



Desert Health[®]

News from the Valley's Integrated Health Community

January/February 2013

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Love YOUR HEART

We all know what our heart loves. We've heard it a million times... optimal weight, regular exercise and a heart-healthy diet. In an effort to achieve these goals and continue improving our well-being, most of us have probably given up some of our favorite things this time of year.

But we are human, and sometimes that simple fact gets in the way. It's our nature to want more, and living for as long as we can is no exception. Thus the conundrum...

What can we consume MORE of and keep our heart happy?

For that answer, I spoke with renowned cardio thoracic surgeon Dr. Steven Gundry, Director of the International Heart and Lung Institute and the Center for Restorative Medicine in Palm Springs. Conversations with Dr. Gundry are always fascinating. He is an internationally-recognized researcher and always up on the latest science; yet uses simplicity and humor in his efforts to get consumers to make healthier choices. His book, *Dr. Gundry's Diet Evolution*, is full of "Gundry-isms" to keep healthy tips top of mind.

When asked what we can eat more of for good heart health, he facetiously replied, "Please, eat as many white and brown foods as you possibly can and I guarantee you, you will produce heart disease,

which your heart will just love."

Let's not focus on what we have to give up. What can we consume in LARGER quantities? For that, Gundry says we simply need to look at the many generations before us. Before 1900, very few people died of heart disease.¹ Since then, heart disease has become the number one killer in the United States taking the lives of more than 2,150 Americans each day, an average of 1 death every 40 seconds.²

Seeded Grapes (or Grape Seed Extract)

"It wasn't very long ago that we had only seeded grapes. And we ate the grapes and chewed them up. Grapes were one of the first cultivated foods and for thousands of years we have been eating grape seed extract. And then, we took the seeds out."

According to Gundry, there is now iron-clad evidence that "we are only as young as our blood vessels remain flexible." Once they become stiff, we start aging rapidly. "Grape seed extracts dramatically improve the flexibility of blood vessels and actually remove the 'stickiness' on the inside of our vessels that attracts cholesterol."

The active ingredients in the compounds are classified as



Continued on page 3



Health is a Choice

Children taught healthy habits often keep them for life. Just ask the Alberici Sisters, Maria Lauren and Linda Eichberg. They grew up in 1960's Philadelphia as part of a health-conscious vegetarian family—a choice their parents made for health, not religion. When kids were bringing Wonder bread and bologna sandwiches to school, they had vegetables on sprouted wheat bread that "grossed out" the others. Instead of tidy little cartons of cow's milk, they had fresh goat's milk. Their mother juiced vegetables and made nut burgers.

Today Maria and Linda are certified fitness instructors promoting a healthy lifestyle at corporate wellness centers in the Los Angeles area. But the journey wasn't always easy. Right out of high school in the mid-seventies, the sisters were selected to join the famous Goldiggers dancing and singing troupe. That is where they met local personality Patti Gribow of Palm Desert. Patti, Linda and Maria were the only members of The Goldiggers to share regular appearances on the Dean Martin Comedy Hour, a tour with the Rat Pack, and opening for Dean Martin in Las Vegas. This year they celebrate the 35th Anniversary of their tour with Frank Sinatra and Dean Martin in 1977.



The Goldiggers with Frank Sinatra: Maria Lauren (Alberici Sisters), Joyce Garro, Frank Sinatra, Patti Pivarnik-Gribow, Linda Eichberg (Alberici Sisters), Bottom, left to right: Robyn Whatley-Kahn, Peggy Gohl-Stucker

Continued on page 26



Save the Date

Annual "Affair of the Heart" event.
A public seminar to help you keep a healthy heart.

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How Lucky Are We?

Of all the regions across America, the Coachella Valley was chosen for the launch of the Clinton Foundation's Health Matters Initiative (pg. 16). What does this mean to our community?

This means there will be a heightened awareness and action to improve health within our schools, our government, our social circles, our non-profit organizations, and our medical community. It means we will benefit from the experience of proven success and will act as a role model for other communities preparing to do the same. It means that major corporations will pledge healthier business practices and volunteer their resources to help the underserved in our area. More people will have access to health care services, and more of us will help to serve others and ourselves.



Lauren and Doris enjoy a Holistic, Happy & Healthy Cookery Class at Kitchen Kitchen in Indian Wells. (See recipe from Chef Dipika Patel and special guest, Cindy Karls on page 30).

May sound too good to be true, but action is already in place. Working with the Clinton Foundation, local community leaders have established 45 health-oriented goals to be accomplished over the next 5-7 years. These goals will be achieved through "pledges" (proposed programs, not money) created by local companies, organizations and individuals like you and me. Each pledge is reviewed by the Clinton Foundation whose local team helps facilitate bringing people together for greater success. They will help us prove that systematic change can be implemented to enhance the overall health of a community.

Each and every one of us can take part. We have the enthusiasm, beautiful weather, and resources to succeed. So get creative! Log onto ClintonHealthMatters.org to read success stories. Think of a way you can create lasting change and make a pledge. Find your motivation during Humana Challenge Week (Jan. 12-20) with the Humana Well-Being Walk & Healthy Fun Fair, Farmer's Market and PGA Tournament Play.

Stop by and see us... We look forward to hearing about your pledge!

Lauren
Lauren Del Sarto
Publisher

**Empowered by words of Thanks
from our community...
...And honored to be making a difference.**

EDUCATION

*"Great editorial! (Integrative Cancer Care July/Aug '11). On behalf of all cancer patients, thank you for writing this article, which will empower them as they navigate their "cancer journey."
— Dr. Amy, MD*

*"Good luck to you and your staff as you continue to provide this community with such vital medical news and information. You have my upmost respect. In Navy terms: "Bravo Zulu!" Well done!"
— Jerry L.*

"You have done more for promoting 'wellness' in this community than anyone has ever done before." — Diane B.

*"My 91-year old mum is your #1 fan. She says she loves Desert Health more than all the other health publications she reads all day long, including Drs. Mercola, Whitaker, Oz, et al (ad infinitum!) You should be proud of your achievements!"
— Julia M.*

*"I compliment you on "Desert Health News." It is both well done and very informative. It is an important vehicle for education and information to the health care and senior community in the valley."
— Bob Y.*

INSPIRATION

"Your article on me (Jan/Feb '12) was a major reason that PowerBar extended my sponsorship for another two years. Thank you so very much." — Bill Bell (90 years old)

*"Could you provide me with an email for Bill Bell? I have a training question for him since I have entered the 2013 Escape from Alcatraz."
— Erich O. (65 years old)*

QUALITY RESOURCE

*"I am very impressed with your ability to draw from all segments of the medical/alternative community. Keep up the good work!"
— Dr. Chris, MD*

"Thank you for putting out a high quality magazine that everyone loves!" — Jay N.

*"Our HR Manager recently picked up your newsletter at a doctor's office and we love it. We would love to pass it out to our employees."
— Elizabeth L.*



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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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Love Your Heart

Continued from page 1

polyphenols shown to improve cardiovascular health by slowing or reversing production of fatty deposits (or plaque) in your arteries.³ When blood cholesterol is too high, low-density lipoprotein (LDL) builds up in plaque. Laboratory and clinical research studies have suggested that grape-seed polyphenols lower oxidized LDL and improve cardiac health.³

Other health benefits of grape seed extract include the prevention of certain cancers and reducing risk for neurological conditions such as Alzheimer's.

Sardines

"80% of all humans live within an hour of water – particularly ocean water – and for all of our modern evolution, we have been a shore-based culture. Much of our development as humans is directly tied to shellfish and crustaceans (shrimp, crabs, mussels) which are high in omega-3s." Then we moved to the Midwest.



Omega-3s are good for both heart and brain health. "The more high quality fish oil I can get into people, the better off they are; even better if I can get them to eat sardines." Gundry uses a blood test which measures omega-3 fats, particularly DHA and EPA. "The highest levels I consistently record are within sardine eaters. In fact, I don't have to ask any more. I say "Hey, you love sardines!" and they say 'How did you know?'"

The people of our parent's age ate so many sardines, he recalls, that we completely depleted the sardine population of Monterey, California. Sardines are now thriving around the world because we have overfished their natural predators, tuna. "So right now sardines are a completely renewable resource." So give them a try.

Olive oil

"Food only exists to bring olive oil into your mouth." A classic Gundry-ism.

This Mediterranean delight is not only beneficial for its omega-3s but also for its polyphenols, and according to Gundry, "olive oil is only as good for you as the polyphenol it contains."



He states that regular versus extra virgin doesn't matter. Turns out extra virgin is a rating related to acidity and the true health benefits come from unfiltered olive oil, which has more polyphenols than filtered.

"What you are really looking for is a bottling date. If you see a bottling date, that is assurance that you are getting good stuff." If you don't see a bottling date, then look for an expiration date. Olive oil should be consumed within the first year of production. The sooner after production, the better it is for you. Similarly, the farther you are away from the 'use by' date, the better it is for you.

He references two studies done in Spain and Italy. People were asked to eat a liter of unfiltered extra virgin olive oil a week. Another group consumed ½ liter of the same oil and the equivalent amount of raw walnuts, in terms of calories. The adhesion molecules on the lining of their blood vessels were measured at the conclusion of the study. "Both of these regimens completely turned off all of the adhesion molecules that attract cholesterol." The oil and walnuts proved to be a little better.

That is a lot of olive oil, so eat to your heart's content.

Is the newly popular coconut oil a viable substitute for olive oil? Gundry says no. "While coconut oil is very good for you and has many health benefits, its polyphenol content is only one tenth that of olive oil."

Raw Nuts

For heart health, there is no better snack than a handful of raw nuts. (Of course raw means no salt, chocolate or seasoning on them.)

Most varieties including walnuts, almonds, macadamia nuts, hazelnuts and pecans are packed with nutrients: omega-3 fatty acids; unsaturated fats, which lower bad cholesterol levels; vitamin E: shown to help stop the development of plaque in your arteries; naturally occurring plant sterols, a substance that can help lower cholesterol; L-arginine: a substance that may help improve the health of artery walls by making them more flexible and less prone to blood clots; and fiber.



Nuts pack a powerful punch and are shown to lower LDL, reduce your risk of developing blood clots, and improve the health of the lining of your arteries.⁴

But eat them in proportion. Increasing your nut consumption won't help your heart if you are not cutting back on saturated fats found in chips, as well as, many dairy and meat products. Nuts contain a lot of fat (as much as 80% of a nut is fat) and even though most of this fat is healthy fat, it's still a lot of calories, so eat them in moderation.

This year, don't simply deny yourself of things you shouldn't eat. Fill your cupboards with more good-for-you foods as healthier choices will lead to a healthier lifestyle – and a happier heart.

For additional suggestions on heart healthy foods, visit Dr. Gundry's website at www.HeartLungInstitute.com. For heart healthy lifestyle tips, visit "Getting Healthy" at www.Heart.org from the American Heart Association.

References: 1) The Franklin Institute. History of the Heart <http://www.fi.edu/learn/heart/history/history.html>; 2) American Heart Association statistics. Top Ten Things To Know About Heart Disease and Stroke Statistic www.heart.org; 3) www.livestrong.com; 4) Nuts and your heart: Eating nuts for heart health. www.mayoclinic.com

Providing Health Care Services Valleywide

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Eyelid Surgery and Excessive Tearing: An In-Depth Discussion

By Jennifer Hui, MD, FACS

The eyes play a vital role in human communication. We all want to look and feel our best, and our eyes go a long way in making a lasting impression. Ideally, we want to portray and emphasize our inner energy and vitality with a fresh, rested look. With time, however, our eyelids may appear tired or droopy. Ultraviolet exposure, the aging process and our own genetics play a role in bringing about these changes.

Our eyelid skin is among the most delicate on the body. As the tissues loosen over time, the skin becomes heavier and may even obscure the eyelashes. In the upper eyelids, affected individuals may notice eye strain or a headache as they subconsciously use their forehead muscles to lift this redundant tissue up and away from the field of view. Patients often complain of feeling and looking tired. An outpatient eyelid lift (blepharoplasty) removes this excess skin and restores a more youthful appearance.

When considering the different types of facial surgery, blepharoplasty is a procedure that brings lasting results. Upper eyelid blepharoplasty is often covered by your insurance. A short office evaluation and visual field test will determine if you are a candidate.

Living in the beautiful Coachella Valley also brings a keen awareness of the need for protection from strong ultraviolet rays. We must not forget the importance of protecting our eyelids. Eyelid lesions are often overlooked or easily missed, and may be benign or malignant. Signs of concern include loss of eyelashes, an irregular border, a non-healing area or a site of bleeding. Any suspicious lesion should be evaluated to ensure that potentially malignant lesions are caught in their earliest stage.

Even though the eyelids are an anatomically unique area, they are not immune to UV damage. Sunglasses that block UV-A and UV-B rays are extremely important. They will reduce exposure to the sun, and may also help to slow the progression of cataracts or macular degeneration. A large, wide brimmed hat is also helpful in protecting the eyes from rays that may elude the sunglasses. Lastly, some individuals choose to also apply a thin layer of aqueous based sunscreen on the eyelid skin. This added layer of protection can be incorporated into a person's usual skin care regimen without much added time.

Another area that affects eyesight and quality of life is the lacrimal (tearing) system. Excessive tearing (epiphora) is a common complaint. Sufferers often learn to live with the symptoms and silently accept it. Epiphora interferes with many activities of daily living – reading, computer work, golf, tennis and interpersonal communication. The excessive tears cause blurry vision, and the skin may become irritated from frequent wiping.

Over time, with excessive and vigorous drying of the eyes, the eyelids may become lax and lose their proper alignment. Without proper alignment, they function suboptimally. These mechanical changes may further exacerbate the epiphora. Even relatively mild eyelid positional changes can have a significant impact on symptoms.



BEFORE—This patient has excess skin of the upper lids as well as ptosis (drooping eyelids)



AFTER—Two months after an upper lid ptosis repair and blepharoplasty the patient looks and feels rejuvenated

There are many causes of excessive tearing, and there is no uniform diagnosis. A thorough examination by a lacrimal specialist is the first step in identifying the source and helping alleviate the symptoms. Many times, the lacrimal system must be evaluated for potential blockage with a short, relatively painless office procedure. First, a numbing drop is placed in the eyes. Next, the entrance to the tear drainage system (the punctum, which is akin to the drainage opening in a sink) is examined and dilated gently if necessary. Then, a small irrigating device is placed in the punctum and sterile saline solution

introduced into the system. If the system is unobstructed, you will feel the liquid drain into your nose and the back of the throat. If there are any blockages, the procedure helps to determine the location of the blockage.

The eyelids and the lacrimal system play key roles in maintaining a healthy ocular surface and optimal vision. Any change in their function can affect activities of daily living. Fortunately, there are many treatment options to relieve symptoms and improve your quality of life.

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



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Lung Cancer Screening Saves Lives

More people die of lung cancer each year than breast, colorectal, prostate and ovarian cancers combined. Lung cancer kills, so why be a victim?

The current lung cancer screening guidelines are in response to the results of the National Cancer Institute's sponsored national lung screening trial (NLST). NLST findings published in the New England Journal of Medicine in August 2011 reported evidence that low dose chest CT screening reduced lung cancer mortality by 20%.

According to the new guidelines, the recommendation is annual low-dose CT of the chest for people aged 55 to 74 with a history of smoking. In the US, the peak incidence of lung cancer is age 73. When lung cancers are found earlier, the five-year survival rate dramatically improves from 15% to over 90%. Right now only approximately 15% of all lung cancers are being diagnosed in an early stage amenable to surgery for cure.

What does this tell you? Don't wait until you have symptoms, because by then it may be too late.

Who is a candidate for lung cancer screening?

If you are a current or former smoker and between the ages of 55 to 74 years with a smoking history of at least 30 pack-years (this means 1 pack a day for 30 years, 2 packs a day for 15 years, etc.), then you are in the group at highest risk for lung cancer and screening for lung cancer is recommended for you.

The risk for lung cancer is different for each person. If you do not share these factors, but have concerns, but sure to speak with your doctor. Anyone concerned about detecting lung cancer or other chest diseases early can be screened.

Should I get a CT scan to screen for lung cancer?

