



Desert Health[®]

News from the Valley's Integrated Health Community

July/August 2013

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Genetic TESTING Is It For You?

Many hail genomics, the study of DNA sequencing and genetic mapping, as the medicine of tomorrow; personalized medicine based on an individual's specific DNA.

According to the National Institutes of Health, there are over 2,000 genetic tests available which, more than ever before, can provide you and your health care practitioner with a roadmap for your health and ways to manage it. The information gained from these tests can determine diseases to which you may be predisposed; what medicines work for you and which do not; and what conditions you may pass onto your children, to name a few.

"I've been a student of medicine for three decades and I've never seen any time as exciting and as extraordinary as this one," says Eric Topol, M.D. Cardiologist, Chief Academic Officer of Scripps Health, and Professor of Genomics at The Scripps Research Institute. "A patient's emerging and unprecedented access to his or her important health information is reshaping medicine."

More and more medical professionals are offering genetic testing, and many websites are even promoting DNA analysis for as low as \$99. "Any genetic testing that provides insight to your DNA coding will be fun and interesting," says Dan

Olesnicky of Executive Urgent Care in Indian Wells which provides 15 different genetic tests. "It's like reading your own owner's manual." But Olesnicky and others advise caution to ensure that the lab used is reputable and that results are comprehensive and accurate. In addition, there is the chance that the information provided may affect you and your family members negatively, so it is good to have a medical professional on hand to review and discuss results.

What Are the Primary Reasons for Genetic Testing?

Pharmacogenetics. One of the fastest growing reasons is to determine if the medications you are taking – or need – work for you based on your body's ability to metabolize them effectively. This information enables your doctor to prescribe proper medications and dosages. The most common tests are for cardiac and pain medications, but testing is also available for others including common psychiatric and cancer drugs.

In 2010, the Food and Drug Administration placed a Box Warning —its most severe safety advisory— on Plavix (generic name clopidogrel), the second biggest selling drug after cholesterol-lowering Lipitor. Approximately 3 million prescriptions are written monthly for this blood thinner to prevent

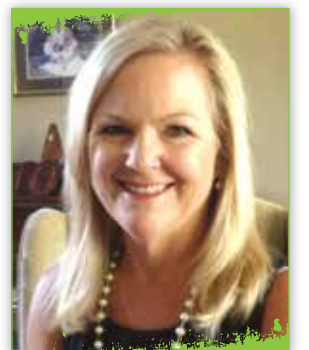
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We often meet people who consider themselves 'conscious eaters,' but rarely do we meet someone whose passion is converting others. In her own personal effort to address America's obesity issues, Registered Dietitian Sarah Gaete is teaching the value of nutrition to as many people as she can. She is passionate about getting others to make healthier choices; and she is making a difference here in the Coachella Valley.

Gaete has been a Registered Dietitian for 25 years and for the past 10 has taught general nutrition at College of the Desert. Her first job as a hospital RD solidified her desire to see more people get well. "Teaching is a way for me to reach large numbers of people and to really make a difference. I have a captive audience for 16 weeks and thus, the opportunity to change behaviors, and to change lives."

Gaete takes her job personally and gives extra attention to every student in her class who expresses a desire to change. 17-year old Kendel Garcia of La Quinta took Gaete's class this past semester. "Sarah was more than just a teacher. She cared about us individually and taught each of us what we were doing right and what we were doing wrong." Kendel was a competitive swimmer who stopped competing, but hadn't changed her diet. Gaete helped her understand the changes she needed to make and why. At the end of the semester, Kendel decided to start training again and Gaete helped her formulate a new dietary plan. "She made me understand what foods would help me perform best and what I needed for training. She totally cared



Registered Dietitian, Teacher, and Certified Health Coach, Sarah Gaete

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Working Together for a Greater Good

We are very excited about our new Expert Advice videos launching on DesertHealthNews.com in early July. Our local practitioners are getting in front of the camera to offer advice on a variety of subjects from Traumatic Brain Injury to Acupuncture. Many of us (including me!) were reserved about taking the leap into video... Doctors practice medicine and I publish news print. Film was a little intimidating for us all, but once these respected professionals got in front of the camera, their personalities began to shine. It's a visual introduction and complement to the many words of advice and knowledge they share with us on the pages of *Desert Health*®.

And we couldn't have done it without Imprint Media. Patti Gribow, Kevin Rochlitz and their team delivered a professional production – and a very fun day – for us all. Joining forces with other local businesses can be refreshing and energizing as the results are usually more significant than anything you could do by yourself. As they say, there is power in numbers, and you experience a satisfying sense of achievement when you accomplish a task as a group.

In this issue, we talk a lot about working together for a greater good. Local companies and individuals are joining forces with national organizations to bring the ambitious Clinton Health Matters Initiative to fruition. The progress, which we will continue to promote editorially as on page 7, is exciting and inspiring. We are the first model community and many are stepping up to the plate. Everyone is encouraged to take part. *Desert Health*® is making an effort (see details below) and we feel good about participating



in the brainstorming sessions, implementing action steps, and making progress to benefit the health of our community!

Power in numbers also applies to individual health. Studies show that exercising with a buddy or group can be more rewarding, fun and successful as you'll read on page 19.

So grab a buddy, rally your co-workers, reach out and get involved. The first step may be the hardest, but the rewards and satisfaction you will feel from achieving something greater than your own individual efforts will keep you moving forward in a positive - and productive - direction.

Lauren
Lauren Del Sarto
Publisher

Left to right: Kevin Rochlitz, Imprint Media Productions; Melissa Caruana and Lauren Del Sarto, *Desert Health*®, Patti Gribow, Imprint Media, and Nathalie Probst of Make Me Up.



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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.

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Desert Health® Honored with Official Pledge Maker Seal Others encouraged to take part in the effort

Desert Health® was recently honored with the Clinton Foundation's Clinton Health Matters Initiative (CHMI) Official Pledge Maker Seal for their efforts to increase the number of doctors and practitioners volunteering at Coachella Valley's Volunteers in Medicine (CVIM).

The *Desert Health*® pledge supports the CHMI goal of increasing access to health care for members of our community who would otherwise be without. "The Coachella Valley is very fortunate to be an inaugural part of the Clinton Foundation's national effort to improve our nation's health one community at a time," said *Desert Health*® Publisher, Lauren Del Sarto. "We wanted to be an active part of that solution."

In determining how to contribute, the *Desert Health*® team reviewed the Coachella Valley Blueprint for Action (created by our own community leaders) which outlines the objectives of the initiative and the bold action steps to achieve those goals. "We looked at where we could make the biggest impact."

Health factors considered by the plan include: **Health Behaviors** (i.e. smoking, excessive drinking, obesity, etc.); **Clinical Care** (i.e. access, disease and prevention); **Social & Economic Factors** (i.e. income, unemployment, homicide rate); and **Physical Environment** (i.e. air quality; access to healthy foods and recreational facilities).

"We had written about CVIM in one of our first editions and knew there was

a great need for doctors and nurses," said Del Sarto. Increasing the number of volunteers will allow CVIM to see more patients and also help reduce the number of uninsured in our ERs.

"We created a plan and submitted it to the Clinton Foundation for review and approval to ensure it fit into the bigger picture." *Desert Health*® is working with all three local hospitals to spread the word, as well as running an active media campaign in the paper (see back page). "Although this is a five-year plan, we hope to double the number of volunteers by year's end."

Volunteering is a very rewarding – and easy – way for individual practitioners to contribute, especially those who are retired and still want to practice medicine for the sole purpose of helping others. A 5-minute application and 4 hours a month of volunteer time is all it takes.

What will YOU pledge?

The CHMI is a community-wide effort and no act of participation is too great or too small. We encourage you to review the Blueprint for Action and determine how you can take part and make a difference in the health of our community.

To access the Coachella Valley Blueprint for Success: www.clintonfoundation.org/assets/files/CHMI_CoachellaDoc_v4.pdf. To get involved contact The Clinton Foundation's Tricia Gehrlein (760) 834.0975.





Genetic Testing: Is It For You?

Continued from page 1

clots in patients with advanced cardiovascular disease. The label warns that the product may not work for everyone. Indeed, up to 30% of those prescribed may have a mild genetic variation that could possibly affect response, increasing a patient's risk for a potentially life-threatening heart attack.¹ Treatment options for these populations include increased dosages of Plavix or another brand prescription.

As a result, leading medical institutions such as Scripps Clinic in San Diego and Vanderbilt University Medical Center are embracing genetic testing for cardiac patients. Scripps offers the option to patients and Vanderbilt automatically tests all those who undergo cardiac catheterization — approximately 4,000 patients per year.²

Many common pain medications require activation by an enzyme called CYP2D6 to become effective. At the 23rd Annual Meeting of the American Academy of Pain Medicine, a presentation on the clinical effect of genotyping chronic pain stated that approximately one half of prescribed patients have genes that alter the function of this enzyme. Testing allows for alteration of dosage regimens to compensate for altered metabolism, thereby optimizing the safety and efficacy of these analgesics.

Predisposition to disease. If you have a family history of a genetic condition, undergoing genetic testing before you have symptoms may show if you are at risk of developing that condition. This is the testing put in the spotlight recently by Angelina Jolie who tested positive for the BRCA1 gene mutation increasing her risk of breast cancer to 87% and ovarian cancer to 50%. She used this information to make choices for herself and her family and decided to have both her breast tissue and ovaries removed.

Since her announcement, requests for testing have increased significantly across the country. *Time Magazine's* recent cover story "The Angelina Effect" discussed how her celebrity will significantly change the way genetic testing is viewed. "We have seen the number of genetic test requests double - maybe even triple," says Kris Kalla, board-certified genetic counselor for Eisenhower Medical Center who specializes in cancer risk assessment. But a large portion of those people aren't appropriate candidates. For hereditary cancers, Kalla notes, a family history is essential and some of the qualifying factors include: 1) early age of onset; 2) rare cases like male breast cancer, 3) multiple generations from one side of the family affected with certain constellations of cancer such as breast and ovarian or colon and uterine; and 4) if there are three or more relatives on the same side of the family with later onset cancers associated with a known hereditary cancer syndrome.

