengthen muscles



Trunk rotations in the morning help loosen stiff bodies

Chair exercises can typically be a difficult task for anyone, and especially someone with Parkinson's. This may require assistance from a spouse or caregiver. To lessen the difficulty, slide forward to the edge of the chair. If still difficult, remind the person to "push back with your shoulders and scoot your bottom forward" to get in proper position. Then lean forward far enough to un-weight the bottom. Frequently, people use cues for "nose over toes." This allows someone to move his body weight forward and propel themselves up from the chair. If unable to do this independently, the caregiver and person can learn to move together to reduce the strain on the assistant. When sitting down, make sure to bend forward from the hips (sticking your bottom out behind you) to control seating motion.

Parkinson's patients often have difficulty initiating gait - they "can't get started." This simple exercise may help. Stand with one foot slightly in front of the other, with weight equally balanced. Then shift weight on to the front foot and then the back (in a rocking motion). After a few such rocking motions, give the instruction to "start" to initiate walking. The patient may find this works better with left rather than right forward, or vice versa. Experiment to see if one foot is more effective. This technique can be used in public without drawing attention.

Opening a door is often problematic for Parkinson's patients, because of the need to back up. This movement can safely be practiced by holding on to the kitchen counter while moving slowly backward. As this becomes easier, the steps can become bigger. Go slowly and in a controlled manner to avoid loss of balance.

While results are slow, research has shown that repetitive exercises done regularly and with as much force as possible can be very effective in the relearning /retraining process for Parkinson's. While the patient may continue to need assistance, they and their caregiver can work together to minimize the strain on them both. This results in success for the patient, caregiver and family.

These are simple exercises that anyone can practice safely. If needed, consult with your physician and ask for a referral to a physical therapist to initiate an individualized assessment and treatment program.

Dixie Brubaker is a physical therapist with New Beginnings Physical Therapy, Inc., an in-home therapy company and can be reached at 760-218-9961 or online at NewBeginningPT.com.



Rocking exercises can help initiate forward gait

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Lessons in Longevity

By Lauren Del Sarto and Friends

Our "Lessons in Longevity" column discovers and shares the secrets we seek from our elders on how to live a long and happy life. For this issue, I stopped by Palm Desert's Joslyn Center. The Joslyn Center is always active and the energy positive and bright.

There I met 91-year old Benedict who just finished a yoga class; Frank who was meeting his regulars for a game of Pinochle (which would have been "Peanuckle" if I hadn't looked it up); and 82-year old Dixie who jumped out of plane for her 80th birthday! They all had some great thoughts to share, but all agreed that a sense of community and friendships they developed at the Joslyn Center were essential ingredients to long-term happiness.



J. Charles Anderson, Indio (72)

"The key to longevity? Move to the Desert, which we did in 2004. The weather truly is great for your bones and your mindset!"



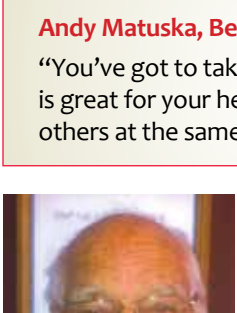
Elmer Frank, Palm Desert (84)

"You've got to have social groups and friends. We started a singles group here at Joslyn and always keep busy planning and enjoying activities like dancing and bowling. Oh yes, and the horses keep me young."



Dixie Lee Lohoff, Palm Desert (82)

"Be happy. If you have troubles, give them away! Life is too short."



Andy Matuska, Bermuda Dunes (89)

"You've got to take care of yourself. And volunteering is great for your health. You are socializing and helping others at the same time."



Benedict Reid, Palm Desert (91-1/2)

"The first secret is to choose the right parents, because that is where your genes come from. After that, to stay young, you need to develop a skill that conforms to your personality, and to make time for a daily meditative practice. When you meditate and simplify, you become peaceful and calm, and you start to understand what all the circus is about, yet you stay centered."

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Finding a Cause to Make a Difference

By Marley Benshalom

Jayne Robertson was looking for a cause. She has been a yoga teacher and health educator for over 30 years and was searching for something tied to the yoga world. In February of this year, she heard about Off the Mat, Into The World, a non-profit organization created by yoga instructors that raises money for communities in crisis. This year, Off the Mat, Into the World is focused on the rehabilitation of young women and girls saved from the sex trade in India.

Jayne knew she had to take part. The program encourages participants to raise a minimum of \$20,000 and spend two weeks in India working with rescued women to encourage their new path. Jayne set her sights on this goal.

"I had excitement, and a lot of fear," says Robertson. "I'm not a fundraiser, I am a yoga educator and dedicate my life to that. I didn't know the first thing about how to raise this much money. I knew I would have to step into areas of great discomfort to ask people for support."

She needed inspiration and found it in gathering a group of women she looked up to. "I told them all that they had inspired me in the past to do greater things and now I needed their help. We sat in a circle and talked about what drives us to succeed, and it wasn't long before I realized that I was not in this alone. I had others who could help me conquer my fears and achieve this magnificent goal."

Jayne wasted no time. She reached out to family, friends and the yoga community and started organizing yoga and meditation classes, t-shirt and wristband sales, book clubs and luncheons. In 8 months, she exceeded her goal and funds to date are \$21,412.

Jayne's final event before her trip to India next February will be One Love Coachella Valley on November 11th at 11:30 am. Six local yoga instructors will teach a two-hour tag team yoga class on the beautiful lawns of Mission Hills Country Club. As 108 represents the number of energy channels running through the body, the requested donation is \$108 per person.

"What started as a personal journey has grown into something far beyond my greatest expectations," Jayne says with disbelief. "It has brought our local yoga community together to make a difference in the world."

How can you support Jayne's effort? Grab your yoga mat and join us at One Love Coachella Valley or donate at <http://www.offthematintotheworld.org/give-to-global-seva.html> (Seva participant name: Jayne Robertson). 760.333.2339.



Jayne Robertson leads a fundraising class at lululemon athletica in Palm Desert



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— Terry L., age 58

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