Only Low Dose CT scans are recommended for lung cancer screening. Chest X-rays are not recommended. However, it is important that you speak with your doctor about getting a CT scan. Be sure to discuss your complete health history and ask for a clear explanation about the possible benefits and risks of being screened. Although screening for lung cancer saves lives, there are some risks and not everyone is a viable candidate.



When caught early, very small masses can be identified and removed for diagnosis or cure through a minimally invasive VATS procedure

What do the results mean?

A CT scan of the chest can reveal anything from lung masses to calcified coronaries to emphysema.

Knowing what to do next is critical... Make sure you know your options.

A "suspicious" result means that the CT scan shows that something is abnormal. This could indicate a serious condition such as lung cancer, or a "false positive" which is no reason for concern. With a suspicious result, additional procedures to identify the abnormality may be recommended. If the abnormality is identified as lung cancer or some other serious condition, your doctor and team of experts will discuss treatment options with you.

A "negative" result means that there were no abnormal findings identified on the CT scan. However, this does not mean that you absolutely do not have lung cancer, nor does it mean that you will never get lung cancer. You will discuss your scan results with your doctor, and determine when and if you should be tested again based on your risk factors.

What is most important is finding a physician who understands all the many treatment options. If an abnormality is detected, formulating a well-thought out treatment plan is crucial. For example, if removing an identified tumor or nodule via surgery is the best course of action, you should know that minimally invasive procedures are now available resulting in smaller incisions, less pain, less stress on the body, faster recovery, and a shorter hospital

stay. As a thoracic surgeon, I perform such procedures via this VATS (minimally invasive) approach whenever possible. This includes wedge resections, lobectomies, mediastinal tumor resections, decortications and single incision surgery for pleural effusions.

Lung cancer screening helps detect lesions earlier and save lives. Educate yourself early on in the process and remember there are no dumb questions. Speak with your doctor about your risk factors and whether lung cancer screening is a good idea for you.

The best way to prevent lung cancer is to never smoke or to stop smoking now. If you are still smoking, talk to your doctor about ways to help you quit.

Eric Presser, MD is a board-certified thoracic surgeon with Premier Surgical Associates in Palm Springs and an advocate for early lung cancer screenings. For more information, visit the American Lung Association at www.lung.org. Dr. Presser welcomes your questions and can be reached at 760.424.8224.

The best way to prevent lung cancer is to never smoke or to stop smoking now. If you are still smoking, talk to your doctor about ways to help you quit.

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DESERT HEALTHCARE DISTRICT: Funding Programs that Improve Local Health Care Services

Heart Healthy Exercise Just Steps Away

According to Jennifer Mieres, M.D., American Heart Association (AHA), "to get heart-healthy benefits, you need to get your heart rate up." Whether it is a structured exercise program or just part of your daily routine, all physical activity adds up to a healthier heart.

Our desert, especially this time of year, provides a large variety of exercise opportunities just steps away from where we live, work, and play. Cities, school districts, businesses, and communities across the Coachella Valley are partnering to support and encourage physical activity at every age.

Highlighted below are 3 new exciting exercise opportunities and programs right here in the Desert for you and your family to enjoy.

One of the simplest types of physical activity — walking — is also one of the most beneficial. Just 30 minutes of brisk walking, at least five days a week, can lower your risks for heart disease, stroke and diabetes. **The Desert Healthcare District's 5 acre Wellness Park**, diagonal to Desert Regional Medical Center, offers a ¼ mile walking/jogging trail loop as well as other amenities. Designed for use by those who have health limitations as well as those who are well and want to stay that way, there are various exercise stations with level pathways, allowing those using wheelchairs and walkers to benefit from outdoor activity. Tranquility and meditation gardens offer peaceful rest stops, and low-level lighting makes the Wellness Park safe for evening use.

Cardiovascular workout equipment is used to facilitate physical activity that the human body can utilize to promote good health, lose

weight and even relieve stress. Achieving an aerobic effect through the use of a piece of cardiovascular workout equipment tends to be very efficient in that an individual can quickly increase their heart rate to their target, and thereafter, maintain that level for a minimum of 20 to 60 consecutive minutes. Doing so allows oxygen to flow freely throughout your body for the majority of your exercise routine.

The new Desert Hot Springs Community Health & Wellness Center (scheduled to open January 2013) will feature a cardio-fitness gym with treadmills, elliptical machines, recumbent step through bikes, upright bikes, upper body ergometer, and variable exercise machines. All of the equipment will have internet-connection capabilities, integrated exercise tracking technology for monitoring and recording exercise compliance, and heart rate monitoring utilizing telemetry.

Desert residents can also participate, for free, in the **Coachella Valley Health Collaborative's "Healthy Lifestyle Challenge"**. An interactive website records an individual's activity and converts it to steps on interactive maps. Individuals can see their progress and see how they match up against others participating in the various challenges. There is a variety of activities to choose from, including pre-designed programs, and the ability to create your own. People can challenge friends and colleagues by walking, running, swimming, hiking, biking and even shopping. It all counts towards the final goal. Challengers can also track their progress online, communicate with other challengers online and receive weekly motivating reminders and health tips. Please visit www.mywellsite.com/cvhc and register today!

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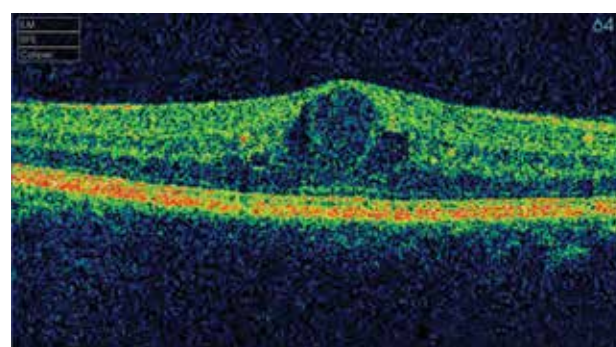
By Greg Evans, OD

In eye care, one of the physician quality reporting indicators is the presence or absence of diabetic macular edema. Macular edema is swelling, thickening or fluid retention in the central macular region of the retina. If left untreated, macular edema can have short-term and long-term effects on vision. It is a treatable diabetic condition and patients need to be aware of the varying medical treatments options.

One of the key categories of drugs used in the treatment protocol of Type II Diabetes is called thiazolidinediones (or glitazones). A recent study in the Archives of Internal Medicine (June 2012) showed patients receiving this class of drugs had a two to three-fold increased risk of developing macular edema. Actos and Avandia are commonly prescribed thiazolidinedione drugs.

The study supports the importance of comprehensive diabetic retinal exams for diabetic patients, as well as the importance of patients bringing an updated list of medications to each eye exam.

The image to the right shows a small pocket of fluid visible under the retina, and is an example of a patient with diabetic macular edema. This patient had good visual acuity but significant swelling of the retina. Macular edema resolved once the patient improved diabetic control. Because this patient was on multiple medications for the control of their diabetes (including Avandia), they are at increased risk of this



re-occurring. This edema was not evident by direct exam, but scanning lasers were able to identify the retinal swelling and fluid.

In patients using Actos and Avandia, eye doctors should more aggressively manage risk factors for macular edema. Since vision is often affected, routine diabetic screenings should include testing for

visual acuity. When there is a change in or reduced vision, the patient should be assessed with scanning lasers for macular edema. In fact, many practices now obtain a baseline macular thickness reading for diabetics as part of their routine diabetic workups.

Medicare recognized that macular edema was being under reported and hence included it in their new physician quality reporting guidelines. Eye care professionals should be up-to-date on the research to thoughtfully guide their patients and to work in conjunction with their patients' other health care providers to meet individual needs.

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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Over 50? Put Colon Cancer Screening on Your To Do List This Year

By David S. Johnson, MD, FACS

Happy 2013 to all! As we begin the New Year, many of us have good intentions to follow through on our resolutions which may include losing weight, finishing projects we've put off, quitting smoking, and making more time for your family. There is one New Year's resolution that I hope everyone over the age of 50 considers -- colon cancer screening.

Despite a recent overall decrease of 3% in new cases of colorectal cancer, it is still the second most common cause of cancer-related deaths, only to be outdone by lung cancer. The National Cancer Institute estimates the cost of colorectal cancer care at roughly \$12 billion in 2006, or approximately 12% of total cancer care cost. One in 20 men and women will be diagnosed with cancer of the colon or rectum during their lifetime. Considering the baby boomer generation is fast approaching 70 million, this translates into 3,500,000 cases!

What is so magical about age 50? 90% of all colorectal cancer diagnoses occur at age 50 or older. It is estimated that if every person over the age of 50 had a colonoscopy performed, 10,000 deaths could be prevented each year. Yet only 62% of adults over the age of 50 in California have colorectal cancer screening performed. For Hispanics, it's less than 52%. Almost 70% of adults without a primary care provider have never had colon cancer screening. We need to do better.

What are my options? Options for screening for colorectal cancer include stool based and endoscopic/radiologic tests. The screening interval for adults over the age of 50 is 10 years for colonoscopy; whereas it is five years for flexible sigmoidoscopy, virtual colonoscopy, and double contrast barium enema (or x-ray of the colon); and annually for a fecal occult blood test.

There are exceptions, however, in adults who are considered higher risk: 1) adults with a 1st degree relative with a history of colorectal cancer or a high risk adenoma (precancerous polyp) before age 60; 2) two 1st degree relatives with history of colorectal cancer or a high risk adenoma regardless of age; and 3) African-Americans. For the first two groups, it is recommended that screening begin at age 40 or at 10 years before the age at diagnosis in youngest relative, and the interval be every 5 years. Because African-Americans tend to present with more advanced cancers and high risk adenomas at an earlier age, screening should begin at age 45, with a 10 year interval.

A stool-based test is a two-step approach to screening, which will require endoscopy if the test is positive. Fecal immunological test (FIT) is a new test that has demonstrated better performance and will most likely replace the more familiar

guaiac-based test. This is because it is able to detect bleeding in smaller amounts.

Colonoscopy is a one-step approach that is considered the "gold standard." It has the advantage of evaluating the entire colon, with the highest accuracy as it is a "visual" test. If done properly by a skilled endoscopist with adequate sedation, it is surprisingly quick and well tolerated.

Flexible sigmoidoscopy does not evaluate the proximal colon, but it is an acceptable screening option, as only 3% of patients with a known tumor in the distal colon will have a tumor in the proximal colon. However, in higher risk patients, colonoscopy should be considered. Since women have a slightly higher incidence of proximal tumors, colonoscopy may also be a better screening option.

CT colonography, or "virtual colonoscopy", is a relatively newer technological option for screening. Its accuracy decreases for tumors less than 1 centimeter in size, and a "positive" test will require a colonoscopy to make a diagnosis. Though it has been endorsed by the American Cancer Society, it is not included in guidelines published by the American College of Physicians (ACP) and the US Preventative Services Task Force (USPSTF). Furthermore, it is not covered by most insurers as a primary screening tool. It is, however, an option for individuals in which colonoscopy is contraindicated.

Double contrast barium enema studies detect only 30-50% of cancers detected by colonoscopy and, subsequently, is no longer included in ACP and USPSTF guidelines.

Capsule endoscopy is an emerging option currently under investigation in the United States. Although it is utilized in Europe, its accuracy is not yet as good as colonoscopy.

What happens if I have a positive test? The whole basis of screening is to make a diagnosis early enough for cure. If a high risk adenoma is found and removed entirely after colonoscopy, then repeat colonoscopy should be performed in 3-5 years. If it is a large adenoma that cannot be removed by colonoscopy, has features worrisome for underlying cancer, or actual cancer, surgery is recommended. Traditionally, surgery involved making a large opening in the abdomen to remove the cancer. Unfortunately, due to the inherent invasive nature of an open procedure, there are significant associated complications, as well as a prolonged recovery. Fortunately, laparoscopic surgery has evolved in the last 10 years as a safe alternative method with no compromise on the conduct of surgery. Laparoscopic colorectal surgery has shown a significant decrease in complications (incisional hernia, bowel obstruction, transfusion requirements, to name a few), shorter hospital stay (3-5 days), more patients going home without additional nursing care, and quicker recovery (weeks versus months).

Be kind to man's best friend. On a final note, in Japan, a Labrador dog was trained to sniff out colon cancer from breath and stool samples. Surprisingly, detection was 91% for breath tests and 100% for stool samples! Now I am not suggesting we replace physicians with dogs, but this does lead us to consider technologies that can mimic this dog's olfactory skill. In the meantime, as we approach Colon Cancer Awareness in the month of March, we should stick to the recommended options -- and schedule your screening today! Until next issue!

Dr. David Johnson is a board-certified general surgeon with Premier Surgical Associates in Palm Springs and can be reached at 760.424.8224. He is an advocate for early detection through colon cancer screenings. For more information, visit the American Cancer Society at www.cancer.org.

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Advanced Imaging for Non-invasive Screening

By Christopher R. Hancock, MD

Advances in technology over the past 30 years have allowed clinicians to diagnose and treat patients using less invasive and more accurate methods. The introduction of Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI), Computed Tomography (CT) and Positron Emission Tomography (PET) changed the way physicians “looked inside” a body to see if there was an abnormality. Over the years, technologically-advanced imaging has evolved to detect disease in a minimally invasive manner and with greater accuracy than traditional screening methods.

Over the past 5 years, the technology has developed even further. Today, MRI, CT and PET/CT can now effectively screen for the following diseases:

Coronary Artery Disease

Coronary artery disease is the leading cause of death for men and women worldwide. Historically, physicians would perform a coronary catheter angiogram to check for blockage of the arteries. This method, while effective, requires that a patient be sedated and have a small incision made in their groin for the catheter. Today, the same exam can be performed with CT and doesn't require sedation or a catheter. Unlike a traditional angiogram which only sees blockage inside the artery, the CT angiogram identifies blockage inside the artery (hard plaque) and inside the artery wall (soft plaque). Soft plaque is the “silent killer” as it is hidden inside the artery wall and can cause sudden death if it ruptures. In 30% of patients who have coronary artery disease, their first symptom is sudden death.



CT Coronary Angiogram identifies blockages inside the artery (hard plaque) and inside the artery wall (soft plaque)

Prostate Cancer

Prostate cancer is the second most common cancer in American men, and 1 in 6 will be diagnosed with prostate cancer in their lifetime. Currently, the PSA (prostate-specific antigen) blood test is the most widely used screening tool for prostate cancer. While the PSA is useful in detecting a problem in the prostate gland, it is not specific enough to determine if it is elevated due to benign disease or cancer. Historically, urologists would perform a trans-rectal ultrasound

guided biopsy (TRUS) to identify the cause. Unfortunately, because TRUS biopsies are done by randomly sampling the prostate gland, they do not detect lesions 35% of the time because they can't see the tumor inside the gland. With the advances in MRI technology, radiologists and physicians can now see inside the gland

and identify tumor suspicious areas with pinpoint precision. This new exam is called a multiparametric MRI of the prostate. This same technology is also used to guide biopsy of a concerning lesion to determine if it is cancer. If cancer is found early, a patient may be able to have focal treatment of the cancer versus whole gland therapy.

Colon Cancer

Colon cancer is the third most common type of cancer, and it has a very high survival rate if caught early. The current recommended guideline for screening is to get a colonoscopy beginning at age 50. Traditional colonoscopies are performed by inserting a thin flexible scope into the colon to look for polyps or tumors. Patients are sedated for their comfort. A less invasive alternative is a Virtual Colonoscopy performed with CT and 3D “fly through” reformations. This exam requires no sedation and identifies polyps or masses inside of the colon, while also producing images of surrounding abdominal and pelvic organs, allowing for their interrogation as well.

Alzheimer's Disease

Alzheimer's disease affects 1 in 8 Americans over the age of 65. While there is currently no cure for Alzheimer's, early detection can help patients and their families plan for their future. Researchers have found that a diagnosis of Alzheimer's is supported when there is atrophy of the hippocampal formations. Today, there is a diagnostic MRI with 3D volumetric quantitative analysis (NeuroQuant) that can measure the volume of the hippocampus, temporal and parietal lobes and other structures of the brain. Most recently, the FDA approved an isotope called Amyvid for PET/CT that specifically identifies amyloid plaques in the brain which are associated with Alzheimer's disease. These plaques are thought to hinder normal brain function and promote degeneration of brain tissue.