Qualified patients often are those who grow up with the fear of getting cancer because they have seen so many people in their families succumb (as in the case with Jolie). "If they test positive for something, we spend a lot of time counseling them and reminding them that they don't have cancer at that time. It takes a while to digest." Counselors are available to patients as needed and set up meetings with others who have that same hereditary syndrome. "We really try to be comprehensive not only in the science and medical aspect, but also in the psychosocial sense." They also make sure patients get prompt follow up as an essential part of testing. "We don't just drop the bomb on someone and let them diffuse it. That is a big part of our job and rather unique."

The fact that genetic counseling is a field within itself supports the fact that it may be important to work with a medical professional when considering genetic testing. "We only test for things upon which we can offer solutions, such as early screening and surgery to reduce the risk," states Kalla. Olesnicky agrees adding that they offer genetic testing only when appropriate.

Diagnostic testing. If you have symptoms of a disease that may be caused by genetic alterations, genetic testing can reveal if you have the suspected disorder. Examples include adult polycystic kidney disease, iron overload (hemochromatosis) and Charcot-Marie-Tooth disease.³

Carrier testing. If you or your partner has a family history of a genetic disorder, such as sickle cell anemia or cystic fibrosis, you may choose to have genetic testing before you have children. This type of genetic testing may also be useful if you are in an ethnic group that has a high risk of a particular genetic disorder. Genetic testing can determine if you carry a copy of an altered gene that would put a child at risk of developing the disorder.³

Prenatal and newborn testing. If you are pregnant, tests are available that can detect some types of abnormalities in your fetus's genes. Spina bifida and Down syndrome are two genetic disorders that are often screened for as part of prenatal genetic testing. Newborn screening is the most common type of genetic testing. In the US, all states require that newborns be tested for certain gene abnormalities that cause specific conditions. This type of genetic testing is important because if results show there's a disorder such as congenital hypothyroidism or phenylketonuria (PKU), care and treatment can begin right away.³

Is Everyone Ready for This New Science?

In a survey of the effect of genetic testing on medicine, Topol notes that of 10,000 doctors, 90% felt they were not up to speed and [do not yet] have the proper knowledge to use genomics in their daily practice. The field of genetic testing counselors is growing and as Kalla notes, there is so much new information on the subject that counselors often specialize just to keep up with the literature and category growth.

Topol adds that the patient perspective is quite different. "We studied and published on thousands of people who got genome-wide scans and showed that people were perfectly comfortable when they got that information—there was no increased anxiety or depression." He says one-fourth of those studied shared the testing with their doctors, which led to better understanding of which tests to do and medicines to use. (Kalla notes that those studied were general population and not in the high risk category for disease.) "There's a knowledge base we have to remedy," he concludes, "because pretty soon the patients are going to know more about their own genomics than many doctors know about genomics overall."

If you are interested in genetic testing, research your family history and speak with your health care practitioner or a qualified genetic counselor to determine if genetic testing is right for you.

References: 1) [03-12-2010] The U.S. Food and Drug Administration.Plavix Box Warning; 2) <http://www.genomeweb.com/dxpgx/vanderbilt-medical-center-initiates-plavix-pgx-testing-all-cardiac-catheterizati>; 3) <http://www.mayoclinic.com/health/genetic-testing/MY00370/DSECTION=why-its-done>

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A Real Pain in the Butt

Hemorrhoids: a real pain for approximately 10 million Americans! Though approximately 38% of us have hemorrhoids, only 4% will have symptoms which may include bleeding, protrusion, discomfort and pain.

Hemorrhoids are actually tissue rich in blood vessels that, when engorged with blood, act as cushions to help protect the anal canal from injury during a bowel movement. Unfortunately, with age, the blood vessels within the cushions become chronically dilated, and the cushions themselves begin to sag downward (prolapse), resulting in symptomatic hemorrhoids. They can be graded by the degree they prolapse. Grade I hemorrhoids have an increase in size and number of veins but no prolapse. Grade II are associated with prolapse but spontaneously reduce. Grade III hemorrhoids have to be manually reduced, and grade IV hemorrhoids are not reducible at all. People with grade III and IV hemorrhoids typically require surgical intervention due to the severity of symptoms.

Treatment is guided by the grade of the hemorrhoids. For grade I, usually a high fiber diet, fiber supplementation, and liberal water consumption will slow the progression of prolapse. For grade II hemorrhoids, options include sclerotherapy (injecting a chemical that causes the veins to scar), infrared coagulation (emitted light heats the hemorrhoids and causes destruction), or banding (small rubber bands are placed to strangle the hemorrhoid). These procedures require little to no anesthesia.

For larger hemorrhoids, grade III and IV, surgical resection has been the mainstay of treatment, though associated with

considerable pain. Two newer techniques are available that offer less pain. These procedures do not remove the hemorrhoid cushions, but instead reduce the size and prolapse without destroying the hemorrhoid complex, thus preserving its physiologic function.

The **stapled hemorrhoidopexy** technique cuts and then staples together a ring of rectal tissue above the hemorrhoids, resulting in lifting the prolapsed hemorrhoids up, resolving the prolapse and reducing the size of the hemorrhoids. The staples are very fine in size (3.5mm) and with time will slough off or will have the lining of the rectum grow over. It is less painful than excision, resulting in shorter recovery time, and quicker return to work.

THD or transanal hemorrhoidal dearterialization is a technique that uses ultrasound to identify the small blood vessels delivering blood to the hemorrhoids, and these vessels are tied off. This results in reduction of the size of the hemorrhoids. Next, the hemorrhoids are lifted up the rectum with sutures, resulting in reduction of the prolapse. Recurrence rate is comparable to traditional excision of hemorrhoids, but with a very short recovery time, typically within 4 days, as no tissue is excised.

Surgical intervention for hemorrhoids usually is reserved until conservative measures have failed or if symptoms are severe. Fortunately there are a variety of interventions available to provide a tailored approach, depending on the severity of hemorrhoids and personal preference.

Dr. Johnson is a board-certified general surgeon with Premier Surgical Associates in Palm Spring and can be reached at 760.424.8224.

The Thoracic Cavity WITH DR. PRESSER



Smoking tobacco is the leading preventable cause of mortality.

On average, smokers live 14 years less than non-smokers and one in six will be diagnosed with lung cancer. Approximately 70% of smokers say they want to quit, but success rates vary, depending on whether they try quitting on their own or undergo treatment. The long-term success rate of those attempting on their own results in only 3 to 7% being abstinent one year later. With optimal treatment, one-year abstinence rates can exceed 30%. Yet only 25% of smokers who try to quit seek help and even fewer use the most effective treatments.

Addressing Barriers to Quit — Nicotine is the primary barrier for quitting. It is a potent psychoactive drug that causes physical dependence, and in its absence, a smoker develops cravings and symptoms such as depressed mood, insomnia, irritability, frustration, difficulty concentrating, restlessness, and increased appetite or weight gain. In addition, smokers become conditioned to associate the pleasurable effects of tobacco use with environmental triggers such as their morning coffee, an alcoholic drink, or the end of a meal. These factors need to be addressed ahead of time so smokers know what to expect and how to respond when factors or situations occur.

All smokers should be told that the fact they started when younger is not their fault. Many people appreciate this because they feel others see them "doing it to themselves." Smoking "back in the day" was as common as carrying a cell phone today, but we didn't have the information we now have about the habit's harmful effects. And let's hope we don't learn the same for cell phones!

Choice of Treatment — A combination of both behavioral and pharmacologic therapies are found to be most effective in promoting abstinence from smoking. Behavioral counseling may include direct patient clinician encounters, computer programs, text or phone, or group-based therapy. Pharmacologic treatment includes drug therapy such as nicotine replacement therapy (Bupropion or Chantix). Each of these medications has proven effective for those trying to quit smoking. Each has a different side effect profile and may be preferentially used in different patient populations.

Other treatments include acupuncture (although studies show acupuncture to be less effective than nicotine replacement therapy) and hypnotherapy, found in a meta-analysis to have potential benefits (although a systematic review of 11 randomized trials found insufficient data). Randomized trials among smokers employed at US companies found that financial incentive increased smoking cessation rates and smoke-free electronic cigarettes (which may or may not have nicotine) appear effective in providing the "smoking" pleasure.

We're all going to die eventually, but why speed up the process by smoking? I tell my patients wanting to quit to buy a bag of lollipops (preferably sugarfree) and carry a picture of a loved one in their wallet. The lollipop satisfies the oral fixation and the picture of the loved one reminds them of the value of life. And anyone undergoing chest surgery realizes how detrimental smoking can be.

Where to start? Communicate with your clinician. Find the treatment that's right for you. Set a quit date and stick to it! And be sure to follow up to address withdrawal symptoms and possible relapse.

Remember... the best thoracic surgeon is the one you never see.

Dr. Presser is a board-certified thoracic surgeon specializing in minimally invasive procedures. He is an advocate for prevention and encourages lung cancer screenings which are proven to save lives. He welcomes your questions and can be reached at 760.424.8224.



From Chicken Pox to Shingles

By Greg Evans, DO

Chicken Pox (varicella zoster virus) is a common disease which typically infects children 5 to 10 years of age. The initial infection usually provides a patient with a lifetime of immunity against chickenpox, even with further exposure to the virus. The primary infection persists about 2 weeks and causes eruptions on the face and body accompanied by fever and general malaise.

Outbreaks of this highly contagious virus have significantly reduced since a vaccine was introduced in 1995.

Shingles is the clinical presentation of the varicella zoster virus once it has been re-activated in adulthood. The CDC estimates there are 500,000 to one million cases of shingles reported each year, and even with an adult vaccine, the numbers are increasing. Shingles typically presents as a rash and usually affects only one side of the body. It is often found in the lower thoracic region but may also be located on the scalp, forehead, areas around the eye socket, and even in the eye.

When shingles affects the eye, the trigeminal nerve is typically involved. This nerve has three main branches that involve both motor and sensory of the face. The ophthalmic branch relays sensory information for the scalp, forehead, eyelids, skin around the eye socket, nose, and most importantly, the cornea and conjunctiva.

When shingles occur around the eye area, two thirds of the cases have corneal

involvement. All the layers of the cornea can be involved and an inflamed lesion can occur. Over time the lesion heals, but this can take weeks to resolve. In our practice, all patients that have had shingles in the eye area are tested for corneal sensitivity.

These patients are usually at risk for further reactivations of the virus, and the nerves in the inflamed area typically become less sensitive. This is referred to as post herpetic denervation hyposensitivity and can put a patient at risk for neurotrophic keratitis or ulcers, as well as other ocular conditions. When the upper eyelid is involved, scarring can result along with retraction of the lid.