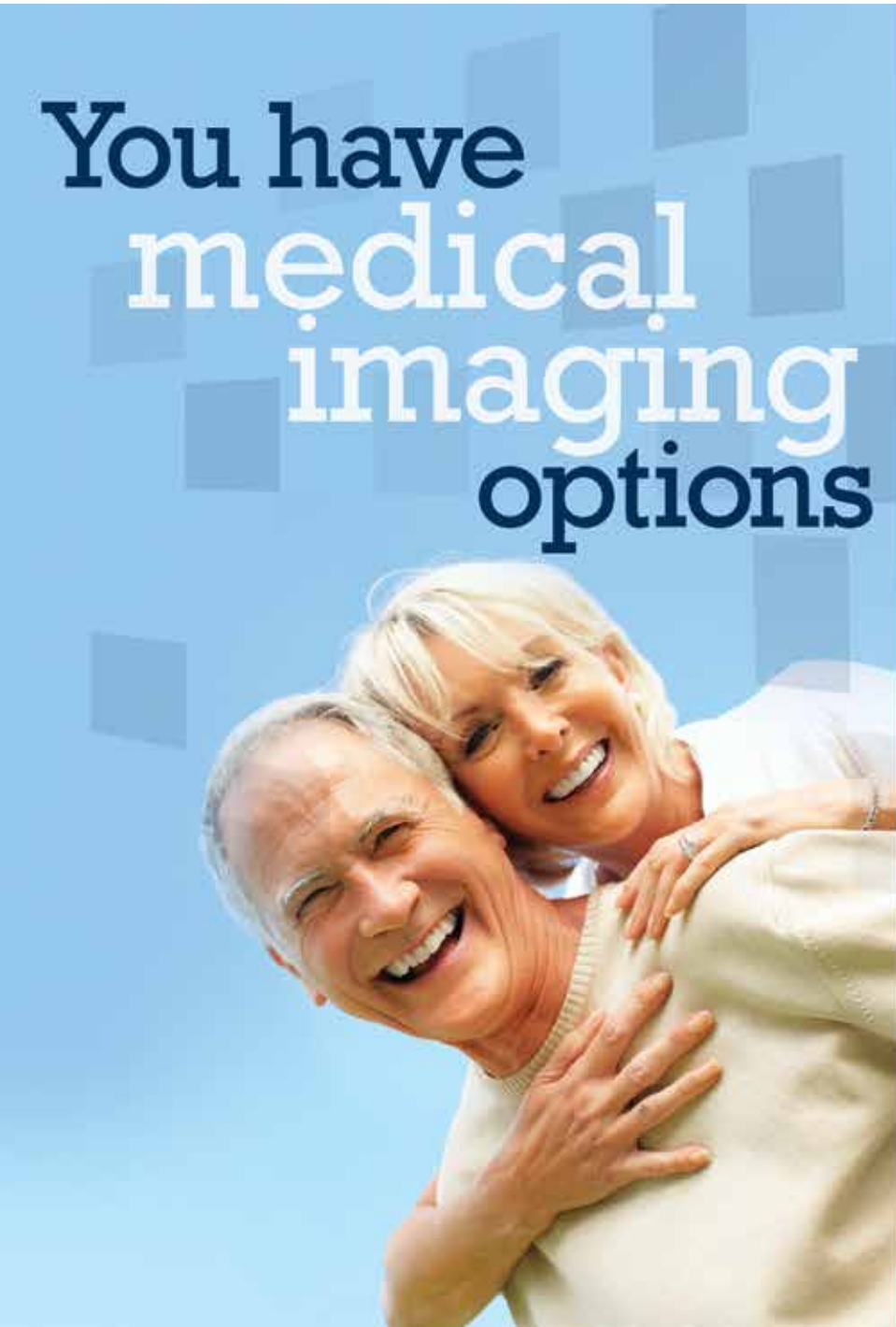
Advanced medical imaging is a great solution for patients who may choose not to undergo standard screening tests due to anxiety related to invasive procedures. Most physicians agree that the best test a patient can have is the one they are willing to undergo.

Dr. Hancock is a Board-Certified Neuroradiologist at Desert Medical Imaging. DMI performs all these screenings at their Indian Wells facility and can be reached at 760.694.9559.

Over the years, technologically-advanced imaging has evolved to detect disease in a minimally invasive manner and with greater accuracy...

Most physicians agree that the best test a patient can have is the one they are willing to undergo.

– Dr. Hancock



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By B. Maya Kato, MD

However, these gatherings can be less than pleasant for some individuals. Hearing-impaired individuals, for one, have difficulty socializing in such environments. This past holiday season, did you notice that Aunt Susan didn't seem to get the jokes, or that Grandpa spent most of the evening alone in his easy chair, rather than join in the conversation? Did you wonder what could possibly be wrong?

Those loved ones may have a hearing loss, and noisy situations can be very difficult. Relatives with hearing loss may become frustrated because they are unable to understand the conversation, and feel left out, or opt not to participate in the celebration at all. Hearing impaired individuals are prone to depression, anxiety, and loneliness.

What to Do?

Learn to recognize when a loved one may be having difficulty hearing. Signs include:

- Frequently asking people to repeat themselves.
- Having trouble understanding women and children.
- Looking at a person's lips, rather than their eyes, during conversation.
- Contributing inappropriately to the conversation or answering questions incorrectly.
- Appearing to "tune out" or sitting alone.

Create an environment to facilitate better hearing:

- Get the person's attention first, making them aware that you will be initiating a conversation.
- Look directly at them when speaking. Hard-of-hearing individuals rely on lip-reading and other visual cues.
- Move the conversation to a quieter location.
- If you are asked to repeat yourself several times, try to rephrase your comments. Some sounds may be easier to understand than others.
- Consider using paper plates and plastic eating utensils instead of china and flatware to cut down on the amount of background noise while the family is gathered at the table.

When the time is right, suggest your loved one see a physician about their possible hearing loss.

The FDA recommends that you see a medical doctor first. Hearing loss is a medical condition, and has a myriad of causes, which may be as simple as wax impaction.

fluid in the ear, ear infections, age, or noise trauma; or more complex conditions such as perforation of the eardrum (rupture or puncture), cholesteatoma (bone-destructive cyst of the ear), vascular tumors, Meniere's disease, nerve tumors, or brain tumors.

Only a physician can diagnose the exact cause of hearing loss, and only a physician can order MRI or CT scans and prescribe medication to treat the ear condition. Without proper medical guidance from a physician, one can spend thousands of dollars on hearing aids, and miss the diagnosis of a correctible, underlying medical condition.

If cleared by the physician, encourage your family member to pursue hearing aid amplification.

According to a comprehensive research study conducted by the Better Hearing Institute (BHI), today's technically advanced, sleekly designed hearing aids have a significantly positive impact on social and emotional health. This study of more than 2,000 hearing aid users looked at 14 specific quality of life measures. The results of the study found many positive effects of hearing aid amplification:

- 80% of hearing aid users are satisfied with the changes that occurred in their lives specifically because of their aids;
- 82% would recommend hearing aids to their friends;
- 91% felt that their hearing aids satisfactorily improved their communication in one-to-one situations;
- 85% were satisfied with improved communication in small group settings;
- 80% reported improvement in their ability to understand the television;
- >50% said their hearing aids improved their relationships at home, their social life, and their ability to join in groups;
- 40% noted improvements in their sense of safety, self-confidence, feelings about self, sense of independence, and work relationships;
- 25-33% said they even saw improvements in their romance, sense of humor, cognitive skills, and mental, emotional, and physical health.

“This survey clearly reveals how dramatically people’s lives can improve with the use of hearing aids,” says Sergei Kochkin, PhD, Executive Director of the BHI. “The findings of this nationally representative survey are both timely and encouraging—particularly given that an increasing number of Americans are suffering from noise-induced hearing loss at increasingly younger ages. Today’s hearing aids are a tremendous asset to people with even mild hearing loss who want to remain active and socially engaged throughout their lives.”

Modern hearing aids are vastly different from their predecessors. “Today’s hearing aids are about staying young, not growing old,” Kochkin advises, “If you want to keep your mind sharp and life complete, don’t leave hearing loss unaddressed.”

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.

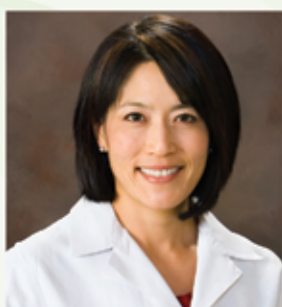
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Living Wellness

with Jennifer DiFrancesco



Simply Meditate

Sometimes the simplest task is the hardest. In the case of meditation this is true for many.

Meditation is simply defined as the 'cessation of fluctuations of the mind.' There is enough statistical research supporting this, and we should all be taking time in our day to have uninterrupted quiet time focusing on the breath and quieting the mind. So, why is this so difficult?

There is a reassuring story for all of us of an American woman visiting India who had the honor of meeting the Dali Lama. The woman asked "Why is it so difficult for Americans to meditate?" The Dali Lama responded, "Americans? Who says this is the case? It is a task of perpetual difficulty for us all!" Even the Dali Lama has difficulty quieting the mind.

We have 60,000 to 90,000 thoughts a day. 90% of these were in our consciousness from the day before. Much of our thought patterns are formed at an early age. By the age of 4-5 years old our core thought patterns are well formed. Additionally, our habits of thinking and breathing are unified. Much of the way we learned how to breathe was learned very early on.

Based on this profound information, how do we start clearing the mind to welcome new positive thought patterns? One can take a first step by spending time thinking about our thoughts, and this type of contemplation can only happen in solitude. A goal of meditation is to unite the breath into this practice and remain focused on a single-pointed sensation of the breath. If the mind wanders 1,000 times, bring it back 1,001 times. Obviously, much patience is required.

There are many documented studies supporting the benefits of meditation which include: increasing immune response and attention span; relieving anxiety and depression; and promoting the neuroplasticity of the brain. When this happens, there is growth in brain cells and parts of the mind open up to create mental engagement.

Sticking to a practice of simply carving out 5 minutes a day for uninterrupted quiet time, with eyes closed, active breathing engaged, upright posture initiated and hands at rest with palms face up can facilitate a profound experience. Palms facing up is important because it means we are in "receiving mode." This higher receptivity helps initiate a relaxed state. Taking this daily path quiets the mind and we realize we are merely the observer of our thoughts.

Over a decade ago, I attended a 10-day silent meditation retreat. The meditation technique was Vipassana which means "to see things as they really are." There are over 120 Vipassana centers around the world with one center conveniently located in Twentynine Palms. After 10-days of not speaking and immersing oneself into this practice of self-observation, it was impossible to see the world around me in the same light. Most experiences we have daily are born of wanting less or more. Centering oneself is called equanimity. There is a center point between the constant push and pull in our lives, and attaining more center balance is the desired result of meditation.

Whether it is 5 minutes a day or 10 days of simply observing the simple quality within, meditation can help us experience tremendous expansion and calming of the mind and the breath.



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Just Another Ride On Your Harley

A Desert Health Review
By Kim L. Buchanan

I have been brushing my teeth for some sixty years, so it's not a stretch for me to believe in the value of a clean colon. But still, when asked if I would try Desert Colon Hydrotherapy and then write a review, I was a little apprehensive. I've been married for over twenty years and still can't sit on the toilet with my wife in the bathroom. However, I agreed to take the challenge—with a complete understanding of why, but not really “how.”

I have eaten a poor diet and had off-and-on constipation most of my life. As I age, I have become aware of the high incidence of colon cancer and the many other colon problems facing men today. I recently decided to become proactively healthier by changing my diet, and a system “jumpstart” in the form of a colon cleanse sounded like a good idea. Now I just needed to get over my embarrassment and overactive imagination.

Upon arriving at Desert Colon Hydrotherapy, I met owner, Tasia, who was delightful and provided a full explanation of her private system which is called the “Angel of Water” (I nicknamed it “Colon Pow”).

Okay, I can do this. It's very private and somewhat like a cruise on your Harley. First you undress from the waist down, climb on board, cover yourself with a

towel, put in the nozzle and wait for the gas station attendant to come and fill “er” up. (Like in Oregon, you can't pump your own gas). That's when Tasia knocks, comes in, fills the water tank, and adjusts the water temperature. She explains how to use the throttle and of course there is always a kill switch if you run into trouble. Tasia is always in the room next door if you need her. After she turns on the water jet, she leaves.

That's when your journey begins. Your attention is immediately drawn to a three-inch clear PVC drain pipe that you continually monitor. (Tachometer if you would still rather think you are on your Harley). I use the word ‘interesting’ to describe the view, as you see the amount, and what, comes out of your colon. Three treatments are recommended as each will clean farther up (remember you have 6’ in there). I've had three treatments in two weeks and have become a true believer in this system and its many health benefits. You can find a lot of great info out there on hydro colon therapy.

Coupled with my daily probiotic (for intestinal health) and improved diet, Colon Pow has given me a squeaky clean start to the New Year. The system at Desert Colon Hydrotherapy is painless and private, so give it a try. Cowboy up and take care of yourself. If you don't, who will?

P.S. For all you 21st century warriors, you can text and use your cell phone while driving this one!

For more information, contact Desert Colon Hydrotherapy at 760.501.6622

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Help Those Who Are Grieving This Time of Year

By Doris Steadman MEd, MSW

The holidays are over, and this time of year can be very difficult for those who are experiencing loss-the loss of friends, family members, pets and even physical health. They may be experiencing an emotional rollercoaster with feelings of sadness, loneliness, emptiness and anxiety.

Grief is a normal, highly personal response to loss. Some may feel sad and experience signs of grieving without knowing it; some may be ashamed or unwilling to tell others how they are feeling. Pam Vandernagel, an LCSW and licensed oncology therapist at Eisenhower Medical Center emphasizes that time alone is not enough to heal the pain, it is very important to have support during the grieving process. While healing requires our taking responsibility for moving through our own pain, we also need others to complete the process.¹

Grief never ends, but it is considered to be managed when the individual has found some resolution or meaning.² Loss leaves one with having to discover a new way of living without that person, and perhaps some guilt about still being here.¹



What can a person do to help themselves through their grieving? Vandernagel suggests grief work such as writing letters, talking to the loved one, gathering pictures and memories, and allowing time to cry.

How can one help a friend or loved one who is grieving? Give the person time to become aware of their feelings and to express them. Spend time with the person, and listen to their stories. Talk about the loss and encourage them to discuss their feelings and memories. Help them discover the barriers that are holding them back from going forward. Encourage them to find something positive in their daily life. Having hope and a positive attitude help to open the endorphins in the brain and allows the immune system to work more efficiently.

Assist those grieving by recommending resources to help them give voice to their emotions, such as grief support groups and individual therapists. Fortunately, we have many resources in the Coachella Valley for those seeking help. Grief support groups are offered at Eisenhower Medical Center (760-674-3618), Desert Regional Medical Center (760-323-6511), and Serenity Hospice (760-325-8718) to name a few. Mourning Star in Palm Desert (760-836-0360) offers groups for children from ages 3 to 18.

Help is available for those who are grieving; however, the gift of friendship is one of the best ways to help a person who is experiencing the pain of loss.

Contact Pam Vandernagel at 760-674-3618 (Monday through Thursday) for additional information on bereavement support groups.

References: 1) Draeger, Bonnie E., When Cancer Strikes a Friend, (New York, Skyhorse Publishing, 2012) 163. 2) Ellor, Rev. James W., "Grief's Journey," Aging Well, 2, (March/April): 42

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Use the Top 10 New Year's Resolutions to Reach Optimal Health in *YOUR* Life

By Richard & Shonna Perry

What is Optimal Health? In his book, Dr. A's Habits of Health, Dr. Wayne Scott Andersen describes Optimal Health as 'the highest degree of health that is possible for you to achieve.'

The reality for many people is they're simply surviving in a slowly declining state of well-being, not really healthy and not quite sick. This is caused by eating excessive amounts of nutritionally barren foods, weak and flabby muscles, lack of sleep, stress, and dependence on medications for relief. Too often, this leads to life-threatening illnesses.

With the New Year, comes an opportunity to make a fresh start and make optimal health your goal for a healthy body, mind and finances. Remember! Optimal health is like a marathon, take your time and incorporate new ideas slowly and deliberately.