Treatment for shingles includes the use of topical and oral antivirals. Often long-term pain medication is needed for post herpetic neuralgia associated with an outbreak. When the eye is involved initial treatment includes anti-viral medication and often steroids to minimize scarring.

For prevention of shingles in patients over 60, vaccination is an option. Studies have shown that not only does it reduce the incidence in patients that have not had any outbreaks, but it is also effective at reducing the reoccurrence rate in patients that have had outbreaks. If you were under 60 when you first had a vaccination for shingles, you may need a repeat vaccination at approximately the 10-year anniversary. Patients that are immune suppressed or taking immune suppressing drugs are at higher risk of initial and repeat outbreaks.

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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Managing Stress

Health care professionals agree: identify your stress – and breathe

When the audience at CVEP's recent small business gathering were asked, "how many of you can identify stress?" only 5% raised their hand. It quickly became apparent that the first step in managing stress is being able to identify it.

"Our cars tell us when the gas is low, but people aren't born with dashboards," says Chris Flores, MD, "So if we can learn the science behind stress and its effect on our body, and can learn to monitor the signs, then we can begin to do something about it." And everyone's perception of stress is unique, adds Ann Marie Palma of Bikram Yoga Palm Desert. What one person considers stressful, another may not, so responses to dealing with stress need to be individualized.

"Many people feel that physical ailments such as a migraine or irritable bowel syndrome must be medical," adds Flores, "when in fact, they may simply be signs of stress." We live in a society where people seek an external cure first - treatment or pill - so the fundamental mindset has to change.

How do we recognize stress in our body? Flores says know your vitals. Buy a blood pressure cuff and monitor your heart rate. The average resting heart rate is around 70 and higher numbers are a sign of stress. Monitor how you feel. Are you getting 6 – 8 hours of restful sleep a night? Are you fatigued throughout the day? Do you crave sugar, carbs or alcohol? These are all indicators that your body is not in balance and may be under stress.

How do we relieve stress? The panel agreed that you need to create a healthy daily protocol, and make it a priority in your life. Something you enjoy like exercise, yoga, or meditation to calm the mind and create that mind-body connection. "Being able to achieve a balance – physically, mentally and emotionally – is key," states Sonja Fung, ND.

And all agree that you need to learn to breathe. Most people take very short shallow breaths all day long. "Deep breaths activate your parasympathetic system," adds Fung, "creating a feeling of safety and relaxation naturally." Flores notes that people tend to breathe an average of 20 times a minute, when that rate should be only 8-10 times. And consciously breathing 4 times a minute is very therapeutic "and can even lower your blood pressure by 20 points."

So let's try it. Empty out your breath. Now breathe in deeply for the count of 5. Then hold that breathe for 5. Then slowly release the breath completely for 5. That is one 15 second breath. Do this 4 times and feel the difference in your body just after this one minute conscious breathing exercise.

Learn to identify your individual symptoms of stress. Establish a daily protocol to help you release it and to create and maintain balance in your body. And don't forget to breathe.... Really breathe.

CVEP's Small Business Development Center offers free classes at their monthly Fireside Chats. For more information, visit www.cvsmbusiness.com or contact Managing Director Ezekiel Bonillas zeke@cvep.com. 760-340-1575



Ann Marie Palma, owner of Bikram Yoga Palm Desert; Chris Flores, MD; and Sonja Fung, ND of the Live Well Clinic discussed stress release techniques at CVSBDC's free monthly Fireside Chat session

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Children's Hearing Health

By B. Maya Kato, MD

We often think of hearing loss as a problem related to aging. However, hearing loss affects people of all ages, from birth through adulthood. Hearing loss affects two in every 100 children under the age of 18. If their hearing loss is undetected, there will be delay in initiating proper treatment and intervention. This may result in delayed speech/language development, social problems and academic difficulties. Intervention includes treatment of infections, early fitting of hearing aids, and may include cochlear implantation for children with severe hearing loss. Children with hearing loss do best when placed into special education programs designed to help maximize a child's hearing and provide the best chances for successful speech and language development.

Types of Pediatric Hearing Loss

There are two primary categories of hearing loss in children, congenital (present at birth) and acquired (occurring after birth). These hearing losses may be sensorineural (involving the inner ear, auditory nerve, or central nervous system), conductive (involving the ear canal, ear drum, middle ear space, or hearing bones) or both.

Causes of congenital hearing loss include:

- Maternal infections during pregnancy
- Ototoxic medication used during pregnancy
- Birth complications (e.g. jaundice, ventilatory support, ICU care, birth weight < 3 lbs, blood transfusion)
- Disorder of the brain or nervous system
- Genetic syndromes
- Family history of hearing loss
- Congenital ear malformation

Causes of acquired hearing loss include:

- Infections of the ear
- Other infections (e.g. meningitis, mumps, measles)
- Perforation of the eardrum
- Excessive noise exposure
- Cholesteatoma
- Head trauma
- Ototoxic medication

Signs of Hearing Loss in Children

It is important to recognize the signs of hearing loss in infants and toddlers as early as possible. The most critical period for speech and language development is from birth to four years of age. The following are warning signs of hearing difficulties:

Newborn (Birth to 4 months):

- Does not startle, cry or react to unexpected loud noises.
- Cannot be soothed by voice alone.
- Does not turn his/her head in the direction of your voice.

Infant (3 months to 2 years)

- Does not point to familiar persons or objects when asked.
- Does not babble, or babbling has stopped.
- By 12 months does not understand simple phrases by listening alone, such as "wave bye-bye," or "clap hands."
- Does not turn in the direction of a soft voice on the first call.
- Does not respond to or localize sounds.
- Does not begin to imitate and use simple words.
- Does not sound like or use speech like children of similar age.

Preschool & Older Children

- Listens to the television at loud volume.
- Does not reply when you call him/her.
- Responds inappropriately to questions.
- Speech articulation problems or speech/language delays.
- Poor school performance.
- Difficulty understanding what people are saying.
- Seems to speak differently from other children.

Hearing Tests: How, When, and Why

Children of any age can be tested. Hearing tests are painless, and normally take less than an hour.

Tests for newborns and infants under one year

It is routine practice for hospitals to perform hearing tests shortly after delivery, prior to discharge from the hospital.

Newborns are tested with either the otoacoustic emissions (OAE) test or the automated auditory brainstem response (AABR) test. During the OAE test, a microphone is placed in the baby's ear. Soft clicking

sounds are presented and a computer records the inner ear responses to the sounds. During the AABR test, the child wears earphones and sensors are placed on the head to measure brain wave activity in response to the sound.

Infants and younger children

Testing for this age group include: the diagnostic auditory brainstem response, visual reinforcement audiometry (VRA), and conditioned play audiometry (CPA). With VRA, the child is presented with sound via earphones. When the child turns toward the sound, a correct response is rewarded with an entertaining visual image. With play audiometry, children are asked to perform a simple activity, such as placing a ring on a peg, when they hear a sound.

Tests for older children

Older children typically can be tested with conventional audiometry, where they are asked to raise their hand in response to various tones, and are tested for their ability to understand speech.

All children should have their hearing tested before they start school. This could reveal mild hearing losses or loss in one ear that may otherwise be difficult for the parent to detect.

Fortunately the most common causes of hearing loss in young children are temporary: earwax, swimmer's ear, or middle-ear infections. These types of hearing loss are largely reversible, with medication or minor procedures.

In contrast to temporary hearing loss, some children have nerve deafness, which is permanent. Most of these children have some usable hearing, and children as young as three months of age can be fitted with hearing aids. Early diagnosis, early fitting of hearing aids, and an early start on special educational programs can help maximize the child's existing hearing. For those children who are severe-to-profoundly hard-of-hearing, cochlear implantation is an excellent option. Cochlear implants can allow the child to hear sound, talk on the phone, and participate fully in a hearing world.

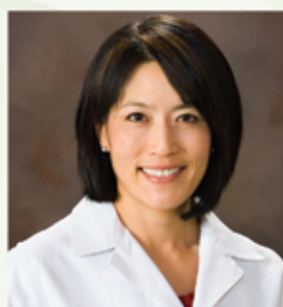
Children with suspected hearing difficulties should be evaluated by an Otolologist (ENT physician specializing in ear disorders) and an audiologist experienced in working with children as soon as possible, to assure expeditious and proper treatment during a critical time of language and social development.

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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Clinton Health Matters Initiative: Substance Abuse

Betty Ford Center leads community effort for change

By Lauren Del Sarto

Let's face it. We drink a lot. It's part of the pleasure – and often the perils – of living in a resort community.

The numbers speak for themselves. According to HARC's 2010 survey, the Coachella Valley has a higher prevalence of people who binge drink than the national benchmark. Surveys show that 21.3 percent of residents who consumed alcoholic beverages engaged in binge drinking during the 30 days prior to being surveyed. The percentages remain high for all ethnic groups including 17.2 percent of all Caucasian and 33.6 percent of Hispanic respondents.

The CHMI Blueprint for Action states that "A resort community atmosphere would normally explain the high number of binge

drinkers; however, these numbers do not reflect responses from tourists, and only represent year-round residents." But of course, someone has to entertain all those out-of-towners, right?

However, when you consider the large number of alcohol-related deaths and driving incidents we hear about daily, you realize there is truly cause for concern. Thus, one of the "Health Behavior" goals of the Blueprint, which was established by our own local health task force, is to "reduce mortality and adverse effect (morbidity) by 50 percent in 5 years." This is a lofty goal, but heading the effort is our very own Betty Ford Center.

"We are honored to have been asked by the Clinton Foundation and are proud to take

part," says Betty Ford Center's CEO, John Schwarzlose. But no one group can do this alone, so the center's first step is to unite all local agencies and resources. "There are a lot of groups doing great work including senior centers, Desert Aids Project, and numerous Latino focused agencies in the East valley," adds Schwarzlose. "Bringing everyone together in a combined effort is key to the initiative's success."

Areas of focus include prevention, resources for adolescents, and expansion of the Betty Ford Center's children's program into k-5 grades at all three valley school districts. This program not only includes education, but also resources for children who are struggling with family addictions. "Eisenhower Medical Center has stepped up to the plate to help fund the school effort and we are currently seeking a bilingual, trained counselor to work in both the Desert Sands and Coachella Valley School Districts." A counselor in the Palm Springs School District is planned in the future.

Training and education doesn't stop with schools. "Our bold steps will include training health care professionals to recognize the signs and to increase the number of substance

abuse workers in the valley."

The Clinton Foundation will also be providing examples of programs that have worked in other communities, such as offering training for bartenders and servers to recognize when customers have had enough, and to take action.

So where do you currently go if you feel you (or a family member) have a problem? "The family physician is usually the first place people will go," says Schwarzlose, "but with this effort, we hope to make more resources readily available." It is worth noting that The Betty Ford Center offers free assessment 7 days a week for all Coachella Valley residents. In addition, no child is ever turned away from the Children's Program due to the inability to pay.

Access the Clinton Health Matters Initiative's Coachella Valley Blueprint for Success: http://www.clintonfoundation.org/assets/files/CHMI_CoachellaDoc_v4.pdf. To get involved in this task force contact The Clinton Foundation's Tricia Gehrlein (760) 834.0975. For more information on the Betty Ford Center's programs call (800) 434-7365.





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Early Detection is Key in Treating Glaucoma

By Wallace Goldban, MD

Glaucoma is a disease of the optic nerve that if not treated can cause blindness. It affects 1 in 200 people under age 50, and 1 in 10 by age 80. Worldwide it is the second leading cause of vision loss behind cataracts.

A damaged optic nerve causes an irreversible loss of vision, so detecting this disease early is of the utmost importance. Luckily eye drops usually keep the disease under control, allowing most people to retain excellent vision and maintain a normal lifestyle.

There are 2 kinds of glaucoma - open angle and closed angle. Open angle is much more common. It slowly progresses and is usually asymptomatic until late in the disease process. Open angle glaucoma is usually treated with eye drops to lower the intraocular pressure and preserve the optic nerve. An intraocular pressure reading above 21 puts a person at risk of glaucoma, but pressure alone is not the defining factor. One person can have a high pressure and never develop optic nerve damage, and another person can develop low tension glaucoma with seemingly normal pressure below 20 which leads to severe damage.

Closed angle glaucoma occurs when the fluid in the eye is unable to drain causing the eye pressure to rise to very high levels (60 or higher). This can cause severe pain and vision loss. Treatment is a laser surgery to allow the fluid to drain. People at risk for this kind of glaucoma are advised not to use general over-the-counter cold and allergy medications as the ingredients can trigger an attack.

Most people diagnosed with glaucoma have the open angle variant. A challenging part of this disease is that patients cannot self-monitor their


condition without an ophthalmologist to check their pressure and vision. During an exam the intraocular pressure will be measured and monitored to insure consistency. Fortunately, there are now daily drops (prostaglandin inhibitors) such as Lumigan, Travatan or Xalatan that help improve the outflow of the fluid in the eye.

Other exam considerations include peripheral vision because glaucoma will cause peripheral vision changes in specific patterns. Newer diagnostic mechanisms such as an ocular coherence tomography machine can measure the health of the nerve fiber layer and detect earlier changes, allowing more aggressive and earlier treatment.

Usually patients are prescribed 2 or 3 different eye drops before surgical intervention is considered for open angle glaucoma. One of the first surgical options considered is a laser surgery that has been shown to improve outflow of fluid from the eye. There are also incisional surgeries for patients that are not responsive enough to eye drops and/or show progressive loss of vision.

Compliance is one of the biggest issues in the treatment of glaucoma as taking eye drops regularly is not only a lifestyle burden, but a financial one. Education and diligence is critical in successfully treating this disease and for most patients, the prognosis is excellent.

Dr. Wallace Goldban is a board-certified ophthalmologist specializing in Lasik surgery and cataract removal. He has over 20 years of experience and is a graduate of the Albert Einstein College of Medicine. He has office locations in Palm Springs and Palm Desert and can be reached at 760.320.8497.



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Advanced Neuroradiological MRI: A Medical Imaging Aid for the Detection of Traumatic Brain Injury

By Christopher R. Hancock, MD

A traumatic head injury is any trauma that injures the scalp, skull, or brain. In recent years, awareness of this often debilitating condition has increased significantly, unfortunately due to the large number of incidents with professional athletes and our service members.

Injuries can be large or small in size, but often both significant in their effect. Fortunately, new technology now allows us to diagnose smaller hemorrhages and fractures that previously may have gone undiagnosed.

Traumatic head injuries comprise a spectrum of damage ranging from a minor bump on the scalp to a serious brain injury. Some traumatic head injuries cause changes in brain function. This is called a **Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI)**. Concussion is a term that describes mild forms of traumatic brain injury. Symptoms of a concussion, however, can range from mild to severe. Symptoms of a traumatic brain injury can occur right away, or develop slowly over several hours or days. Mild concussions, which do not necessarily lead to loss of consciousness are easy to dismiss, simple to misdiagnose and difficult to detect. Further, the person's head may look normal externally, but problems could result from bleeding or swelling inside the skull.

Head injuries are either closed or open (penetrating). A closed head injury represents trauma to the head from striking an object (whether stationary or mobile) that does not result in penetration of the scalp and skull. An open, or penetrating, head injury means the head struck an object and resulted in violation of the scalp or skull. Even if the skull is not fractured, the brain can strike the inside of the skull and become bruised. This usually happens when a person or an object are moving at great speed resulting in a high energy collision, such as in motor vehicle crashes. Some other common causes of head injury include falls, sports/outdoor injuries, physical assault, accidents at home and injuries at work.

Traumatic head Injury may cause bleeding into the brain tissue, within the ventricular system centrally located in the brain, or between the protective layers that surround the brain including epidural, subdural, and subarachnoid hemorrhages. Large and medium sized collections of hemorrhage and fractures can be discovered easily by typical magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) and by computed tomographic (CT) examinations. Small and especially microscopic components of hemorrhage, however, can be difficult to discover unless advanced medical imaging techniques are employed. In addition, there is a type of brain injury called diffuse axonal injury

(DAI) wherein the electrical circuitry of the brain becomes disconnected. These axonal connections are crucial for normal brain function to allow electrical signaling for processes of movement, sensation, cognition, and many others. This type of injury is akin to going through one's home cutting the electrical cables to some appliances and lights, unplugging others, and leaving others undisturbed. A photo of a home demonstrates its appliances and lights are all present in their proper location, but it says little about whether they work. Analogously, DAI and microhemorrhage can be easily missed if specific advanced and highly sensitive MRI sequences are not employed during a brain MRI examination.

Learning to recognize a serious head injury and give basic first aid can save someone's life. Immediate medical assistance is encouraged if the person: becomes drowsy, behaves abnormally, develops a severe headache or stiff neck, loses consciousness (even briefly), or vomits more than once. For a mild head injury, no treatment may be needed; however, the symptoms of a serious head injury may appear later. As a result, friends or family need to watch adults who have been injured after they are released from the emergency room or office. Parents or caregivers of children also need to learn how to watch a child after a head injury, and know when the child can go back to being active and taking part in sports.

For people who sustain mild to severe head injuries of any type, new tools are available for patients and their physicians. The new tools are **advanced neuroradiological sequences for detecting microhemorrhages and diffuse axonal injury**. These injuries can be invisible on typical MRI brain studies creating a quandary for patients, families, and physicians. Patients and families may report striking symptoms and observations of severe behavior and cognitive impairment. Physicians specializing in traumatic brain injury recognize the signs and symptoms of traumatic brain injury; however, they usually lack access to highly sensitive advanced neuroimaging MRI techniques used to discover elusive microhemorrhage and diffuse axonal injury. Falls, motor vehicle crashes and sports/outdoors injuries are everyday occurrences, thus heightened awareness of

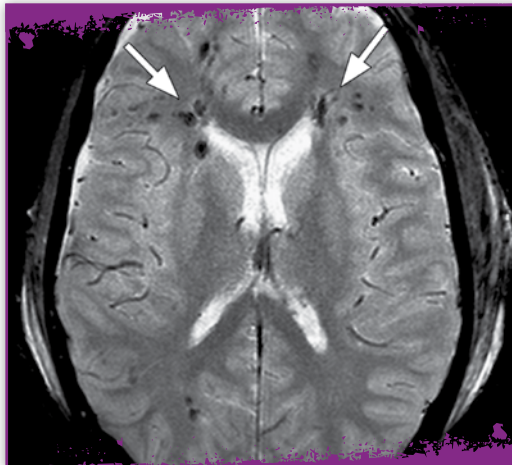


Image by RadioGraphics (September 2009 vol. 29 no. 5 1433-1449)

traumatic brain injury is invaluable.

A standard brain MRI will show the structure of the brain and any major defects to the brain but it doesn't show connections inside the brain or their potential disruption. A traumatic brain injury MRI study is different in that it scans the brain for microscopic changes in the brain and shows the physician the "hidden injury." It is also vital that the radiologists interpreting exams be trained specifically for, and maintain a specific interest in traumatic brain injury as they have a greater understanding of the structures of the brain.

Researchers are learning more about the effects traumatic injuries have on the brain and whether they are a factor in dementia and other neurological disorder.

Dr. Hancock is a Board Certified Neuroradiologist who performs Traumatic Brain Injury exams at Desert Medical Imaging. For more information call 760.694.9559.

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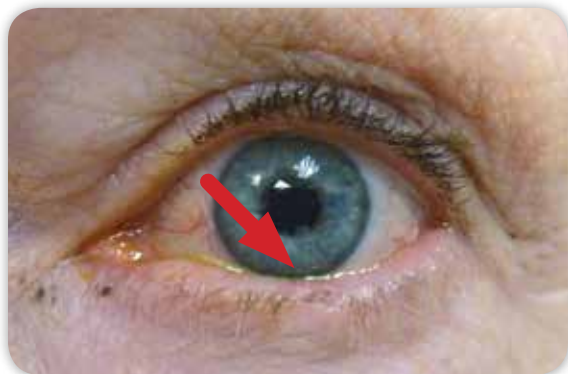


KEEP AN EYE ON YOUR SKIN

By Jennifer Hui, MD, FACS

Skin cancer can be quite common here in the Coachella Valley. Our beautiful weather also brings with it intense ultraviolet exposure. Cumulative exposure to UV rays is the most significant cause of skin cancer, and our eyelids are no exception.