1. Lose Weight/Maintain a Healthy Weight

According to the National Weight Control Registry, led by Dr. James Hill and Dr. Rena Wing, registry members who, on average, have lost 66 lbs and kept it off for 5.5 years, reported that they continue to maintain a low calorie, low fat diet, and do high levels of activity. What do they have in common? They modified their food intake, increased physical activity (most through walking), eat breakfast every day, weigh themselves at least once a week, watch less than 10 hours of TV per week and exercise on average about 1 hour per day. (For more information go to www.nwcr.ws.com)

What is the best solution? The key to unlocking our fat stores is not just in how much we eat, but how often. Dr. Andersen advocates eating small (100-300 calorie) frequent (every 2-3 hours) balanced meals consisting of lean protein, low glycemic vegetables and starches, and limiting our natural sugars intake. He further recommends drinking half our body weight in ounces of water each day, getting 7-8 hours of sleep each night, and reducing stress.

2. Get Fit

Increase your energy expenditure using good habits of motion by increasing your endurance, strength and flexibility. Improve your posture and breathing techniques. Create gentle, effective daily motion vs. intense workouts to avoid burnout and injury. Join a gym, work with a trainer, start a walking program, do chair yoga. Daily exercise clears your mind, gives you satisfaction, helps maintain a healthy metabolism and provides a sense of accomplishment.

3. Spend More Time with Family

Everyone is busy these days. Sit down for a daily family meal. Phone out of town family members weekly or bi-weekly. Remember birthdays with a card or phone call. (Note: e-mail keeps you in touch, but lacks the personal connection of an actual conversation).

4. Enjoy Life to the Fullest

Just as optimal health is a personal goal, so is measuring the richness of your life. Are you living your life to its fullest? Ask yourself: What are my goals? What do I really want in my life? Did my actions today take me closer to those goals? What steps can I take to reach my goals?

5. Help Others in their Dreams/Volunteer

Let this be the year you give back. No matter the degree of your involvement, when you give you receive. Learn to give what you can, don't over commit yourself in time or money. Be responsible to the commitment. Remember, time is the greatest gift of all.

6. Reduce Your Debt

Vow to manage your debt more effectively. In his book, *The Richest Man in Babylon*, George S. Clason, lists 7 simple rules in the form of a parable to lead readers toward better financial understanding. Written in 1926, this is a terrific gift for anyone... Or see Reesa Manning's recommendations on page 28 of this issue!

7. Manage Stress

Stress is an integral part of our lives. Let's look at ways to de-stress our lives. Get a massage (weekly if possible), do yoga, take a warm bath or shower, make your home cozy and inspiring, dim lights, turn off the news, reduce your noise pollution. Set goals, visit with family and friends, and make time every day for reflection, meditation or prayer.

8. Take a Trip

The planning, execution and enjoyment of travel broadens our horizons and enriches our lives through personal development and growth. It gives us a better understanding of our community, state, nation and world. Don't wait!

9. Learn Something New

Try something new this year, like a foreign language, cooking technique, learn to surf, play an instrument, tango!

10. Fall in Love

Fall in love with yourself first. Who is this marvelous, complex being, and what greatness do you bring to the world? With this answer, find the love in everyone you meet. This year, my vow is to look only for the good in my family, friends and acquaintances. I bet I fall in love daily!

Shonna and Richard Perry are Certified Health Coaches at Perry4Health. They offer free personalized health assessments, and planning and support for weight management and optimal health. For more information call, 760-217-6169 or email: perry4health@gmail.com.

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Is Spinal Decompression a Viable Option for Back Pain Relief?

By Lauren Del Sarto

In the world of chiropractic health care, spinal decompression is promoted as the latest technology to relieve back pain caused by compressed or degenerative discs. Although some within the medical community, including the Mayo Clinic, are using the treatment for conditions such as herniated and bulging discs, spinal stenosis, and sciatica, most doctors are awaiting results of blind placebo studies that scientifically prove the treatment is effective.

The therapy is relatively new... non-surgical spinal decompression was pioneered by Dr. Allan Dyer, PhD, MD who introduced the first spinal decompression table in 1991.¹ Decompression is achieved through the use of a mechanical traction device applied through an on-board computer that controls the force and angle of disc distraction. The program enables the table to apply a very slight and slow traction force to the discs of the spinal column reducing intradiscal pressure and increasing blood flow to those compressed areas. Many other doctors, scientists, and corporations have developed spinal decompression tables, each with features believed to mimic or enhance the effectiveness of the original concept.²

Enthusiasm for this therapy stems from the ineffectiveness of traditional non-surgical therapies in relieving pain, and the belief that spinal decompression offers a less invasive option to surgery.

But does it work? The National Institutes of Health website reports that there have been two pilot studies which show that non-surgical spinal decompression treatment has a beneficial effect on lower back pain, enhancing the structure of the spine by increasing disc height. One study authored by Dr. John Leslie of the Mayo Clinic and others, found that clinical use of a spinal decompression system led to an 88.9 percent reduction in pain scores over six weeks, as well as a drop in consumption of pain medications and improvement in quality of life.³

In the other study, CT scans of the lumbar spine in patients before and after spinal decompression treatment showed possible beneficial anatomical changes. Dr. Christian Apfel, lead author of this study and associate professor of anesthesiology and perioperative care at the University of California at San Francisco, says, "A significant reduction in chronic lower back pain after non-invasive spinal decompression correlated with an increase in disc height."³ It is noted that these studies were not conducted using scientific standards. Many agree that a similar controlled, randomized trial is required to prove that increased disc height leads to pain amelioration.

Yet for many who have suffered with back pain for long periods of time, and have tried traditional therapies including pain medications, physical therapy and epidurals to no avail, spinal decompression is an effective option. "Most of my spinal decompression patients arrive with MRI in hand," says Dr. Larry Le Roy of Le Roy Chiropractic in La Quinta. "They have tried the route of pain meds and epidurals and been told that surgery is the best option."

75% of the patients he sees are golfers and they want to keep golfing. "I'm an athlete too, and I get it. Life is no fun when you can't enjoy your sports and hobbies, so our goal is to alleviate pain and get them back to what they love doing."

Dr. Le Roy explains how decompression creates a negative pressure and pulls blood into the affected area and helps bring the discs back to life. "Disc degeneration means the disc is dying. It is not getting the nutrients it needs. Is (spinal decompression) going to give you the disc of a 20 year old? No. But if we can get some life back into those discs, we can take the pressure off the nerves and give the patient relief from pain."

Karen Adamik of Indio is a believer. What started in 2009 as a slight pain in her knee expanded throughout her body and left her unable to walk. She was diagnosed with herniated and degenerated disks in her lower back. Over 18 months, she pursued relief through physical therapy, pain medications and steroid injections, but nothing provided relief beyond two months. She was told surgery was her next option and was looking forward to long-term relief. Her surgeon told Karen the procedure probably still wouldn't relieve the pain and that he wouldn't recommend it. Taken back, she sought a second option from a neurosurgeon who agreed that surgery would probably not alleviate the pain long-term.

A friend mentioned spinal decompression and Adamik thought 'what have I got to lose.' She started treatment in January of 2011 and believes it saved her life. She now walks 3 miles a day and is back to doing the things she enjoys. "I stopped living as pain management took over my life." She adds that, for her condition, spinal decompression was a good choice. She began with 24 treatments going 3 times a week and currently is on a once a month maintenance program. Her spinal decompression treatments, which she adds are painless, are coupled with chiropractic adjustments. With Dr. Le Roy's encouragement, she increased her exercise as her pain eased and has lost 55 pounds.

"As part of a comprehensive treatment plan, we recommend physical therapy or rehab to strengthen core muscles, and chiropractic adjustments specific to a patient's condition," adds Le Roy.

He states that contraindications to spinal decompression therapy include (but are not limited to) severe osteoporosis, pregnancy, severe obesity, and post-surgery that includes metal screws or cages.

If spinal decompression sounds like a good option, what are the factors to consider?

"Ensure that the your doctor is trained on the modality from experts, not only the manufacturer," says Le Roy, as the programmed weight, angles and treatment time are factors determined by the doctor based on one's specific MRI and condition. "The treatment does not hurt and if it does, there is something wrong with the settings or position." In addition, a thorough examination should include an MRI or other acceptable imaging.

Although science has yet to prove the validity of spinal decompression, many are successfully using the therapy to relieve chronic pain. "I now understand that there is no quick fix for pain free living, concludes Adamik, "but as long as I continue my maintenance program and healthier lifestyle, I live pain free – and feel like myself again!"

References: 1) <http://www.vaxd.net/about.htm>; 2) http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Spinal_decompression; 3) National Institutes of Health website <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC1887522/>



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Relieve Your Pain and Improve Your Game

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

Pain, stress or limited motion keeps you from achieving optimal results and benefits from your sport. Pain and muscular tension interfere with your mobility on the tennis court or the swing of your golf club, reducing your performance, endurance and enjoyment.

Do you wake up the day after golfing, biking or playing tennis with stiffness, soreness, a strain or pain in your hips and back?

Acupuncture and herbal medicine have been shown to alleviate these symptoms. Both therapies have been used for centuries to reduce swelling, improve range of motion, strengthen the body, speed recovery, and address underlying issues that can contribute to future injuries. Although many people believe that age-related degradation in performance levels is inevitable, Chinese medicine offers many techniques to enhance performance and slow the aging process.

Acupuncture can also reduce or eliminate muscle tension in your back, neck and shoulders. By maintaining healthy blood circulation and body flexibility, you can prevent injuries and keep your body in good condition. In some cases acupuncture can reduce pain immediately, and patients often notice a difference after the first treatment. The martial arts tradition from the same cultural heritage as acupuncture also leaves us a rich compendium of "secret formulas" that range from aids for performance to liniments for pain, bruising, and headache. Factors including level of tightness or stiffness, and the length of time you have been suffering, are considered to developing your acupuncture treatment program.

Recently, a Johns Hopkins study found that people with chronic tendonitis or arthritis who had acupuncture sessions

twice a week for 6 weeks had less pain and disability than a control group who only thought they were receiving acupuncture (the needles didn't penetrate the skin). Additionally, a 2008 study in the Journal of Alternative and Complementary Medicine found that participants who were acupunctured for muscle soreness 24 and 48 hours after they exercised to exhaustion reported significantly less pain than people who didn't receive the treatment.

A large part of the philosophy of Chinese medicine is based on not only curing disease, but preventing it. The ideal goal of Chinese doctors was to keep people healthy, active and vital; to promote longevity and to ensure healthy appetites and lifestyle. According to the Journal of Strength and Conditioning Research, researchers found the use of acupuncture in resistance and endurance sports activities tended to increase muscular strength and power. Acupuncture also seemed to improve the haemodynamic parameters of endurance athletes.

Put all this together with proper exercise and imagine yourself stronger, looser, more flexible and pain free. Also remember to treat an injury as soon as possible, and continue treatment to full recovery, in whatever treatment modality you choose. Your serve should be faster and your drives longer. For the sports enthusiast these therapies should be a part of your sports oriented physical maintenance routine. Then watch your fun quotient go up and your score go down.

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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The Need to Unwind, for Health's Sake

By Jayne Robertson

The holidays are behind us and we've just turned the corner into the New Year. Now it's time to get ourselves back on track for more balanced living. But how easy is that in this extremely social valley with galas, fundraisers and a seemingly endless calendar of events? We move from the holiday season into our own local high season and the tendency to overcommit is as abundant as ever.

Do you ever find yourself running from appointment to appointment, from one sport or social event/gathering to another? How is this any different from the hectic holiday season? Same stress, different outfit. Human beings evolved with a basic and primal need to unplug, unwind and rest. Yet our culture encourages us to stay engaged, look busy and be more productive. The idea of giving ourselves a "time out" is aimed at naughty children, not grown adults. However, if we actually slowed down enough and listened to what our deep inner voice is telling us, we'd probably hear it say... "slow down, sit down, take a deep breath and put your feet up for a while."

When we ignore our need to find quiet down time, our bodies begin to react. If we are over-stimulated, over-stressed and over-committed, real physical reactions occur. Our heart rate, blood pressure and breathing rate elevate. Our stress hormones rise, our sleep is disrupted, our digestion is affected and our muscles don't recognize chronic tension. Our bodies are in a perpetual state of flight or fight, which means that we perceive our everyday life as being a basic threat and therefore stressful. We didn't evolve to remain in this state, although it is necessary when a real threat is present. It can mean the difference between running a red light, pulling our hand out of the fire or yanking someone away from a wayward car.

When we are in a restful state, our bodies and minds heal. The stress responses of higher heart rate, blood pressure, rapid breathing and stress hormones subside, and we are better able to digest, rest and recover. It's an interesting reflection that we actually have to learn how to relax without using drugs, food or alcohol. Simple strategies include deep breathing, easy stretches, seated contemplation and meditation, soaking in the tub or sitting outside in sunshine with a cup of herbal tea. If you're looking for more guidance try a gentle or restorative yoga class, a meditation class or tai chi.

But here's one thing you can do right now. Stop. Sit up straight. Relax your shoulders and jaw. Take a gentle yet full inhale and as you exhale slowly, let your eyes close. Repeat. Now... doesn't that feel better?

Jayne Robertson is a yoga teacher, yoga therapist and personal fitness trainer. She can be reached at 760-333-2339 or for more information visit www.desertyogatherapy.com.



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Empowering Patients with Choices at Desert Integrative Medical Clinic

By Lauren Del Sarto

When Robert Steinberg, M.D. decided to bring board-certified naturopathic doctor (N.D.) Lucy Rojo into his practice, his objective was to further expand natural medicine options for his patients in addition to offering traditional medical solutions. Dr. Steinberg has practiced internal and primary care medicine for 32 years in the desert. He has studied integrative health care for the past 20 years and understands the value of nutrition and patient-centered lifestyle modifications to achieve lasting health.

“My vision with Desert Integrative Medical Center is to expand on natural intervention options and Dr. Rojo is a perfect fit,” say Steinberg. “My focus as a primary care internal medicine physician is on acute and chronic management. By expanding on natural support and using drugs more selectively, we combine the best of both worlds and are moving in the right direction.”

Steinberg was influenced by integrative medicine years ago. “The more I learned, the more I wanted to know.” He described himself as the ‘lone wolf in the desert’ for the past decade in terms of advocating for integrative medicine. “A movement towards integrative health care is happening now because people want better outcomes and alternatives.” He continues his education by attending nutritional and anti-aging conferences, studying nutritional journals and discussing the latest information with colleagues. “When you are in the company of like-minded physicians who are concerned with the same issues and practicing similar health care approaches throughout the world, it is very gratifying.”

“This combined approach to health had been a dream since graduating from naturopathic medical school,” adds Rojo. Professional partnerships between medical and naturopathic doctors can better serve patients seeking natural, yet effective approaches to their wellness needs.

Steinberg adds, “Doctors need to be trained in both mainstream and preventive, nutritional models. If physicians don’t incorporate science-based, nutritional interventions into practice, they are missing an important component of patient care.”

And what do patients think? “Patients must be of the mindset that they want to be proactive and look at alternatives,” says Steinberg. “Some patients are fine with getting a prescription and going on their way, but others want more individualized time and understanding of their health challenges and wellness options.” Steinberg notes that most patients appreciate doctors that are versed in both medical approaches. Rojo adds, “Having choice and being heard makes a difference in the level of satisfaction.”

“There has never been a more important time for patients to take control of their health, given all the current changes to our health care system and that means being proactive,” Steinberg notes, adding that metabolic syndrome, an expression of pre-diabetes, is at an all-time high. “If we don’t change our diets and we keep eating bad fats and high carbohydrates, ramped obesity and diabetes will continue to rise. Chronic degenerative disease across the spectrum can be modified positively, and controlled or improved by interventions that keep insulin levels low. Supplements, diet and exercise can help do that, but people ultimately have to take responsibility and change their lifestyles.”

Both are enthusiastic that they are better able to offer patients choices “We have an exceptional opportunity to create something new and different,” concludes Steinberg. “And patients are ready for it.”

For more information visit www.DesertIntegrativeMedicalCenter.com or call 760.340.2260.

Cholesterol: Reconsidering Our Prejudice Against This 27 Carbon Molecule

By Nicole Ortiz, N.D.