The eyelids are among the thinnest, most delicate tissues of the body and are an important part of ocular health. They protect the eyes from foreign bodies and trauma and help to keep them well lubricated.



This patient noticed an irregular area in the center of her left lower lid for 1 year prior to diagnosis of basal cell carcinoma.

Like skin elsewhere on our bodies, our eyelids are often prone to developing small growths. Most often, these lesions are benign entities such as nevi (moles) or skin tags. Some growths, however, are cause for concern. Enlargement or changes in appearance are two key factors. These changes occur slowly and go unnoticed for a prolonged period. Other important changes are altered architecture of the eyelid margin or loss of eyelashes (madarosis). The eyelid margin is the portion of the eyelid where the skin meets the moist inner surface of the eyelid. The lashes emanate from the eyelid margin. Skin cancers may cause irregularity or ulceration of the margin's surface and may manifest as a small non-healing area, or an area that periodically bleeds and crusts (figure 1a and 1b). Other presentations include the presence of a lesion that recurs following treatments such as cryotherapy (freezing) or excision.

Prevention is key when considering skin cancers. A broad spectrum sunscreen that blocks both UVA and UVB rays is recommended on exposed skin. A sun protection factor of at least 30 is ideal. Sunscreen should be applied prior to any vigorous activity so it has time to set into the skin. Thirty minutes is ideal if swimming or heavy perspiration is anticipated. Sunscreen should be applied liberally to ensure proper coverage. Adequate amounts will require repeated smoothing over the skin. You should begin with enough sunscreen to cause a milky film on the skin that requires numerous motions to work it onto the area. Sunscreen should be applied to all exposed areas, including the nose, ears, top of scalp, backs of hands, soles of feet and neck.

And reapplication is key. Too often we forget to reapply, or think that since we applied so much the first time, it will last all day. With activity, perspiration will cause loss of protection and the sun's UV rays can break down the protective ingredients of the sunscreen. As such, sunscreen should be reapplied every 2 to 3 hours.

But don't forget your eyelids! Sunglasses that block UVA and UVB rays and are large enough to fully cover the eyes and periocular areas are the most beneficial. When purchasing sunglasses, take shape into consideration. Ideally, sunglasses should wrap around the eyes. Also take into consideration the types of activities and times of day you are planning to use them. For example, if you will be playing golf or tennis midday, make sure they are large enough to block the sunlight that is directly over your head. If you do not feel sunglasses alone are adequate, the addition of a broad brimmed hat is recommended.

Sunglasses and hats also protect the eyes from the sun's harmful rays. Cataract progression may be slowed with prolonged and diligent use of sunglasses and/or hats. In those people who are more prone to develop macular degeneration (family history), UV protection is also beneficial in protecting the retinas from toxic insult.

Any suspicious lesion of the eyelid should be evaluated. Signs which cause concern include enlargement, change in appearance, and alteration of architecture or loss of lashes. Persistent inflammation and recurrence are also important factors.

Early diagnosis and treatment are key in eyelid malignancies. Appropriate management is important in eradicating the tumor while maintaining as much normal tissue as possible. If skin cancer is diagnosed and is localized to the eyelid, removal is usually indicated. This can be performed by the Oculoplastic surgeon, or by a dermatologist trained in the Mohs technique. Once the cancer is removed, the eyelid must be reconstructed to ensure optimal function and appearance. Lesions in this region can be difficult to see and are often overlooked. Any area of concern should be evaluated, preferably by a physician who is specially trained in this eye region.

Dr. Hui is the founder of The Eyelid Institute in Palm Desert. She is an Oculoplastic surgeon and has a special interest in helping patients with Eyelid, Lacrimal and Orbital conditions. 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.



The affected inner surface of the eyelid is more irritated and inflamed than surrounding areas.

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Cryotherapy for Inflammation and Pain

By Lauren Del Sarto

Helen Davis has suffered with arthritis for 20 years. She is on two different medications for two types of arthritis, yet has seen the condition progress. This past January, she had an arthritic flare up that left her totally helpless. Her family feared for her life.

"I have always been healthy and active," she proudly says. "I could have delivered all my babies myself (including my twins!), but I never thought something could leave me as helpless as a baby." She slowly got back to the walking exercise she loves. But then swelling in her knees kept her from even doing that. Just prior to her trip to the Desert to see her daughter's family, she visited her rheumatologist in Alabama. "She couldn't even get my pant leg over my knee and told me that when I returned, she would adjust my medications."



Due to significant progress made, Helen Davis will return home to Alabama and drive 5 hours for monthly maintenance treatments of Cryotherapy



Prior to treatment, arthritis kept Davis from being able to make a fist

Her son-in-law had not seen Helen in almost a year. She arrived from the airport embarrassed about her condition. Upon seeing her, he knew she needed Cryotherapy. Their daughter, a competitive volleyball player and client of Kinetix Health & Performance Center seriously injured her ankle and was scheduled for surgery. The surgery was postponed and Kinetix owner Mike Butler recommended Cryo. After four treatments, her ankle was well on its way to recovery. Upon re-examination, the stunned surgeon encouraged her to keep doing what she was doing. Her recovery time will continue for a few more weeks versus the months planned for post-op.

They were convinced that Helen could benefit from the treatment as well. As arthritis inhibits your body's ability to heal, Helen also had a skin condition on her finger that had been there for years. After two Cryo treatments, it was gone and she could bend her fingers. After 5 treatments, she could bend her knee and was walking without pain.

"I am walking proof of the benefits of this therapy and will be singing its praises all the way back to Alabama," says Helen. "I am so grateful to have found something that works." Butler recommended 1-2 monthly maintenance treatments for Helen, who had already researched the closest location to her home and will be traveling 5 hours to Tallahassee as needed. "I can't wait to show my doctor my skin, my hands. She won't believe this knee!"

"In addition to the reduction of inflammation and pain, we've noticed a big difference with sclerosis and eczema," says Susan Butler. "Within a few sessions it is gone."

As a therapy for ankylosing spondylitis and other chronic inflammatory conditions including osteoarthritis and rheumatoid arthritis, Cryotherapy has been successfully used in European hospitals for years. The theory is that intense cold stimulates the body's natural anti-inflammatory chemicals and pain-relieving hormones. After just a few minutes in the chamber, the temperature causes blood to pump to your main organs and brain to protect them. When you come out, blood is rushed back into the system greatly benefiting damaged areas. Your endocrine system is also stimulated and releases a whole host of chemicals including anti-inflammatory markers, pain-relieving hormones, feel-good endorphins, and adrenaline to help the body in repairing injury.¹



Treatments include up to three minutes in the Cryotherapy cylinder



Shoulder impingements limited Tom's range of motion



After three treatments, range of motion improved and Tom was playing pain-free golf

The chamber can reach -170 Celsius and treatments are 2-3 minutes. "My husband offered to prepare an ice bath for me," Helen says with a smile. "I told him 'no thank you.' I'll drive 5 hours for the real thing."

Tom D. of La Quinta is an avid golfer whose game was only disturbed by severe pain from shoulder impingements which limited his range of motion. For this condition, the Butlers recommended Active Release Therapy (ART) to break up the tissue coupled with Cryo. After his second treatment, his range of motion had improved and the pain went from sharp to dull. The third treatment was combined with ART and Tom went out and played his first pain-free round in years. Also surprising were the many ancillary benefits he experienced including better sleep, more energy, improved posture, and "overall pain-free mornings." Two weeks later he is still playing golf pain-free and with an improved range of motion.

"You live with pain for so long, and are amazed when you find something that works with lasting results. I look forward to my maintenance program – and to many more pain-free rounds."

The Whole Body Cryotherapy Chamber is available locally at Kinetix Health & Performance Center in Palm Desert. For more information call (760) 200-1719 or visit KinetixCenter.com.

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The Body Deli Launches The Palm Springs Spa Collection

We love local! So when our friends at The Body Deli announced that they were launching the Palm Springs Spa Collection, we had to help spread the word. Products like these, inspired by the Palm Springs lifestyle and made with local, organic ingredients like grapefruit and dates, promote the best our Valley has to offer to the rest of the world.

Building on the success of their other organic skin care products, The Body Deli co-founders and "cosmetic chefs," David Parker and Margaret Skarin, developed a special collection that exemplifies the casual, chic lifestyle the world has come to identify with Palm Springs. "Since moving to the Coachella Valley in 2001, I have come to love the Palm Springs lifestyle with vibrant colors, mid-century architecture and pool side living," explains Parker, a Northern California native. "So Margaret and I came up with the idea of creating a collection using desert botanicals grown right here in our valley."



The Las Palmas blend is handmade with locally grown Medjool dates, aromatic grapefruit and blood oranges, with vanilla, ginger and a hint of evening jasmine. Featuring iconic Palm Springs modern packaging, the sultry aroma of the Palm Springs Spa Collection evokes evenings under the stars listening to classic Rat Pack Swing while sipping a fragrant cocktail.

Included in the line is The Body Deli's first perfume. "We wanted to capture and bottle the smell of summer," says Parker about the organic, non-alcohol based perfume. "As it contains no synthetics, it's a perfect solution for those who are 'anti-perfume' or sensitive to chemicals... or

simply like wearing natural scents." It smells fresh and clean with a little bit of floral and a little spice.

The Body Deli has been providing 'nutrition for the skin' since 2001. Motivated by the concept of natural living and driven by the science of "living foods," a staff of 10 hand-makes small batches at their Palm Desert location utilizing raw, fresh, natural and organic ingredients. The result is a myriad of nutrient-rich creations for the body, face and hair that deliver vitamins, enzymes and minerals at their peak potency.

The Palm Springs Spa Collection is available in lotion, oil, perfume, scrub and body wash formats. Retail prices range from \$25 to \$60 and the products may be purchased at The Body Deli's Palm Desert store (73-910 Hwy 111) and at Raymond | Lawrence in Palm Springs' Uptown Design District. All Body Deli products are also available on-line at www.thebodydeli.com or call 760-340-3731.



The Body Deli Cosmetic Chefs and owners, Margaret Skarin and David Parker



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Hip Emotions

By Bronwyn Ison

Early in my yoga teaching career a student approached me after class with tears cascading down her face. My natural instinct was concern. She wrapped her arms around me and thanked me for a wonderful experience. With ambiguous feelings and trepidation, she shared her feelings as to why she was crying. We had performed several asanas (poses) with a focus on hip opening. I smiled and revealed to her that what she was experiencing was healthy and normal. Hip opening in yoga is an existential gateway to releasing - and learning about - your emotions.