Cholesterol is historically thought to be the biggest predictor for heart disease, and therefore not something we want in high quantities in our bodies. But, an emerging new paradigm in the medical community suggests it may not be the most important determinant for cardiovascular disease.

So if cholesterol doesn’t cause heart disease, what does? A growing number of physicians blame inflammation, which is caused by a number of things with a sugary, carb-laden diet at the top of the list.

As a medical community, we are beginning to take a closer look at the pros and cons of keeping cholesterol at a minimum. Given that Americans spend \$30 billion on statins to lower their cholesterol levels, an important consideration is

the mounting data warning us of the measurable correlations between statin drug use and diabetes, memory loss and cancer in certain segments of the population.

So why is cholesterol not such a bad thing? As the vital molecule present in every cell membrane, cholesterol is so important to the body we simply cannot exist without it. It’s used to insulate nerve fibers (and therefore make nerve signals travel properly), contribute to vitamin synthesis, and make hormones which carry chemical signals around the body. But when cholesterol is grossly out of balance - either in too high or too low quantities - disease can ensue.

Two important studies help broaden our perspective of what other factors are

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Dr. Steinberg has been practicing internal and integrative medicine in the Coachella Valley since 1981.

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predictors of heart disease. The Nurse’s Health Study, one of the largest and most respected studies regarding diet and health, found 5 basic behaviors that reduced the risk of heart disease by 82%.

1. Exercising regularly
2. Eating a diet rich in omega-3 fats, fruits and vegetables
3. Drinking alcohol only in moderation
4. Not smoking
5. Maintaining a healthy weight

All 5 of these behaviors likewise support healthy cholesterol levels and reduce inflammation in the body.

Another important 4 year study, Lyon Diet Heart Study, looked at 605 patients who had heart attacks and who had classic risk factors, including high cholesterol and being a smoker. About half of the participants were told to eat a low fat and low cholesterol diet; the other half were told to eat a Mediterranean diet high in oils, vegetables, fruits, nuts and fish.

Neither group was given a cholesterol lowering drug such as a statin. The participants who ate the Mediterranean diet had a 72% decrease in coronary events and a 56% decrease in overall mortality and their cholesterol didn’t elevate despite the fact they ate a good portion of fat in their diet.

From these studies we are reminded that our overall lifestyle, how we eat, sleep, move and indulge, have significant implications on the health of our heart and all systems of our body. While some people need—and benefit from—cholesterol lowering medications, the overall best practice for your heart starts with daily choices. Begin by filling your kitchen with a disease preventing diet, rich in good fats, organic protein, fresh veggies and fruits, and minimal breads and sugars.

Dr. Ortiz is a primary care naturopathic doctor at the Live Well Clinic in La Quinta. For more information call 760-771-5970 or visit www.livewellclinic.org.

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Genetic Testing Options to Determine Individual Heart Disease Risk

By Shannon Sinsheimer, ND

Heart disease is the general term used to describe any medical condition of the heart, blood vessels, and arteries. The type of heart disease that affects most Americans is coronary artery disease, or a blockage of plaques in the cardiovascular system which often leads to heart attacks. The most common health advice given to reduce the risk of heart disease is cholesterol reduction with statin medication, diet modification, exercise, and stress management. While these are all excellent suggestions, a secondary way to determine individual risk of heart disease and further treatment advice, is to test genetic predisposition to heart disease.

Our body composition is built upon a series of DNA codes that specifies how to make our individual structure. This is true from the color of our hair and eyes, height, weight, to risk of certain diseases. Of course, not all diseases express themselves (despite genetic composition) and other diseases are present even with a lack of genetic encoding for that disease. The risk and presence of heart disease has a large genetic component; however, not all genetic 'at risk' individuals have equal levels of genetic risk. Despite this, most at-risk individuals have very similar prevention and treatment programs. Genetic testing for risk of heart disease can provide data for an individualized risk assessment, analysis and treatment program.

A common genetic test for heart disease risk uses 8 individual genetic markers to determine predisposition to several components of heart disease including: stroke, heart attack, increased cholesterol, coronary artery disease, thrombosis caused by Plavix treatment, drug metabolism rate, effect of statins and aspirin on lowering risk of heart disease, and increased risk of negative side effects caused by statin drug therapy. One of the most interesting parts of the test results is risk rates in percentages (25%, 50%, 75%, etc.). This means two separate individuals may have the same family history of heart disease but their individual genetic make-up puts one person at a 25% increased risk of heart disease and the other at a 75% increased risk. The test may also determine if the first individual with a lower risk may benefit from statin drug therapy, but the higher risk individual may have no benefit from the same therapy. Genetic testing for heart disease is a precise means to navigate individual therapies.

These genetic tests are easily performed and are cost effective. The test is a simple swab of the inner cheek that is then sent to a specialized lab for analysis. The cost of the test is often covered by insurance, including Medicare, and is approximately \$80. For the simplicity and cost of the test, the outcome and potential to change treatments and stress factors surrounding heart disease, is more than recovered. With results, natural treatment options, more precise dietary recommendations, and alterations in drug therapy can be implemented for a more positive and personalized treatment approach to heart disease.

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

Valley Chosen as Model for Improving Health Clinton Health Matters Initiative Starts Here

Answering the call for a healthier America, the Clinton Foundation launched the Clinton Health Matters Initiative aimed at improving the well-being of our nation's population and reducing health care costs associated with preventable disease. And they are doing it one community and one person, at a time.

The Coachella Valley is one of the first two regions, along with Little Rock, Arkansas, selected to serve as a model for how systematic change can advance community health. The Initiative will activate individuals, engage the private sector, and bring community groups together to create goals and implement change.

"President Clinton chose this region because he saw the need, along with so many great resources already in place," says Tricia Gehrlein, Regional Director of the Clinton Health Matters Initiative. "We have strong support from local leaders and community groups who are moving toward the same goals. Our community is ready." Gehrlein is a 24 year local who worked at Desert Regional Medical Center and the Desert Healthcare District before joining the Foundation. "I am the facilitator to bring people together and help programs move forward with additional resources."

The community determines the work to be done. In December, 140 local leaders gathered to come up with a total of 45 goals to serve as the Valley's blueprint for action. These goals will be launched in January 2013.

Working at national, regional and individual levels, the Initiative is asking corporations, community groups and individuals, to "make a pledge" for health improvement. "A pledge for health that is sustainable, replicable and measurable," says Gehrlein. "The idea is to create a program that can be replicated in other communities."

Nationally, large corporations are being asked to work together to voluntarily change business practices for better health. One example of the Foundation's success is how the Alliance for a Healthier Generation worked with Coca-Cola, Pepsi Co. and Dr. Pepper to reduce sugary sweetened beverages in schools, leading to a 90% reduction nationwide.

The Initiative's national partners such as GE and Verizon, will leverage their resources to accomplish regional goals. An initiative in the works with Verizon is to help resolve a local communication challenge. Gehrlein met with the valley's local health information managers and identified that one of their greatest challenges is connectivity in the East Valley. "If it rains, phones and internet don't work well due to older equipment in those communities, a serious detriment to hospitals and medical staff." So Verizon is looking into how they can contribute in-kind services to improve communication.

Individuals can take part through the Health Matters Initiative website, where examples of successful health pledges from throughout the country are visible. "It can be as simple as starting a walking group – or generating neighborhood programs in an underutilized park." All pledges are reviewed by the Foundation's headquarters, and Gehrlein is here to help locally.

As the first region to launch the Initiative, the Coachella Valley is setting the tone and our successes will be duplicated in other communities. Individuals, groups, companies and employers are encouraged to make a pledge to support local goals and work together to improve the health of our community. Gehrlein adds, "President Clinton didn't just give us the opportunity; he is giving us the ability and the tools to make real change."

For more information or to make a pledge, visit www.ClintonHealthMatters.org or contact Tricia Gehrlein at tgehrlein@clintonfoundation.org (760) 861-3687.

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Be The Change You Seek

By Marley Benshalom, COD Student & Desert Health Intern

As a student at College of The Desert, I notice a lack of healthy food on campus. It is a struggle to find healthy food that will support my mind and body throughout ten-hour school days. After speaking with students and administration, I realized that I was not alone in wanting healthier food choices on campus. Many people have a problem eating at the school café, and often just avoid it all together. Inspiration to change our food options at COD came from learning about The Healthy Life Challenge taking place in schools throughout the Coachella Valley. College is a place of higher education where people take time to expand their knowledge. It should also be place that represents healthy lifestyle choices.

I decided to initiate change by taking action. First, I appealed to friends at school to help with this issue. We surveyed the campus, and found direction through the student services. We sat down as a group and came up with some workable solutions. Our ideas were presented to the café owner during the college food service meeting. Much to our surprise, everything we proposed was well received and accepted. The administration and faculty were excited to see students creating change rather than complaining. We also engaged members of our student body council who attended the meeting to create a feedback box for the café.

Next, we identified two healthy dishes for the café to implement immediately and several healthy snacks for next semester. A few of our group members gave out samples of the new items in their classes. We created coupons and flyers that we passed out around campus, and spent the rest of the semester talking about the changes. I also promoted the new café items through speeches as different class projects.

We are delighted to now see healthier choices offered at the café and feel confident that this will increase their business. Mimi Lee, the owner of the café, looks forward to our help next semester to continue reinventing menu options.

As students, we have very hectic lives, and it is very fulfilling to know that we are creating change that benefits all students.

Like every school, there are many challenges on our campus. I always hear complaints and hardly ever hear solution-oriented conversation. Students can be part of the solution. A great way to start is to gather your closest friends and create a team for change. The change starts now. Today school cafes, and tomorrow, childhood obesity.

As President Barak Obama once said, “Change will not come if we wait for some other person, or if we wait for some other time. We are the ones we’ve been waiting for. We are the change that we seek.” I agree that if each person took on one issue, the world would have far less problems. Living healthy is a choice that has a huge impact every day. Schools are the first place we learn about the choices we have in life. Schools should be the first place we learn how to create a healthy lifestyle.



Students who pull together can create change



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Senior students in Cathedral City High School’s HEAL program have been putting their academic and career-technical skills to good use this year, providing significant medical support for their school. As 11th graders, HEAL students completed ROP Medical Terminology and First Responder courses, as well as CPR/AED & First Aid certifications and had the privilege of training with the Cathedral City Fire Department in Teen CERT (Community Emergency Response Team). Now as 12th graders they are able to use their knowledge and training in a very real way.

The Great Shake-Out Drill on October 18, 2012 at Cathedral City High School was more than the standard “drop & cover/evacuate. There were full moulage victims with very real mock injuries. There was plenty of fake blood and impaled objects for the HEAL Seniors to triage and treat. The 67 HEAL seniors formed the campus First Aid team, under the supervision of medically trained HEAL counselor and teachers, and school nurses, who were careful to limit their role so these enthusiastic students could take full responsibility.

Students used their CERT training to form triage, treatment and transport teams, with appropriate communication protocols. They used their first aid and CERT training to determine the status of each victim, treat their injuries and monitor their status throughout the drill.



Much credit goes to the HEAL students, who faced their fears and put their knowledge and skills to work. Many thanks goes to the wonderful industry and education partners who made it possible for HEAL students to do this work. This effective use of real-life skills never would have happened without the hands-on training and interactions with professionals who took student learning to the next level. These young people can now serve as responsible members of our community, ready to take action and to help save lives.



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Golf Injuries: Why They Happen And How to Fix Them

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

Golf is a billion dollar industry. It is the fastest growing sport with very expensive equipment. The average golfer will practice or play 4 days a week, and spend several hours watching golf shows, videos and reading books to hit the ball a few extra yards. To further enhance their play, golfers spend \$1500-\$2500 annually on clubs, irons, putters, shoes, balls and related golf accessories.

Yet the most important playing tool—a golfer's body—goes largely ignored. Let's face it—if you can't rotate your torso, manage your swing plane or bend over without losing your balance, all of the equipment, lessons, books and videos are not going to help. It was just a few years ago that we heard about golfers hitting the gyms, getting massages and embracing yoga to become more flexible. Most pro golfers now have a fitness trainer who designs a workout program specifically for that individual.

Even with this heightened awareness of fitness, over time the body breaks down, and injuries will follow. Golf is a repetitious game, and many of the injuries that I see are overuse or trauma related. In this article we are discussing the most common golf injuries and then how to treat them.

Let's first look at the address position. Most golfers in my practice bend from the lower back and not from their hips. This is usually a result of poor posture and bad habits developed over time (since most of us have desk jobs). Sometimes golfers are so tight in the hips that they have developed a poor movement pattern because their lower back is weak. Back injuries are number one on the list. If you aren't bending correctly then you cannot rotate properly which in turn will cause the body to slide or do a reverse pivot and may lead to back problems.

THE FIX: An effective exercise is to place a 7 iron behind your back and place it on your spine, then as you bend forward don't allow the iron to leave your spine. Also think about bending at the hips by pushing your bottom out and away from you.

The next phase is the backswing. Most people who can't address the ball with good posture will tend to come out of their swing plane in order to get the club back far enough behind them. With reduced range of motion in the shoulders and hips, the golfer will then slide or do a reverse pivot because they can't rotate.

THE FIX: Stretching the hips, neck, shoulders and spine regularly is important. If you don't know where to start find a good golf instructor for your swing and a

neuromuscular therapist who can work on your body.

The next phase is impact between golf club and ball. The wrist and elbow are usually involved in the impact motion. Early extension, leading with the arms and sliding can all occur, resulting in overuse of the wrist and elbows. Tendonitis (golfer's elbow), tenosynovitis (usually involving the tendon sheath of the thumb) and sprains to the wrist (ligament damage) are common symptoms of overuse.

THE FIX: Prevention of these injuries means working on your swing plane, flexibility and strengthening of the grip. Treatment involves working with a physical therapist or practitioner who understands golf biomechanics.



Mike Butler works with a client to improve golf swing posture and avoid lower back injuries

Follow through or "finish" is the last phase of motion. Your finish is the result of your backswing. It mirrors what you have previously done with your club or iron. Many people who don't finish to the target usually aren't rotating enough. They will get to a certain point, and because of physical limitations or technique, end up extending their spine backwards onto their back leg. This can result in a spinal condition called stenosis which is a narrowing of the spinal cord (common in golfers over 55). Inability to stand in one place and bend backwards or even having a tough time walking, are possible signs of stenosis. Other problems like the club finishing over the shoulder, flipping the club, or decelerating or stopping the swing, are indications of a physical issue usually involving the neck, back or hips.

THE FIX: Working on your flexibility and technique are crucial if you are experiencing these problems. If you feel tingling down your leg (sometimes referred to as sciatica), see your physician.

The bottom line—start taking better care of your body. If you are experiencing pain, either during or after golf, see your physician. If you are tight and can't rotate, or you can't complete rounds due to exhaustion, then it's time to see a good golf fitness professional. Think about getting regular massages or trying yoga or Pilates. These are just a few suggestions. Now that I have your attention, get back on course by treating your body as your best piece of expensive equipment. It will maximize your rewards on and off the course!

Please see your physician before starting any exercise program.

Michael K Butler B.A.;P.T.A.;CSCS*D;RSCC*D;NMT;PES is co-owner of Kinetix Health and Performance Center in Palm Desert. He holds many National Certifications with Distinction in the field of strength and conditioning, he is also a full body Active Release Practitioner and is a TPI and C.H.E.K golf biomechanic specialist. You can catch him on KXPS 1010 radio as he talks about fitness. He can be reached at 760-200-1719, or at Michael@kinetixcenter.com. You can also go to kinetixcenter.com for more info.



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Join the 2013 Healthy Lifestyle Challenge!

The Coachella Valley Health Collaborative kicks off its 2013 Healthy Lifestyle Challenge in January. Nearly 2,000 Coachella Valley residents participated in the collaborative's 2012 Challenge recording more than 500 million steps (or 242,000 miles!). Participation doubled from the year before and is expected to increase significantly in the Challenge's third year.

Geared toward local organizations, businesses and residents, the Challenge is a community call-to-action around living a healthier lifestyle. The Challenge was developed to help improve the health of Coachella Valley residents by promoting physical fitness and exercise.

The collaborative's interactive website records an individual's activity and converts it into steps on interactive maps. Individuals can see their progress and how they match up against others participating in the various challenges. Individuals can challenge themselves or friends and colleagues by walking, running, swimming, hiking, biking and even shopping!

The 2012 Challenge saw 125 organizations, including valley cities and companies (from 2 employees to thousands) compete for internal prizes, as well as the Collaborative's "Best of the Best" award. A panel nominated by the Collaborative considers all programs submitted for this special award and elects the most successful campaign based on meeting objectives and producing results. "Best of the Best" will once again be presented in October 2013.

Sponsored by the Desert Oasis Healthcare, the website is free for all and designed to motivate people to improve their health by becoming more active. Challengers can track their progress online, communicate with other participants online, and receive weekly motivating reminders and health tips.

Whether you are an HR manager, a group leader, a family member or an individual motivated to improve your health, all Coachella Valley residents are encouraged to "create a challenge" and participate in this free program.

All are also welcome to attend the kick-off breakfast being held Wednesday, January 9 from 7:30a – 9:30a at the Annenberg Center for Health Sciences at Eisenhower Medical Center. To RSVP for the breakfast, please contact Regina Garrison at the Collaborative (760) 341-2883 x78144.

The mission of the Coachella Valley Collaborative is to provide a meaningful forum for individuals, agencies, and organizations to improve the health and well-being of residents of eastern Riverside County. Serving diverse communities of the Coachella Valley through education and public advocacy, the Coachella Valley Health Collaborative is a catalyst to improve the health status of all residents and their accessibility to quality, state-of-the-art health care. A major goal is to improve health by increasing community collaboration and decreasing duplication and fragmentation of services.

The collaborative is supported by grants from the Desert Healthcare District, Desert Oasis Healthcare, Regional Access Project Foundation and Kaiser Permanente. The Cal State San Bernardino Palm Desert Campus provides professional oversight, financial services, office space and other services.

To register for the challenge, visit www.mywellsite.com/cvhc. For more information about the Coachella Valley Health Collaborative, contact Gary Jeandron, Project Director, at (760) 341-2883, ext. 78163, e-mail gjeandro@csusb.edu.



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Fitness – Age Is No Excuse!

By Lew Bronstein CFT, CPLC, FPC

In our 20's and 30's, health and fitness are a priority. As we get into our 50's, it often becomes less of a priority. This is a major issue facing society today. Healthy lifestyle and fitness is crucial to maintaining muscular and skeletal systems. Staying fit has been shown to prevent many of today's chronic conditions including diabetes, arterial sclerosis, osteoporosis, and joint and back injuries according to numerous studies by the Mayo and Cleveland Clinics.

So what is stopping most people from taking an active role in their fitness after 50? Factors such as long work hours, raising children, family issues and economic changes, are often reasons for putting fitness on the back burner.

Let's take a look at some of the most common excuses:

"I don't have enough time to exercise." This is the number one excuse and one of the easiest to discredit. Instead of sitting on your lunch break consuming fast foods, prepare a healthy lunch and bring it from home. Take a walk for half of your break and then reward yourself with your home made meal.

The average American watches more than 4 hours of TV each day. Why not give up just one of those hours for a little workout? We all have an equal amount of time. A second, a minute and an hour are the same no matter where you live, what job or business you have, or what age you are. It is how you manage your time that makes the difference.

"It is too late for me to begin exercising now." Research has shown that strengthening exercises are both safe and effective for men and women of all ages, including those not in perfect health. In fact, people with health concerns - including heart disease or arthritis—often benefit the most from an exercise program a few times each week. Regular cardio exercise is proven to help maintain cardio pulmonary health.

So where do you begin?

- Consult your doctor for a recommendation based on your current fitness level and be mindful of any limitations for specific issues.
- Consult a fitness trainer or other fitness professional to determine the best approach to meet your specific goals.
- Get moving! It is important to begin the process right away. Stop the excuses and begin your fitness program at a pace that works for you.
- Begin a fitness journal to track and monitor your progress. As you become stronger and your body adapts to your new routine, you will continue to build to the next fitness level.
- Find ways to make fitness fun. Is there a certain music that motivates you? A friend with whom you would like to exercise? A certain sport you would like to learn? Do you like exercising indoors, outdoors or a combination of both? Find what works for you and just do it!

Take this opportunity to build your body to support you through your golden years. A regular fitness routine will increase your energy and well being... and is the first step in living a long, healthy life!

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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Moving is Emotional, Especially for Seniors

By Will Andrews

Today has been a tough one, emotionally, for Ann, age 83. The earlier downsizing decisions involving baskets and plates have given way to a far more intense one – what to do with her grandmother's cedar chest. Ann's 57 year-old daughter, Wendy, patiently helps her navigate these murky emotional waters with as much care as possible, but it's still Ann's decision to make. Does she choose this piece of furniture or her favorite chair as one of the few select items for the move to her new home in the assisted living community?

Ann is not alone. Millions of seniors like her are facing the difficult task of moving into adult retirement communities, assisted living facilities, and skilled nursing homes every year. According to U.S. Census Bureau data released on December 12, 2012, the country's senior population, age 55+, will increase from 88.51 million in 2015 to 115.91 million by 2035, the latter figure representing 31.35 percent of the total U.S. projected population.

Successfully managing the moving of a senior takes patience and planning. Many of the "golden rules of moving" are necessary components for minimizing stress and maximizing productivity: sorting, organizing, disposing of unwanted items and thorough planning of the physical moving process. In moving seniors, many of these tasks can be challenging. Following are a few special considerations:

Be kind. When helping to sort and pack their things, keep in mind that their eyesight and an inability to do everything they used to do can result in poor housekeeping habits. Offer to clean as you pack and try not to criticize.

Plan the move. Allow enough time so no one feels rushed. Sorting through years of stuff is difficult and sometimes emotionally painful. Give them time to absorb the change.

Talk and start with small tasks. Take a day to talk about the move and everyone's

expectations. Give seniors small tasks such as going through a desk drawer or a box from the attic. Ask them to spend only 15 to 20 minutes a day on one task. Let them decide what they'd like to do. Taking small steps will help your loved ones get used to the idea of moving.

Consider the sentimental value. Considering the emotional attachment a senior adult may have to their home, choose a room with less sentimental value to begin the sorting and organizing process, such as the garage or laundry room. This approach can serve to ease some of the senior's moving stress as they begin their transition.

Hire outside help. Sometimes it's easier for seniors to work with an outside party rather than family members. There are many companies who specialize in moving seniors, offering comfort to senior and their family.

"People often underestimate the emotional expense incurred while moving senior family members or friends," says Scott McClure, Regional Director, New Horizons Senior Move Management. "Freeing up families to address life-sizing issues such as heirloom distribution and home sales, instead of packing boxes, clearing closets, estate sale planning, and coordinating furniture moves, can make a big difference during delicate housing transitions."

Moving, especially later in life, can cause significant emotional and physical stress on the mind and body. Thorough planning and patience by family and friends can create a successful prescription for a senior move.

For more information on moving seniors, see 10 Tips to Help Older Adults Move By Diane Schmidt for About.com (http://moving.about.com/od/movingwithchildren/a/senior_tips.htm). For assistance with moving, contact New Horizons Senior Move Management at 888.435.3156.



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Power of Attorney Can Bring Peace of Mind

By Jeanette Jacobson

Knowing that you will be taken care of in the event that you aren't able to make daily decisions for yourself can help bring peace of mind as you grow older. While it is difficult to imagine being in that position, it is important to prepare by having a "power of attorney" document in place – just in case.

Power of attorney (POA) is a fundamental document to help guide the smooth running of your daily affairs in case you are unable to do so. It is especially important for aging and elderly individuals to assign an "agent" to act on their behalf via a POA. It's an important part of any good financial plan.

A power of attorney (POA) is a legal document that gives your appointed person the power to perform certain functions on your behalf. Giving your authority to someone gives that individual the power to make legally binding decisions on your behalf, so this person must be chosen carefully.

- There are five types of POA's.
- **General Power of Attorney** authorizes your agent to act on your behalf in a variety of different situations.
 - **Special Power of Attorney** authorizes your agent to act on your behalf in specific situations only.
 - **Health Care Power of Attorney** allows your selected person to make health care decisions for you.
 - **Durable Power of Attorney** enables the general, special and health care powers of attorney to be made "durable" (meaning a legal document which lasts a long period of time) - just by adding certain wording.
 - **Revocation of Power of Attorney** allows you to cancel a power of attorney document at any time.

Health Care Power of Attorney will allow the person to whom you give permission the authority to make health care decisions on your behalf if you are unconscious, mentally incompetent, or just unable to make such decisions. A Health Care Power of Attorney is different from a Living Will because it allows you to pick someone to make health care decisions for you. A Living Will only enables you to voice your wishes concerning life-sustaining procedures.

Durable Power of Attorney is really just a general, special or health care power of attorney that has special durability requirements. If you become mentally incapable while you have a power of attorney document that's already in effect, a durability provision will allow the document to stay in effect.

There is always the possibility that the person you pick to be your agent or power of attorney will not be able or want to do it, so it is good to have a backup person, or successor agent, in mind.

A power of attorney must be signed by the person granting the permission. At the time of the signing, you must be mentally able in order to make the document



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legally binding. If there is any question about your mental capability, a doctor may be asked to certify in writing that you understand the document and the consequences of signing the document. The signature on a power of attorney should also be notarized. Notarization makes it harder for someone to challenge the validity of the signatures. It also allows the document to be "recorded" for use with real estate transactions.

Power of attorney documents clearly define who is in charge should something happen to you and/or your ability to make sound decisions. It acts as a roadmap with your best interests in mind, and will help avoid pitfalls.

Power of attorney documents can be completed and notarized by an attorney or a certified Paralegal. However, you can also obtain documents which you can complete yourself via the internet at legal websites.

A power of attorney is important for you, your family and your friends. It helps ensure that you and your daily affairs are taken care of regardless of life circumstances, and provides peace of mind for you and your loved ones.

Jeanette Jacobson is a Paralegal working with ElderCaring in La Quinta. ElderCaring can be reached at 760.333.0427. More information on Power of Attorney can be found at the State of California Franchise Tax website at <https://www.ftb.ca.gov/law/poa/index.shtml#G1>.

Sources: 1) <http://www.healthcare-information-guide.com/power-of-attorney.html>; 2) <https://www.ftb.ca.gov/law/poa/index.shtml#G1>; 3) <http://www.legalhelpmate.com/power-of-attorney-info-list1.aspx>; 4) http://www.rtl.org/action_center/pdfs/DPOA.pdf



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Family Caregivers Need Care Too

By Dorcas Greene, MEd & Stacy Hennis, PT, C/NDT

Are you one of the 65 million family caregivers in the United States? A recent study released by Elissa S. Epel, Dept of Psychiatry at the University of California reports that this often stressful situation can take up to 10 years off a caretaker's life.

Let me tell you about Jack, age 72. Jack and his wife found their dream retirement home nearly three years ago. Once an avid golfer, Jack became a full time caregiver when his wife Susan, age 68, suffered a massive stroke (Male caregivers represent 40% of family caregivers). He does the grocery shopping, picks up medicine, and drives his wife to doctor's appointments. He does laundry, prepares meals and manages his wife's lift and other mobility devices. While his golf clubs lie idle, Jack becomes more isolated from friends, his blood pressure elevates, and exhaustion and frustration build leaving him feeling guilty and depressed. Jack is in danger of becoming a patient himself.

If you are a family caregiver, it is important to remember that you need to look after yourself in order to care for the one you love. Remember, your loved one wants that for you as well. Reach out for help and support, as you can't do this alone. Asking for help is a sign of strength, not weakness.

How can you take control of your own health and still care for a spouse, parent, sibling, or child? By being proactive in all stages of your caregiving situation, you can learn how to relieve stress daily.

Here are a few hints to help with managing daily stress:

- Keep that medical appointment you keep canceling because it frequently seems to conflict with your relative's needs.
- Reach out to professionals qualified to assist you as a caregiver.

- Attend a caregiver support group at a local senior center or community resource center.
- Get help online through the National Family Caregiver Association and the National Institutes of Health.
- Exercise at least 20 minutes a day.
- Keep your back healthy. Many family caregivers do a lot of lifting, moving, pushing. If you aren't sure how to protect your back, ask your doctor to refer you to a physical therapist.
- Eat as many vegetables and healthy whole foods as you can. The proper nutrition goes a long way.
- Educate yourself about your loved one's condition. Knowledge is power.

There are many free local support groups in the Coachella Valley including:

Rancho Mirage: Support Group for Stroke Survivor Family Caregivers: 1st& 3rd Wednesday of each month, 10-11 AM, Country Villa Rancho Mirage Health Care Center.

Palm Springs: Support Group for Stroke Survivor Family Caregivers: 2nd& 4th

Wednesday, 10:30-11:30 AM, Stroke Recovery Center

Parkinson's Support Group Tuesdays, 1:30-2:30, Eisenhower Medical Campus.

Dorcas Greene, Collaborative Coaching USA, has been a family caregiver for over 40 years. Her passion is ensuring that other family caregivers maintain their sanity and health. Stacy Hennis, New Beginning Physical Therapy, specializes in treating adults with chronic medical conditions. These conditions affect the family, not just the patient. To reach Dorcas, please call 760-301-5247 or online at DorcasGreeneCoach.com. To reach Stacy, please call 760-218-9961 or online at NewBeginningPT.com



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Join Desert Health® at These Upcoming Events!

January 12 Humana Well Being Walk & Healthy Fun Fair
5-3/4 mile walk along the Bear Creek Trail ending in celebration to include live music, kid's fun zone, healthy foods and over 40 health related community organizations. Walk Registration 7-8a, Walk from 8a-10a and Fair 9a-1p. La Quinta Community Park. FREE. (760) 777.7090. www.PlayInLaQuinta.com

January 13 Humana Day at the Certified Farmers Market
This Sunday market in La Quinta will feature fresh fruits, vegetables, breads, flowers, and more, along with slow food demonstrations by 4 of the hottest chefs in La Quinta. 8a-12p. FREE. (760) 777.7090. www.PlayInLaQuinta.com

Jan. 14 – 20 Humana Challenge
Mon: Couple's Challenge Pro-Am. Tues: Practice Rounds. Wed–Sun.: PGA Tour play on all 3 courses starting at 8:30a in La Quinta. For tickets call (760) 346.8184. www.HumanaChallenge.com

February 5 Indio Senior Center Health Fair
Resources and exhibits on health and wellness with raffle prizes given away every fifteen minutes. 8:30a-12:30p. Admission & raffle tickets FREE. (760) 772.3869. www.Indio.org

February 8 6th Annual Go Red For Women Luncheon
At The Westin Mission Hills Resort & Spa in Rancho Mirage. Help raise funds for Go Red For Women and enjoy a delicious lunch while learning about the risk of heart disease in women. 9a–2p. For tickets call (760) 346-8109

February 14 12th Annual Affair of the Heart
Heart health takes center stage on Valentine's Day at Desert Regional Medical Center's Stergios Building, Palm Springs. Educational lectures by physicians and screenings for blood pressure, glucose, and body fat (BMI). 10a–2p. FREE. (800) 491.4990

Feb. 23 – 24 2nd Annual Indian Wells Chamber Health and Wellness Series
"Healthy Families. Feeding the Dream" Saturday bring the entire family for an outdoor day of fun and education promoting healthy family lifestyles (Hwy 111 & Indian Wells Ln). Sunday attend the benefit dinner with guest speaker at the Miramonte Hotel. Weekend festivities benefit the JFK Healthy Family Foundation. Sat: FREE. Sun: Tickets \$100 (760) 346.7095. www.IndianWellsChamber.com

March 2 18th Annual Jim Cook Day of Hope for Diabetes
Presented by the Desert Diabetes Club. Celebrity and medical speakers come together to provide educational lectures and speaker panels. 40 + exhibitors with resources and information. Annenberg Center at Eisenhower Medical Center, Rancho Mirage. FREE. (760) 773.1578 www.emc.org/ddc

Living With Diabetes In a Positive Way at Day of Hope for Diabetes®

The 18th annual Jim Cook Day of Hope for Diabetes® will take place Saturday, March 2 at the Annenberg Center for Health Sciences, Eisenhower Medical Center in Rancho Mirage. This year's Day of Hope® theme is "Living with Diabetes in a Positive Way."