In yogic terms, there is no separation between mind, body and spirit. The three in harmony are a yoga axiom. In other words, if something is bothering you physically, emotionally or spiritually, it is likely to manifest in your body. Research tells us that virtually everyone stores negative energy in the body. One common area is the hips and/or pelvic girdle. You may be thinking 'what a peculiar circumstance.' However, opening the hips will release toxic energy as well as aid in proper alignment, releasing lower back tension, and improving circulation in your legs.

The hip ball and socket is the largest joint in the human body. Yoga philosophy teaches that drawing our breath (prana) life force into the hip area can aid in releasing pent-up emotions and stress. In class, I often refer to this region as our "junk drawer." It is one of the areas within our bodies we store and deposit negativity - similar to a kitchen or bedroom junk drawer where we store things away to deal with later.

There are a myriad of reasons why we bind in our hips. Our professional lives may subject us to sitting or standing all day. Plus, if you participate in hiking, biking, walking or running, it is likely you have tight hip flexors. All positions are weight bearing onto the pelvis. Our hips are exceptionally important and complex, and fortunately, offer us a wide range of motion. According to Blandine Calais-Germain, author of *Anatomy of Movement*, there are eight directions in which the hips are mobile: flexion, extension, adduction, abduction, medial rotation, lateral rotation, anteversion and retroversion.

You can find great relief for your tight hips and lower back by fully engaging yourself in yoga. If yoga is a new endeavor for you, it is wise to seek a professional. Being conscious of our movement is important, and learning proper form and technique is essential for a beneficial yoga practice. Yoga is an elixir for the joints. Working the largest ball and socket joint will enable your entire body to feel rejuvenated. When our hamstrings are tight it leads to lower back pain hence tight hips. Never push yourself beyond your limits. You must know when to stop to preclude injury.

It is never too late to begin working on your hips and exercising an emotional release. You will be amazed how your hips can set you free!



Yogis at Evolve in La Quinta relax into Pigeon Pose deeply stretching hip flexors

Bronwyn Ison is the owner of Evolve Yoga in La Quinta and can be reached at (760) 564-YOGA. www.e-volveyoga.com

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Start at Cactus and Reach for the Clouds

Each day I look at our beautiful San Jacinto Mountains and feel an emotional response. I feel awe, appreciation, and personal gratitude for my annual honor of climbing to the top of this grand mountain. It is noteworthy that this hike - to the tram from the base of the mountain (near the Palm Springs Museum), and then from the tram to the summit - is the greatest elevation gain of any trail in the country. *Backpacker Magazine* rates Skyline Trail the nation's 3rd most difficult hike with a climb of nearly 10,000 feet over 20 miles. There are many reasons to add this hike, locally known as "Cactus to Clouds," to your bucket list. Clearly, however, there are prerequisites, such as good baseline health and weekly hiking with elevation training, yet it is a great aspiration.

This year marks my 5th time to make this hike, and each time a different emotion and lesson surfaces. During my journey, I imagine earlier days in the Coachella Valley when desert temperatures began to spike and the native Indians journeyed from desert floor to higher elevation using this same trail. An elder tribesman I often see at the top of the tram took time one day to impart his knowledge of the route's history. He told me of entire families who would make the trek, carrying heavy loads and taking days to complete their mission. He mentioned a plant which still exists on the trail today that was often taken internally by elders who turned ill and were unable to complete the journey. The plant would flood the body with potassium creating a deep sleep and causing the heart to fail. As I hike this monumental mountain, I think of their tribulations and the respect they had for this sacred area. With each step, I reflect on what I label 'hardships' and by the end of the long ascent, my worries and challenges are lessened.

The challenges of the Cahuilla Indians hold lessons we can all learn on our path to health and wellness. When considering their journey, you must remember that their great physical strength for climbing the mountain was necessary for food and shelter. Staying on the hot desert floor was not an option. Nowadays, we take our health, food sources and luxuries for granted. Every now and then it is good to work hard and physically challenge your body as those before us were required to do.

The first step towards well-being is to set a physical goal. Physical goals can transcend into spiritual epiphanies and emotional breakthroughs. Many goals might seem insurmountable, yet can always be attained. Our mental fortitude is stronger than we can imagine and will carry us through. Start with any goal that pushes you a bit beyond your comfort zone. Work towards accomplishment and then set your sights on starting at "cactus" and reaching for "clouds."

And one day, I hope to see you on this magical trail in our very own backyard.



Sciatica: Causes and Treatments

By Lawrence Le Roy, DC

The painful and irritating condition we commonly call “sciatica” is also known as sciatic neuritis, sciatic neuralgia, or lumbar radiculopathy. It involves one of five spinal nerve roots of the sciatic nerve which is the longest and widest single nerve in the body. It begins in the lumbar spine (lower back) from the spinal nerves L4 (L – Lumbar) through S3 (S – Sacral) and travels through the buttock and down the lower limb to the foot on both sides.

Why is it so painful? Almost all of the skin of the leg, the muscles of the back of the thigh, the leg, and the foot are supplied by the sciatic nerve. If there is compression or irritation of one of the five spinal nerve roots, this can result in symptoms including low back pain, buttock pain, and pain, numbness or weakness in various parts of the leg or foot. One may also experience pins and needles or tingling and difficulty moving or controlling the leg. The pain from sciatica can be severe and debilitating for some, and less frequent and irritating to others, but with the potential of getting worse.

What Causes Sciatica?

The common causes of compression include:

Spinal disc bulge or spinal disc herniation (a herniated intervertebral disc)

Discs are like shock absorbers that cushion the spine from compression forces. The spinal discs consist of a fibrous tough ring of cartilage known as the annulus fibrosus with an egg yolk type liquid center, the nucleus pulposus. They separate the vertebrae allowing space for the exiting nerve roots coming from the spinal cord. The discs are weak when rotational pressure movements are applied to the spine - such as during a golf swing or lifting and twisting.

When the liquid center bulges in an outward direction (most commonly posterior lateral toward the spinal nerve roots), there is tearing of the annulus fibrosus, resulting in compression of the nerve root against an internal portion of the spinal vertebra, causing sciatica. Additional compression may develop due to inflammation and swelling of the surrounding tissues.

Spinal stenosis

Spinal stenosis is a narrowing of the spinal canal (the opening where the spinal cord runs) causing compression on the spinal cord or sciatic nerve roots. Stenosis of the foramina (the opening created by an arch at the top of one vertebra and an arch at the bottom of the vertebra above where the spinal nerve exits on either side) will also cause compression on the spinal nerve root exiting between these two vertebrae.

Spinal stenosis may be caused by inflammation, herniated disc, spondylolisthesis (a slipping of one vertebra on another), or a bone spur, resulting in a narrowing of the space, irritating and pinching the spinal nerves and creating sciatic pain.

Diagnosis

Sciatica is usually diagnosed by a physical examination and history of the symptoms. While tests may be positive in 90% of people with sciatica, approximately 75% with a positive test do not have sciatica.

Additional studies such as a CT or MRI may be recommended to diagnose a lumbar disc herniation.

Treatment

Medications

Medications are typically prescribed for sciatica to reduce swelling and relieve immediate pain; however, evidence for the effectiveness of analgesics is poor. Evidence is also lacking in the use of opioids and muscle relaxants which are often prescribed.

Spinal manipulation

There is moderate quality evidence that spinal manipulation (a chiropractic adjustment) is an effective and generally safe treatment for sciatica. Chiropractic adjustments provide joint mobilization helping to normalize joint motion aiding in reducing inflammation, swelling and nerve irritation.

Decompression Therapy

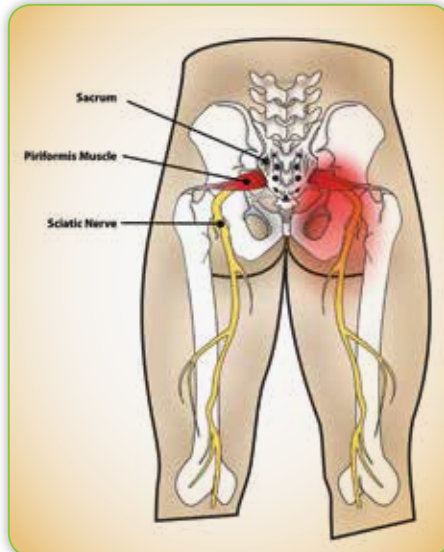
Axial spinal decompression has demonstrated an ability to significantly reduce intradiscal pressure to a negative 150mm Hg, allowing for disc decompression. Patients with sciatica and abnormal sensory function with positive examination and

positive imaging studies reported an overall improvement of 67% after receiving spinal decompression therapy. Patients with disc involvement reported 86% relief of their symptoms after a course of axial spinal decompression therapy.

There are surgical options available for sciatica, but many of these procedures have been shown to only provide short term relief. The aforementioned are non-invasive therapies and should be considered prior to spinal surgery. Speak to a qualified health care practitioner to determine the best treatment for your condition.

Dr. Le Roy is a doctor of chiropractic and can be reached at 760.771.4800.

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Why Not Organic?

By Cristina Cascio, Agua Serena Spa Director

Lately I've noticed people turning up their nose at organic products and foods. Some seem downright annoyed. I overheard a woman at the drugstore plainly tell the clerk who was attempting to share the benefits of their new organic sunscreen, "I don't need organic; I'm over it!" I found that incredibly interesting and had to probe further.

How can a process with (literally) the most pure intentions end up with a bad rap? In the luxury spa world, we do our homework and work to find products that include ingredients our bodies crave. These essential nutrients allow us to enjoy the most benefit without the suspicion of added chemicals, dyes, toxins or preservatives. Of course we can find less expensive and more readily available products to use, but in our industry, the goal is to find creators who put their emphasis on every ingredient and who take pride in the methods with which they produce those products. We invest time getting to know the people behind the brands; we investigate their practices and training techniques; and we make sure they stand behind their product with the utmost integrity. Isn't that important to everyone or are we out of touch with the needs and wants of our consumers?

I reached out to our trusted source here at Agua Serena Spa to inject another point of view. Dr. Bruce Underwood is the resort's expert on healthy living and preventive care who provides services for both guests and staff. I asked the Doc his views on organic products and loved his response, "The most important part of eating is to get all of the essential minerals, vitamins, amino acids and fatty acids our body needs daily. Eating organic helps in lowering the toxic load on your liver and kidneys, but it does not provide all the essential nutrients. Quality products are also necessary."