This free event is being presented by the Desert Diabetes Club as an educational tool to help persons with both Type 1 and Type 2 diabetes and their families better understand and manage the disease. There will be keynote speakers and 25 educational sessions by physicians, researchers, nutritionists and other experts covering diabetes treatment, pre-diabetes, new findings, diet, exercise, and long-term implications. Spanish-language programs will be offered.

Attendees will also be able to participate in an "Ask the Doctor" session where they can query physicians about their particular areas of concern.

This year's celebrity keynote speaker is Tony Award- and Emmy Award-winning actor, dancer and singer, Ben Vereen. The animated song-and-dance man won a Tony award for his role in the Broadway musical Pippin; was memorable as Chicken George in the TV miniseries Roots; and nabbed an Emmy for the TV special Ben Vereen...His Roots. As a person living with Type 2 diabetes, Vereen is working to bring much-needed attention to the growing diabetes epidemic and is "taking a stand" as a diabetes advocate and role model.

This year's medical keynote speaker is Jeremy Pettus, M.D., UCSD Department of Endocrinology, Taking Control of Your Diabetes

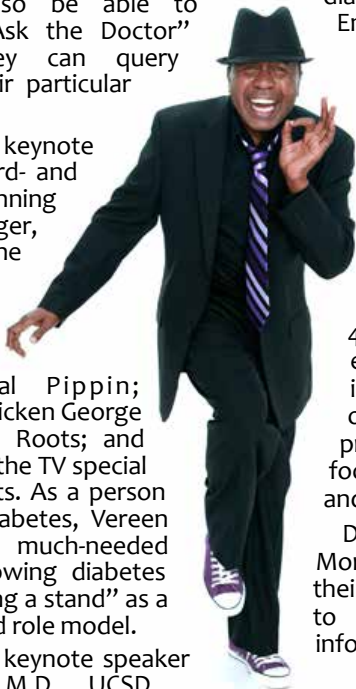
(TCOYD) Co-Director, and research scientist at the La Jolla Institute of Allergy and Immunology. Dr. Pettus was diagnosed with Type 1 diabetes at the age of 15, and since that time has dedicated his career toward educating and treating patients living with the disease. With the staff from TCOYD, Dr. Pettus has given talks across the country to both patients and health care providers. His messages focus on empowering patients to take control of their disease, and in doing so, live happy and healthy lives.

This year's medical guest speaker from San Diego will be William H. Polonsky, PhD, CDE, and CEO and Founder of the Behavioral Diabetes Institute, the world's first organization wholly dedicated to studying and addressing the unmet psychological needs of people with diabetes. His topic will be The Emotional Side of Diabetes.

Platinum Sponsor of Day of Hope® is the City of Rancho Mirage and this year's event honors Mayors Pro Tem Gordon Moller and Ron Meepos, both of whom lost their lives within the past two years due to complications of diabetes.

The event will also feature 45 companies presenting education, products and information. Testing will be offered for glucose levels, eye pressure, stroke risk assessment, foot circulation, blood pressure and others.

Don't miss this FREE event! More than 1,000 diabetics and their family members are expected to attend to learn the latest information on controlling the disease. For more information visit emc.org/ddc or call 760.773.1578.



Ben Vereen

Desert Diabetes Club Presents the 18th Annual



Saturday, March 2, 2013
8 a.m. to 3 p.m.
Annenberg Center for Health Sciences at Eisenhower Medical Center

39000 Bob Hope Drive, Rancho Mirage
Keynote Celebrity and Medical Speakers



Ben Vereen
Tony Award and Emmy Award-winning actor, dancer and singer. Living with Type 2 diabetes and an advocate and role model.



Jeremy Hodson Pettus, MD
Endocrinologist
Taking Control of Your Diabetes
Co-Director, UCSD School of Medicine
Diagnosed with Type 1 diabetes at age 15

A full-day FREE event. 45 exhibitors & products.
Health screenings for all members.

Plus over 20 educational sessions by physicians, researchers, nutritionists and other health experts.

Spanish speaking lectures & exhibitors offered

Session Schedule

7:30 a.m. – 1 p.m.
Registration/Membership

8 a.m. – 3 p.m.
Exhibitor Health Fair

8 a.m. – NOON
Turn in your written questions for Ask the Doctor panel and prizes (2 p.m.)

8:30 – 8:45 a.m. INTRO
Welcome to the Jim Cook Day of Hope for Diabetes®

Melinda Read, Spokesperson

Chuck Fasilis, President
Desert Diabetes Club

Rodolfo Batarsé, MD
Spanish Program Director

9 – 9:45 a.m. SESSIONS
Denial, Obesity & Complication with Diabetes
Rodolfo Batarsé, MD, Nephrologist
Eisenhower Medical Center

What Medications are You Taking?
Ashish Patel, PharmD., Pharmacist
Walgreens Pharmacy

Diabetes Treatment and Programs (SPANISH)
Marielena Cid, RN, CDE, BSN,
Diabetes Educator, Eisenhower Medical Center

Love Your Feet!
Michael Seiberg, DPM, Podiatrist
Eisenhower Medical Center

Carb Friendly Meals & Snacks for People with Diabetes
Barbra Sassower, MPH, RD, CDE
Nutritional Services, Eisenhower Medical Center

10 a.m. – 10:45 SESSIONS
The Emotional Side of Diabetes
William Polonsky, MD, Clinical Psychologist
Behavioral Diabetes Institute, San Diego

Diabetes and Your Heart
Phillip Patel, MD, Cardiologist
Desert Cardiology Center

Denial, Obesity & Complication (SPANISH)
Rodolfo Batarsé, MD, Nephrologist
Eisenhower Medical Center

New Ways of Eye Treatment
Camille Harrison, MD, Retina Specialist
Retina Institute of California

Burst Exercise for Diabetes
Mark J. Smith, PhD, Applied Physiologist
Spa and Sports Center, Mission Hills Country Club

11 – 11:45 a.m. CELEBRITY KEYNOTE SPEAKER
Living With Diabetes, Ben Vereen

NOON – 1 p.m. LUNCH BREAK
Exhibitor Health Fair Open

NOON – 12:20 p.m.
Chair Exercise
Lisa Manning, CET , Certified Exercise Therapist

Continuous Glucose Monitoring
K. Douglas Thasher, DO
Family Medicine, Eisenhower George & Julia Argyros Health Center

12:30 – 12:50 p.m.
Tailoring Fitness for Type 1 and 2 Diabetes
Sharla Jensen, Fitness Instructor
Eisenhower Renker Wellness Center

Latest Blood Testing Monitors
K. Douglas Thasher, DO

1 – 1:45 p.m. MEDICAL KEYNOTE SPEAKER
The Power of Insulin (Recent Advances for Type 1 & 2 Diabetes)
Jeremy Hodson Pettus, MD

2 p.m. – 3 p.m. ASK THE DOCTOR PANEL
Prizes awarded at these sessions!

Rodolfo Batarsé, MD, Nephrologist

William Polonsky, MD, Clinical Psychologist

Jeremy Pettus, MD, Endocrinologist

Brigid Boland, MD, Gastroenterologist

Ashish Patel, PharmD., Pharmacist

Phillip Patel, MD, Cardiologist

For more information, please call 760-773-1578 or visit emc.org/ddc



More than golf.
A Challenge to live life well.



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.



HumanaChallenge.com



Official Event

Host City
La Quinta

Healthy Fun at The Humana Challenge!

The 2013 Humana Challenge in partnership with the Clinton Foundation will take place January 12-20 with a week of festivities and a continued focus on health and well-being. This year's event will be even bigger and better, living up to their title of Sports Event of the Year for 2012 by the Sports Business Journal and the Sports Business Daily.

Described as a "week of well-being with a side of world-class golf," activities begin on Saturday, January 12 with The Humana Well Being Walk & Healthy Fun Fair. Humana Day at the Certified Farmer's Market in La Quinta takes place on Sunday and both events are free and open to the public.

To further encourage active participation, Humana's Walk It pedometer program will return. Last year, community members and tournament attendees walked almost 100 million steps resulting in \$2 million donated to local charities by the Humana Foundation.

Tournament play takes place Monday, January 14 through Sunday, January 20. Bob Marra, Executive Director and CEO of the Humana Challenge, stresses the importance of getting people involved. New this year are theme days throughout the tournament: Thursday (17th) will be **Senior's Day**, and Friday (18th) will be **KMIR6/KPSE MY13 Women's Day**. **Humana Military Day** on Saturday (19th) offers complimentary tournament admission tickets for all active duty, reserve and military retirees, along with their dependents. Sunday (20th) will be the **Barbara Sinatra Kid's Day presented by Raymond James Palm Desert**. There will be activities and shows in Bob Hope Square tied to each themed day. Also new this year, all military veterans will have access to free admission to the Humana Challenge every day.

Marra also stated there will be 156 players in the field this year, compared to 144 last year. The purse of \$5.6 million is the same as last year, with \$1,008,000 going to the winner. "We look forward to seeing Phil Mickelson, who is a two-time winner here, as well as Mark Wilson, last year's Humana Challenge winner and Brandt Snedeker, 2012 Fed EX Cup winner to name a few of the early player commitments."

This will be the second year for the Clinton Foundation's annual conference entitled Health Matters: Activating Wellness In Every Generation where national and local leaders will convene to discuss ways through which individuals, communities and corporations can make meaningful contributions to the health of others. The conference takes place January 14 and 15 and launches the Clinton Foundation's Health Matters Initiative as the Coachella Valley is one of two communities (along with Little Rock, AK) selected as a model for how systematic change can be implemented to improve the health of a community (see more on the Initiative on page 16).

Desert Health® is proud to once again be a part of the Humana Challenge. We invite you to visit our expanded "Showcase of Local Health & Wellness" in Bob Hope Square and participate in the many free activities offered, including BMI measurements, massage, blood pressure tests, balance tests and spinal decompression evaluations to name a few.

Join in the fun! We look forward to seeing you at this year's Humana Challenge.

For tickets and more information, visit www.HumanaChallenge.com or call 888-672-4673.



Visit our pavilion in Bob Hope Square
at the Humana Challenge!

Balance Tests Cathedral City 760.202.0368 Indio 760.347.6195	\$75 Gift Certificates Indian Wells 760.346.9354	B-12 Shots La Quinta 760.771.5970
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Natural Arthritic Joint/Pain Cream Samples Palm Desert • La Quinta 206.850.0180	And Register to win \$50 towards any product or service in Desert Health! Services offered are based on practitioner availability throughout the event.	Body Composition Analysis and BMI Measurement Palm Desert 760.217.6169

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WEAR RED FOR LADIES' DAY OUT!

Join the American Heart Association on Friday, February 8 for the 6th Annual Go Red For Women Luncheon at the Westin Mission Hills Resort & Spa in Rancho Mirage.

This year's Luncheon features health expos, educational sessions, a "red handbag" silent auction, and a special fashion show by our local Palm Desert Macy's featuring some of our very own local survivors.



In its six year history, the Coachella Valley Go Red for Women Luncheon has generated over \$800,000 for the local chapter providing funding for much needed research on women's heart health. Go Red For Women is the American Heart Association's national campaign dedicated to uncovering the truth about women and heart disease.

More women die of heart disease than all forms of cancer combined. Unfortunately, this killer is often silent, hidden and misunderstood. But the statistics are very clear: one in three women will succumb to heart disease.

Now is your opportunity to help - and to have a little fun - at this ladies day out! Tickets to the Go Red For Women Luncheon are \$125 by January 18, 2013 and \$150 after January 18. So get your tickets today!

On the day of the event, registration begins at 9:00am and the educational sessions begin at 9:30am. A select physician from Desert Regional Medical Center will be speaking on heart health, and a heart healthy lunch will be served at noon.

Attendees are encouraged to wear red in support of the American Heart Association's Go Red For Women campaign.

For more information, visit www.cvgoredluncheon.org or contact Kristi Narmore at 760-346-8109 or kristi.narmore@heart.org.

MAKE IT YOUR MISSION
TO FIGHT HEART DISEASE IN WOMEN

Heart disease is still the No. 1 killer of women, taking the life of 1 in 3 women each year.

Give the women you care about the power to save their lives at GoRedForWomen.org.

Coachella Valley Go Red For Women Luncheon
Friday, February 8, 2013
Westin Mission Hills Resort & Spa
FOR MORE INFO, CALL 760-346-8109 OR VISIT WWW.CVGOREDLUNCHEON.ORG

Go Red for women
American Heart Association

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MARK YOUR CALENDAR

"Feeding the Dream," a Wellness Event for the Whole Family

The Indian Wells Chamber of Commerce cordially invites you to attend "Feeding the Dream," an exciting health and wellness event designed to benefit the Healthy Family Foundation.

"Feeding the Dream" is composed of two events: a fun-filled health fair for the whole family and a formal dinner. The health fair will be held on Saturday, February 23, 2013 on the grassy lawn between the Miramonte Resort and the Indian Wells Resort (located on Highway 111 and Indian Wells Lane). The free event will include fun for the entire family between 10 am and 4 pm. Over 40 local businesses will have booths at the event, providing education, prize giveaways, and fun activities. A stage will host a wide variety of entertainment, including cooking competitions, Zumba fitness classes, chef demonstrations, hula hooping contests, and more. The event will also feature a beer garden and a "Taste of the Desert" tent where visitors can sample local fare from a variety of restaurants.

The formal dinner will be held the following evening on Sunday, February 24 at the Miramonte Hotel. The evening will feature a four-course meal and a noted guest speaker. Advance tickets are \$85 if purchased before January 18, 2013, so be sure to RSVP early (after January 18, tickets will be \$100 per person).

"Feeding the Dream" focuses on creating healthy families through improved nutrition and exercise, and event proceeds will benefit the Healthy Family Foundation, a division of the JFK Memorial Foundation. The Healthy Family Foundation is dedicated to enhancing the physical, emotional, and intellectual health and wellness of Coachella Valley children and families. Learn more about the Healthy Family Foundation and their amazing work by visiting them on the web at www.jfkfoundation.org.

The event is part of the Indian Wells Chamber of Commerce Health and Wellness Series created to increase local knowledge of health and wellness resources, build healthier communities, and benefit a select local non-profit. Last year, the event focused on prostate cancer education, and benefited Gilda's Club Desert Cities, which strives to ensure that all people impacted by cancer are empowered by knowledge, strengthened by action, and sustained by community.

If you'd like to know more about the event, visit us online at www.indianwellschamber.com or on Facebook at www.facebook.com/IWchamber. Additionally, sponsorships and booths are still available. If you or your organization is interested in participating in the event, please contact Mike Avila at the Indian Wells Chamber of Commerce at 760-346-7095.



ANNUAL HEALTH & WELLNESS SERIES
INDIAN WELLS CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

2nd Annual Indian Wells Health & Wellness Event

Feeding the Dream
Benefitting: **Healthy Family Foundation**
a division of the JFK Memorial Foundation

Family Fun Free to All **Fundraiser Dinner Event**

February 23, 2013
10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Indian Wells Resort Hotel
(Grassy Area Adjacent to Tennis Courts)

"Chef's Throwdown"
featuring celebrity, executive and valley school chefs

Vendor booths featuring demonstrations, music and activities for all ages.

Beer Garden
by Stone Brewery

Lemonade Stand

February 24, 2013

Miramonte Resort and Spa
Special Guest Speaker (TBA)

Ticket Prices:
\$85 before January 18, 2013
\$100 after and at the door.

SPONSORS



Vendor booths, tickets and sponsorships available the Indian Wells Chamber Office. 760.346.7095 or at www.IndianWellsChamber.com



Health is a Choice

Continued from page 1

Patti grew up in Cincinnati and was raised on whole foods with everything cooked fresh and homemade. However, she adds, "When I met Maria and Linda, they ate an entirely different way, and it definitely had a positive influence on me. Processed foods were the new thing in the 60's and 70's and it was hard for them, but they stuck to it."

"Here we were living the dream traveling around the world, performing in exciting places but we had to go to bed early to ensure we got up for a healthy breakfast and maybe get some eggs for protein," says Linda. The all-day breakfast didn't exist, except in Vegas. "We took trail mix with us on the road. Of course, trail mix wasn't invented yet; we called it our 'nut mix' consisting of raw nuts and dried fruit. Linda and I bought fruit in the local supermarket and would heat up V-8 juice in our tea pot to make soup in our rooms because most restaurants didn't have foods we could eat," says Maria. When The Goldiggers troop went for a steakhouse dinner, the sisters would choose a big baked potato and a Caesar salad, a change from the bland iceberg lettuce salads that were the norm back then.

Why didn't they stray? "We had no desire for processed food or meat. It wasn't in our DNA, so to speak. Our habits were ingrained."

The sisters also worked out and showed Patti how weight training could improve her stamina and endurance for their busy performance schedule which included 37 weeks of touring a year. "I was 20 years old majoring in Musical Theater at the Conservatory of Music in Cincinnati. I tried out for the Goldiggers and within three weeks, I was on the stage performing with Dean Martin." It was a whirlwind and staying fit helped.

Patti and the sisters performed with Dean, Frank, and Bob Hope to name a few. Patti was with the troupe for 13 years while Maria and Linda stayed on with Dean for almost 20. The Goldigger's became a family and are all close friends today. (In fact, Maria introduced Patti to her husband, Dale Gribow, a local lawyer many readers may know).

That friendship was called upon recently when Patti decided it was time to get serious about her health. While she grew up on wholesome foods, the importance of eating healthy—as in most families – was taken for granted. "I just turned 60 and decided it is time to kick it up a notch." Her father's family produces cholesterol and her mother's side has high blood pressure and Patti is on medication for both. "I would like to see if I can reduce my medication through diet."



The Goldiggers reunite: Linda Eichberg (Alberici Sisters), Robyn Whatley-Kahn, Patti Pivarnik-Gribow, Marie Halton-Peck, Linda Snook-Peck, Maria Lauren (Alberici Sisters), and Joyce Garro

"Our parents were strict, but it kept us from straying and that became very important throughout our adult life – especially when we entered show business." The sisters reference a quote from their father, Albert Alberici, when interviewed by the The Vegetarian Health Review and Digest: "Children who rely on foods that are depleted of nourishment suffer in every way....but there are other elements just as important. The love of family. We are close-knit, warm, and affectionate. There is no generation gap. Our mealtime gatherings are festivals of joy."

Patti calls the Alberici Sisters for recipes and simple ideas to incorporate healthy lifestyle change. She has increased the quantity of vegetables she is eating and has significantly reduced her meat consumption. She has cut back on dairy, prepares a lot of fresh fish, and watches her salt intake. Patti is working with her cardiologist who oversees her progress with blood work scheduled every six months.



Maria and Linda are certified fitness trainers and lifestyle coaches

The lifelong friendship these women share is invaluable and their work together is part of our American history. Maria and Linda have even written a book about their experiences with the Rat Pack called "Beyond Our Wildest Dreams." (www.BeyondOurWildestDreams.com)

In the end, it all comes down to healthy choices. Maria and Linda agree that teaching your children the value of nutritious food and exercise is important and can lead to a lifetime of healthy choices. But as Patti will tell you, it's never too late to start. "My goal is to live longer. To spend time with my grandchildren (if I am so blessed), and to continue making healthier lifestyle choices along the way."

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Relax.



Succeeding at Weight Loss

By Lauren Del Sarto

With the New Year upon us, many have started their weight loss program with enthusiasm and full intention. Psychology Today reports that studies show while the first two weeks are usually encouraging, by February people start sliding back in to sedentary habits... and by the following December, most of us are back to where we started.

So what are the secrets to a successful weight loss plan? To answer that question, I sat down with Dr. Dan Olesnick of Executive Wellness in Indian Wells. He recommends creating an educated game plan, selecting a diet that works for your body and lifestyle, and having an ongoing weight maintenance plan to follow.

The first step is to make sure you are ready to commit. "We won't start anyone on a program who isn't ready. There is no quick fix and you must be willing to make serious lifestyle adjustments."

The next step is to establish an educated game plan that includes knowing where your body is metabolically. He adds that many people will feel ready to start a diet and will faithfully stick to it, but just can't seem to lose the weight. "If this is the case, chances are that something is out of whack hormonally. By correcting the hormonal imbalance, you can shed the weight by adhering to the diet."

Olesnick recommends running blood, hormone and genetic testing to help establish a baseline and determine what is happening with your body metabolically. Are you possibly insulin resistant? Is it hormone growth failure? Are you a man in andropause or a woman in perimenopause? Starting with accurate data will increase your success rate and help you to make choices more wisely. "It's nice to be able to tell patients who have failed at dieting that it's not their fault."

Next, determine the plan that will work for your body and lifestyle. I asked Olesnick his thoughts on all the new weight loss technology on the market. "There is no quick fix. The oldest technology - and still the best - is diet and exercise."

Selecting a diet that fits your lifestyle is the most important element. "We have a dozen different types of diets based on lifestyle and goals. If someone is a meat eater, we may recommend Atkins or Paleo. For fast food junkies, we encourage skipping the bun and french fries and opting for one of the healthier sides now offered." Your diet needs to be realistic for you. A simple first step is moving away from carbs and refined sugar, and towards proteins and low glycemic index foods such as berries.

With exercise, Olesnick says, don't forget the 'thermal advantage.' One of the best exercises for weight loss is swimming. In addition to the calories burned through exercise, your body is burning calories to maintain your body temperature. He notes that Michael Phelps consumes an average of 12,000 calories a day. And while he may expend 3,000 calories with the act of swimming, the large majority of those calories are expended maintaining his body temp in an 82 degree pool. "If you swim, reduce the temp of your pool slightly, and you may see weight loss more quickly."

Olesnick adds that the best use of the new technology on the market is to further sculpt the body once you get close to a desired weight. "We may use the ZERONA (cold laser) or EXILIS (radiofrequency heat) to assist in reshaping trouble spots on patients who are close to their desired weight as we find these technologies very effective for such use."

He recommends that while on a weight loss program, you check in with your doctor or health care practitioner at least once a week, preferably three, as motivation is very important.

Once you have achieved your desired weight (after a minimum of 12 weeks), maintenance is key. If you have chosen a diet that meets your lifestyle, hopefully that way of eating can become your new lifestyle. High quality foods and high quality supplements, even if it's only a daily multivitamin, will better meet your body's needs. "Processed foods are so nutritionally void of the nutrients your body is craving, it forces us to overeat. Spending the time and money to cook your own high quality food will save you from weight gain in the long run."

"Make sure you have a support group or system in place to help keep the 'new you' on track." A well thought out maintenance plan will ensure success tomorrow and in the many healthy years to follow.

Dr. Olesnick can be reached at Executive Wellness (760) 346-9354.



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NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTION: Put Your Finances in Order!

By Reesa Manning

If you're serious about pursuing your financial goals, first get your finances in order. Here are a few simple steps to keep you on track:



Get organized.

Make time to understand your basic financial facts—how much your net worth increased during the past year, how you are spending your income, or how well your investments have performed. Organizing your finances will assist in tracking this information.

Budget your expenditures.

Inefficient and wasted expenditures are often major obstacles to saving for financial goals. Analyzing your expenses will help you find ways to reduce spending and increase your savings.

Develop explicit written financial goals.

Goals help set our financial priorities and provide motivation for reducing spending and saving for the future. Quantify your ultimate goal and interim goals so your progress can be tracked.

Pay yourself first.

If you wait until the end of the month to see how much money is left over for saving, you'll probably find that the answer is nothing. Pay yourself first, and then find ways to reduce spending to pay the rest of your bills.

Establish an emergency cash reserve.

This will give you funds to deal with short-term emergencies such as a temporary job loss, a short-term disability, a major home repair, or a large medical bill. How much you need in the reserve will depend on your age, health, job outlook, and ability to borrow quickly.

Get your debt under control.

Take steps to reduce your consumer debt as much as possible—any interest payments are just reducing the amount available for saving. There are a variety of strategies you can use to either reduce your debt or lower the cost of that debt.

Invest automatically.

One of the best ways to invest consistently is to make investing automatic. Make arrangements to have a specific amount deducted from your checking or saving account periodically and transferred to an investment account. (Keep in mind that an automatic saving plan, such as dollar cost averaging, does not assure a profit or protect against loss in declining markets. Because such a strategy involves periodic investment, consider your financial ability and willingness to continue purchases through periods of low price levels.)

Develop an investment strategy.

Your strategy will depend on a variety of factors unique to your situation, including your risk tolerance, return expectations, investment period, and investment preferences. Developing an investment strategy requires evaluating many factors, but it can give you a well-thought-out strategy to help pursue your long-term goals.

Assess your insurance needs including life, health, disability, long-term care, homeowners, automobile, and personal liability.

Over time, your insurance needs are likely to change. Insurance companies offer innovations and riders that might be applicable to your situation. Reevaluating your insurance can lead to lower premiums with coverage better suited to your situation.

Take active steps to reduce your taxes.

Reduce your income taxes in order to free money for saving. Review income tax reduction strategies now, so you have time to implement them moving forward.

Review your estate plan.

If it's been a few years since you've reviewed your estate plan, take time to go over your documents to make sure they still reflect your wishes for your estate's disposition. If you don't have an estate plan, get one in place.

While many of these tips may sound familiar, it is the rare individual who takes advantage of all of them. The bottom line is whether you are still working or already retired, you need a sound financial plan—now more than ever—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





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It's That Time of Year!

A Look at Tax Preparation Options

By Nona S. Solowitz, CPA

Ready or not, it's time to start thinking about filing your 2012 taxes.

By choosing the best tax preparation option for your situation, you can prevent major headaches and stress on April 15th.

You have several options in filing your taxes. You can file taxes yourself, use a national tax preparation chain, or hire a licensed tax preparer like an Enrolled Agent (EA) or Certified Public Accountant (CPA).

The best choice for you depends on a number of factors, including the complexity of your financial situation, your filing status and whether you want to plan ahead for next year's taxes. Let's examine the options:

Do-It-Yourself Filing: Filing taxes yourself is a convenient option for those with very basic returns, such as filing as an individual with only one or two W2s. The IRS website offers links to a number of e-filing options for individuals (www.irs.gov).

You can also use tax preparation software, but these programs can be confusing with complicated tax jargon. If you're going to purchase tax software, it may be easier to invest in a personal tax preparer who can answer your questions, navigate tax laws and offer advice for your tax situation.

National Tax Preparation Chains: A national tax preparation chain will prepare your taxes and file them on your behalf for a fee. However, if your tax situation is complicated, be wary: Tax preparers for these national chains are only required to take a basic tax preparation training course. Given this consideration, your preparer may not have the intimate knowledge of tax law necessary to give advice for your particular tax situation. This option may be a good consideration for basic, uncomplicated returns.

Enrolled Agents (EAs): Enrolled agents are federally recognized tax preparers. To become an EA, one must either take a written exam based on tax matters or have


the required past experience with the IRS. EAs can work with a national tax preparation chain, a private tax preparation firm or be self-employed. If your return is complex but you don't need comprehensive services like asset protection or financial planning, an EA may fit your needs. Do your research as agents will have varying degrees of actual tax preparation experience.

Certified Public Accountants (CPAs): On any given day, a CPA's roles might include tax preparer, accountant, financial advisor, strategist and planner. CPAs are licensed by state and are usually required to have a bachelor's degree and work experience in public accounting, and must also meet ongoing education requirements. With knowledge in subjects like accounting, income tax, general business, economics, and business IT, CPAs are equipped to prepare individual and business taxes, address tax problems based on accounting issues and provide strategic advice for your financial situation.

If your tax return is complicated, or you have questions about planning ahead, or you want a year-round financial advisor, a CPA may be the best tax preparation solution for you. Their rigorous credentialing ensures CPAs are knowledgeable about the latest changes to tax laws, codes and regulations.

A good CPA doesn't disappear after April 15th. They are a year-round financial advisor who will provide personalized service that benefits their clients come tax season. An experienced and qualified CPA builds a relationship with you, educates you about tax planning options, and helps you make the best financial decisions for your situation.

Nona S. Solowitz is a Certified Public Accountant and the founding owner of Nona S. Solowitz CPA, a firm that specializes in personal and small business tax preparation and planning. For more information, call (760) 423-0133 or visit SolowitzCPA.com.



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In November, Lauren and her mom Doris attended our Holistic, Happy & Healthy Cooking class at Kitchen Kitchen in Indian Wells. Impressed with the dinner created, she asked that we share the recipe with *Desert Health*® readers. When thinking of a 'healthy' meal, red meat and coconut rice are not the first ingredients that spring to mind. However, our core philosophy to healthy eating is a combination of using only fresh, high-quality, organic, and nutrition-packed ingredients, and eating in moderation. We also encourage the use of medicinal spices which not only add flavor, but also provide many health benefits.

Spicy Indian Steaks

1 ½ T grated ginger root	1 t cumin seeds	4 T extra virgin olive oil
1 medium onion, minced	¾ t cayenne pepper	3 lbs grass fed tri-tip
4 garlic cloves, minced	1 ½ t Himalayan pink salt	
3 t coriander seeds	1 ½ t mustard seeds	

Place the first three ingredients in a food processor until finely minced. Grind the next five ingredients in a spice or coffee grinder until powdered. Stir into onion mixture. Heat 1 tbsp. oil in large skillet and add onion mixture; sauté over medium heat until fragrant and sealed. Place mixture on steaks, turning to coat, then marinate steaks 2-24 hours. Grill/bake steaks at 375 degrees, 30-45mins or until desired doneness. Arrange over rice and enjoy!

The spicy main course was complemented with sticky coconut rice, a mildly sweet yam and banana puree, and roasted asparagus accompanied by a glass of organic red wine to complete this holistic experience. In addition to the delicious main course, guests were treated to a starter of chilgoza paneer, followed by a warming split red lentil soup, and finished with a spiced chai tea shot served with chewy ginger cookies.

Chef Dipika holds monthly 'Healthy Eating' & 'Indian' cookery classes at Kitchen Kitchen. To reserve your spot go to www.KitchenKitchen.com or call (760)773-9464. You can also create this holistic experience in the comfort of your own home by booking private tutorials which are an educational, fun and an unforgettable experience. To enjoy this life experience, go to www.queenofnutrition.com or contact Dipika at deepatel@live.com. Special guest Cindy Karls is also a health and nutrition coach with an expertise in weight loss and empowering her clients to make life-long changes through nutrition. For more information or to schedule a free consultation, contact Cindy at cindykarlscoaching@gmail.com.



If Kent State Calls, Please Answer... Your Community is Counting on You!

If you receive a call from Kent State University conducting a survey, it is your chance to help HARC (Health Assessment Resource Center) collect data for its third Coachella Valley health needs assessment. This translates into much needed funding for local non-profit services and health care providers who work with those in need right here in our community.

The important data they are collecting is free and available to everyone (www.HarcData.org) and helps organizations make a case for grant funding, develop targeted programs, and prioritize health needs in the community. In fact, local organizations that cited HARC data in their funding requests have received over \$4.7 million to fund local programs valleywide. These programs do amazing things for our community, including feeding homebound seniors, providing counseling for school children, and providing free HIV/AIDS testing.

HARC is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization located in Palm Desert. It was created in 2006 to fill the need for objective, reliable research regarding the health of Coachella Valley communities. HARC conducted the first assessment of community health in 2007, and a second in 2010. A wide variety of local organizations utilize this data, including non-profits, county and city government, universities, hospitals, and private businesses, among others.


Now the time has come for data collection for the third survey. The survey is conducted via telephone interviews of adults across the Coachella Valley, in both English and Spanish. Because HARC strives to make sure this data represents the entire population of the Coachella Valley, it is extremely important that individuals from all walks of life participate.

Kent State University, a contractor working with HARC, will begin calling Coachella Valley residents in January, and continue to do so until April 2013. Each telephone survey takes approximately 23 minutes to complete. The survey covers important aspects of health and wellness, such as access to healthcare, chronic illness, mental health, preventative screenings, and health behaviors, among others. By also assessing demographic information, HARC is able to determine not only health needs, but also health disparities among groups.

Community participation is extremely important to the success of this survey. So please, if you receive a call from Kent State University on behalf of HARC, take the time to answer the call and respond to the questions. By participating in the survey, you will be contributing to improving the health of our community.


The results of the 2013 survey will be shared with the community in early 2014, and available for all online. If you have any questions regarding the survey, please contact Eileen Packer, HARC's CEO by phone at (760) 404-1945 or email at epacker@harcdata.org.

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