In recent years, we have seen increased attention on the debate between organic and non-organic, and the final outcome after decades of research is far from clear. After striking up a conversation with Ida from the drug store about her comment to the clerk, asking more questions about how she felt and why, it turns out the root of her frustration is in the indecision on the subject...and understandably so! You may have heard about the larger scale study that came out of Stanford University in 2012, which really fueled the fire of anti-organics. The conclusion stated:

"The published literature lacks strong evidence that organic foods are significantly more nutritious than conventional foods. Consumption of organic foods may reduce exposure to pesticide residues and antibiotic-resistant bacteria."

I could hear the vindication in peoples' voices, even my own sister's when she shared her, "I told you so," but the last sentence in that conclusion is still enough for me to take the organic route. You better believe that anytime I have the opportunity to "reduce exposure to pesticide residue and antibiotic resistant bacteria," I'm jumping on that! Not just for myself either, I have to make that critical decision for my spa guests as well. There is no other choice on the matter that will allow me to sleep at night.

I feel blessed to work with skincare lines like Primavera, whose creators have such passion for the amazing products they produce. They are family owned and work closely with their organic farmers in 16 countries to source the 125 native plant ingredients necessary to make their products. That means ingredients like lavender and witch hazel are brought from France, tea tree from Australia, eucalyptus from Portugal and so on. Their materials indicate exactly what percentage of the total product is certified organic and it is rarely outside of the 90% range. They are a company which shares values of authenticity, transparency, respect and responsibility, and give us confidence knowing we can be proud of the products and services we provide our guests.

So, why not organic? The research pros and cons will continue, and yes, you may have to pay more for peace of mind that you are avoiding exposure to toxic chemicals, but making that decision for your body feels good...and you are worth it! You've only got one shot on this earth, so as they say, 'don't count every moment of the day, make every moment count!'

Agua Serena Spa is located at the Hyatt Regency Indian Wells. For more information visit aguaserenaspa.com or call 760.674.4100.

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- 4 Only 7% of organic ingredients contain pesticides versus 38% in conventional ingredients.³
- 5 Organic ingredients are known to contain more compounds known as phenols, which are believed to have cancer fighting properties.⁴

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It is Easier to Prevent Dehydration Than Treat It

By Sonja Fung, ND

You never want to be caught in a state of dehydration, especially here in the desert. If you wait until you are thirsty to drink water, you are already dehydrated. The dry valley air coupled with our oven-like heat enables dehydration which can sneak up quickly, and because most people don't drink enough water, the threshold may be closer than you think - especially when exercising. It is much easier to prevent dehydration than to treat it.

We should always be cognizant of our hydration status, especially in the summer months. If you have a dry, sticky mouth, are thirsty, have frequent headaches or constipation, you already are in mild to moderate dehydration. A good gauge of hydration status is not how thirsty you

are, but the color of your urine. If your urine is light to clear, you are adequately hydrated. If your urine is dark yellow to amber, you are dehydrated.

Our bodies are 72% water and we need a lot of water intake to keep the proper balance. You should be drinking half your body weight in ounces of water every day. If you weigh 140 pounds, you should be drinking at least 70 oz of water daily. That's a little over 2 liters and does not include coffee, tea or other liquids.

As we sweat, we lose more than just water. Electrolytes such as sodium, potassium, calcium, and magnesium are also lost. If you have ever experienced muscle cramping after sweating a lot, it is an indication of the loss of these major

minerals and a sign of moderate to severe dehydration. Electrolytes are essential in the function of your body, so they need to be replaced.

How do you maintain optimal hydration when exercising? Don't start already dehydrated. Make it a habit to continuously drink water throughout the day. Start your day with a large glass of water with a good squeeze of fresh lemon juice first thing in the morning. Carry a reusable glass or BPA-free water bottle with you and count your refills. Before, during, and after your work out, drink electrolyte water and avoid the sugary neon sports drink. Most sports drinks are filled with high fructose corn syrup, artificial flavoring, and dyes. Instead, choose from these healthy electrolyte options - or better yet, make your own.

- Smart Water by Glaceau
- Trader Joes Electrolyte water
- Zico Coconut water

Making your own electrolyte

replenishing drink is easy and cost effective. Just mix together:

- 12 oz filtered water
- 2 Tablespoons fresh lemon juice
- 1/8 tsp sea salt
- a small pinch of Stevia extract (natural sugar substitute) to taste

For the intense athlete, there are other healthy electrolyte supplements that you can purchase such as Catalyte (an electrolyte restoring powder). Add 1 scoop to a water bottle and drink before, during, and after strenuous exercise.

Remember, an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure and there are easy ways to prevent dehydration. Don't wait until it's too late.

Dr. Sonja Fung is a primary care naturopathic doctor and co-owner at Live Well Clinic, located on Avenue 47 and Adams, behind the Target/ World Market complex. For more information you can visit the website at www.livewellclinic.org or call at 760-771-5970.



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What is TCM?

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

Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) can resolve many health issues. Reflecting Chinese insight and ingenuity, it has been used effectively and without harmful side effects for thousands of years to cure ailments, support healing, increase energy and promote general well-being.

TCM is based on the concept of Qi (pronounced 'chea'), which literally means "breath" or "air" and is thought of as life force (or energy) inherent in all things. In TCM, your body is seen as an integrated whole; your mind, emotions, spirit, and physical body forming a complex interrelated system that is powered by Qi. The balance of negative and positive forms (Yin and Yang) of Qi in the body is essential for good health, while imbalance can cause disease. It is this balance that TCM seeks to augment and restore.

TCM understands that your body has a natural regenerative capacity. TCM practitioners balance your Qi to allow this self-healing ability to function, giving your body the support it needs to regain its health.

To accomplish this, TCM uses a variety of natural healing methods. Chief among these is acupuncture, which has been practiced for thousands of years. Very fine needles are inserted along meridians, energy pathways in the body, to tonify or sedate as required. Acupuncture also has direct effects on blood chemistry with the ability to alleviate pain, often nearly immediately. Needles used may be as few as four, or as many as fifty, depending on the condition, and may be enhanced with microcurrents. Ear acupuncture has been found to be especially useful for quick relief of pain.

Another important (and ancient) component of TCM is herbal therapy. The essential properties of literally hundreds of herbs and their actions on the body-mind-spirit have been identified and classified. A wide range of objects fall into the category of TCM: herbs, stones, bones, insects, animal parts, as well as, flowers, stems, seeds, bark and roots.



A TCM formula combines herbs in a way that makes them more powerful than the sum of the individual parts, with each herb performing a specific task within the body to achieve the objective of the formula as a whole. Herbal formulas can be supplied as raw herbs, concentrated powders, capsules and teas.

When treating a patient, TCM also factors in lifestyle choices, exercise, food and diet, as well as the season of year, geographical location, age, genetics, and the overall condition of your body. This makes it a truly comprehensive approach to health.

Diane Sheppard is a licensed acupuncturist with a Ph.D. in Oriental Medicine. She is a practitioner at Eisenhower Wellness Institute and owner of AcQPoint Wellness Center in La Quinta. 760-775-7900 www.AcQPoint.com



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What's the Skinny on Body Shaping?

By Lauren Del Sarto

Getting rid of those stubborn fat areas – saddlebags, the pooch, love handles – is a lifelong plight for many. So it's easy to understand the latest weight loss craze, 'Body Shaping' or 'Body Sculpting' as these therapies promise results for areas you can't seem to lose with diet or exercise. By flattening or killing fat cells that your body then metabolizes and naturally eliminates, these devices are said to deliver immediate and progressive results over 2-6 months.

But this advanced technology is not a substitute for weight loss - and not for everyone. "These are not treatments for people who need to lose 50 pounds," says Dan Olesnicky, MD of Executive Wellness. "We recommend these finishing technologies for those who maintain a healthy lifestyle and are active." Brittany Zakrzewski, Nurse LVN at Dr. Suzanne Quardt's office agrees. "These treatments are best for people who are at a healthy weight, but have stubborn areas they just can't seem to lose."

Unlike Laser Lipo (or Smart Lipo) which pierces the skin and can leave bruising, these non-invasive therapies are applied externally and appear to have few side effects and zero recovery time. However, the results and risks are dependent on the practitioner performing the procedure, so if you are seeking treatment, make sure it is from a qualified source.



Exilis works to both reduce fat in problem areas and tighten skin in the facial area

Fire up those fat cells. Exilis is radiofrequency technology that heats up the skin and the deep layers of fat underneath. It is applied with a handheld wand allowing the tech to act "as a sculptor" strategically covering all areas of concern. It is effective on most problem areas and has the added benefit of skin tightening, unraveling collagen allowing skin to snap back tighter. Multiple treatments are required and you will continue to see improvement for up to 6 months. It is an electrical probe, so it can burn the skin if not properly applied.

Freeze the pooch. Devices like CoolSculpting® chill the fat cells to 4 degree Celsius triggering their natural death with no effect on nerves or other tissues. Typically only one 60-minute treatment is necessary for each area and is reported to kill 20-30% of the targeted fat cells. CoolSculpting® is only FDA approved for use on the abdomen and love handles. Zakrzewski notes that reported 'blocky' results are avoided by ending each treatment with a 2 minute massage to smooth out the area.



CoolSculpting® freezes fat cells triggering their natural death

Laser the legs (and other areas). Cold laser therapies like Zerona® can be used on most problem areas. After about 20 minutes of treatment, the fat cells beneath the targeted area develop a transitory pore that allows the cells' contents to be released and flattening the cell. Patients start seeing results after two weeks of treatment. "Zerona is a good complement to a weight loss program," says Olesnicky. "Both synergistically release the fat cells and you continue to burn fat in those problem areas as you lose weight."

The professionals remind us that none of these technologies get rid of fat around your organs, which are the most dangerous fats. "Investing in these therapies for cosmetic purposes are well and good," concludes Olesnicky, "but first invest your time and efforts into establishing healthier lifestyle choices."



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Be sure to check out the next issue as Desert Health® will be putting some of these therapies to the test this summer and reporting our results in the September October issue!

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Managing Menopause Naturally

By Jill Coleman, RN

Menopause is a subject on which there are many views and opinions, and it is experienced in just as many ways. Fortunately, there are many simple steps and natural remedies you can take to help relieve the myriad of symptoms you may face.

The average age of menopause is around 52, but peri-menopause can begin in the 30's as hormones start to shift and fluctuations in estrogen, progesterone and testosterone start the roller-coaster of emotions and symptoms. Officially, one is not in menopause until there are no menses for 12 months. It could be irregular in timing, but as long as a woman is bleeding, she is not in menopause. Since the thyroid, adrenals, and ovaries are interrelated, the condition of these glands plays an important role in how one gets through this 'change of life.'

What is Going On?

As most of us know, menopause symptoms can include irritability, hot flashes, problems sleeping, thinning hair, decreased libido, increased breast tenderness, vaginal dryness, food cravings, weight gain, fuzzy thinking, headaches, joint discomfort, and more.

During this change, the body starts to hold on to fat because estrogen is stored in fat, and is a very valuable hormone to be released when needed. This can create weight gain around the middle and can make it difficult to lose those unwanted pounds.

Since estrogen and progesterone production by the ovaries decreases, testosterone levels fall out of ratio and can also lead to weight gain since testosterone is primarily a male hormone. Muscle starts to diminish and metabolism starts to slow down.

What's A Woman to Do?

Exercise: Since fat cells do not burn fat like muscle cells do, it is important to stay active. Find something you enjoy and stick with it. Walking, yoga, Pilates, swimming, biking - or anything that raises your heart rate for at least 20 to 40 minutes a day, 4-5 times a week. Make exercise fun by diversifying. Dancing is also great as long as it increases your heart rate above 100.

Herbs: Herbs such as black cohosh, dong quai, wild yam (root), St. John's wort, sage, shatavari root extract, licorice root, and Korean ginseng can also offer relief from symptoms. Chaste tree can be helpful for those who are still menstruating. If you choose herbs, make sure you get organic forms from a reputable company.

Foods: Studies show that women with good eating habits tend to have less menopausal symptoms. So if you have been thinking about improving your eating habits, doing so to minimize menopausal and peri-menopausal symptoms should be very good incentive.

Here are a few diet guidelines... not only for menopause but for life!

Above all, avoid MSG, hydrogenated oils, "enriched" packaged foods, high fructose syrups, caffeine, alcohol, peanuts and white foods such as white flour (that includes pasta and breads), white rice, and white potatoes.

Avoid sugar! Sugar contributes to so many problems, and remember, white foods (breads, pastas) turn into sugar in your body. Avoid all artificial sweeteners such as

Continued on page 17



What Is A Breast MRI?

Provided by Breastlink

Breast MRI (Magnetic Resonance Imaging) is an extremely helpful, non-invasive imaging tool used to evaluate mammographic abnormalities and identify early breast cancer, especially in women at high risk. An MRI does not involve radiation exposure and does not replace screening mammography. Instead it provides a powerful supplementary tool for detecting and staging breast cancer.

What Are The Clinical Indications For Breast MRI?

✓ **Surveillance of high risk patients:** Recent clinical trials have demonstrated that an annual breast MRI can significantly improve the detection of cancer that is otherwise clinically and mammographically hidden in patients with a >20% lifetime risk of developing breast cancer. Breast MRI may be indicated in the surveillance of women with a genetic predisposition to breast cancer (BRCA1, BRCA2) or in patients with a strong family history or history of chest wall radiation for treatment of Hodgkin's lymphoma.

✓ **Determining the extent of disease of a recently diagnosed breast cancer:** After a biopsy confirms the presence of a breast cancer, an MRI can be helpful to determine how large the tumor is and if there are other areas involved in the same breast or in the other breast. This is helpful for determining the best surgical option.

✓ **Unknown primary cancer:** MRI may be indicated in patients with no mammographic or physical findings of a primary breast carcinoma as MRI may identify the hidden breast cancer. Alternatively, if no MRI evidence is present, it would exclude the breast as the potential site of the primary cancer.

✓ **Assessment of chemotherapy response:** Breast MRI may be employed

before, during and/or after a course of chemotherapy to evaluate treatment response and the extent of residual disease prior to surgical treatment.

✓ **Silicone implant integrity:** Breast MRI is the best test for determining whether silicone implants have ruptured, and to what extent.

✓ **Supplementary problem solving tool:** Sometimes an abnormality seen on a mammogram cannot be adequately evaluated by additional mammography and ultrasound alone. In these rare cases, MRI can be used to definitively determine if the abnormality needs biopsy or can be safely left alone. A breast MRI may also be an option for screening high risk women with dense breast tissue in conjunction with a mammogram.

During a breast MRI, the patient lies face down on a platform specifically designed for the procedure. The platform has openings to accommodate the breasts and allow them to be imaged without compression. An intravenous contrast agent is injected, and the images are obtained. The exam takes approximately 30 minutes to an hour. Once the exam is completed, a board-certified breast radiologist will interpret the images and send a final report to your physician.

A patient should discuss with their physician if they would benefit from a breast MRI. Breast MRI is covered by private health insurance and Medicare for qualified patients. However, it is important for patients to check with their individual insurance plans, as coverage may vary.

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Managing Menopause Naturally

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aspartame, and yes, raw honey and agave nectar are sugars. Stevia, Xylitol, and Lacanto are acceptable natural sweeteners. Better yet, substitute sugary foods with fresh, organic fruit to feed those cravings.

Many say to increase soy (for natural estrogen), but almost all soy today is genetically modified so I don't recommend it. Most soy is unfermented and has very high levels of phytic acid that blocks mineral absorption. Meso and Tempe are good forms of fermented soy, but make sure you get them non-GMO.

If you like salt, make sure it is a good quality sea salt with a high amount of trace minerals to balance the sodium chloride such as Himalayan sea salt.

I know you don't want to hear this, but chocolate should be eliminated. If you just can't go without it, make sure it is organic dark chocolate with at least 70% Cacao, and limit to no more than once or twice a week.

Get more fiber and calcium by eating more organic, green vegetables. They are a wonderful source of nutrients and trace minerals. The body absorbs 98% of calcium from green vegetables and only 2% from common calcium supplements, which are mostly just ground up rock!

Whole grains can be a good source of fiber. But from my research, ALL grains should be sprouted, and most of us eat far too many grain products, which are mainly over processed and hence, depleted of nutrients.

Eat more organic fruits and berries. Cranberries, strawberries, blueberries, bilberries, cherries, red clover, green tea, flax seed, black beans, yams, omega 3 oils (high quality fish oil), raw nuts, and as above, fresh green leafy vegetables and fruit. Eat twice as many vegetables as fruits. Eat three times a day, especially breakfast, with quality protein at every meal and some kind of raw vegetable. Increase healthy fats like raw organic butter, coconut oil, flax seed oil, and don't worry about the calories. Focus more on nutrition content. All calories are not equal! Get as much nutrition per calorie as possible!

Increase water intake. Preferably, filtered water is best, not distilled, and everyone should be drinking ½ their body weight in ounces. So if you weigh 150 lbs, you should be drinking 75 ounces of fresh water every day.

Realize What's Happening & Relax

Of course, the more you resist something, the more unpleasant it is. Stress can contribute to many symptoms, so take time to relax and continue to enjoy life. Try laughing about it! This may be the most important thing you can do, as state of mind can override many physical conditions. Acupuncture can also be very helpful, and a good massage once a week relieves stress and feels oh so good!

It is never too early or too late to start taking responsibility for your body. Look at menopause as a little adventure. Get together with friends and support each other with healthy tips and recipes. You are not alone on this road to the next stage of life!

Jill Coleman has been a registered nurse for over 21 years working at a variety of Southern California hospitals including UCLA's Heart Transplant Step-down Unit and LAUSC County Hospital's Trauma Unit. She has studied holistic medicine since the late 1990's, and promotes the use of medicinal grade, whole food and organic remedies in her practice. For more information on foods and menopause, visit her blog at www.JillColemanRN.com.

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The Many Benefits of Strength Training

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

I have many clients who come to me wanting to lose weight quickly but don't know how. They've tried dieting, aerobic exercise, even many of the fad exercise weight loss programs seen on TV. Nothing seems to work. What is often overlooked is that in order to lose weight, you need to challenge your muscle, and strength training is a good way to do just that.

Many people (especially women) fear weightlifting as they feel they will become bigger, or may injure themselves in the process. But strength training can tone the body and most problems arise when you push your body beyond its capabilities. If done correctly, strength training is one of the safest modes of exercise out there. Men want to lift heavy, but often get caught in a rut after doing so which is due largely to their routine choices.

Strength training challenges you both mentally and physically. When you can squat, bench press or even do 10 chin ups, you boost your self-confidence, feel good about yourself, and even feel more youthful than before. As a proponent of strength training, I'd like to provide you with a few benefits to encourage you to pick up weights and ask yourself, "Why didn't I do this sooner?!"

1. Weight training helps you lose fat. The bottom line is that more muscle means more calories burned during rest. A major review of published research shows that weight training has an average loss of approximately 1.7 kg of fat in both normal and overweight individuals while preserving both their lean body mass and metabolic rate. With all the different fads on the market, nothing can match old style strength training. The key is finding the level that pushes your body hard enough to gain a metabolic effect during recovery when your body is at rest, but still burning fat.

2. Strength training decreases blood pressure and improves heart function. Weight training dramatically improves heart function and has been repeatedly shown to decrease blood pressure. A study found that across 8 trials of strength training programs, systolic blood pressure decreased by an average of 6.2mmHg. This study is of significance considering that this is more than double the benefit of typical blood pressure medications.

3. Strength training improves sleep and reduces chronic pain. A recent intervention showed that older men improved their quality of sleep by 5% and woke up fewer times during the night while on a strength training program. Lack of quality rest and deep REM sleep can influence glycemic control, diabetes risk, body fat gain and inflammation.

4. Heavy lifting can help build bone. More than any other physical activity, weight training helps to build bone mass and density. Studies show former elite athletes who included weight lifting as part of their workout routines have much stronger bones as they age. This translates into a 50% lower chance of fracture in men, and 20% lower fracture risk in women.

To build bone, you want a training program that emphasizes hypertrophy (muscle size increase) and strength ranges. This means lifting near maximal loads at times, doing plyometrics (jump training), and even wearing a protective vest. For hypertrophy, stay in a rep range of 8-12 reps and near 75% of your max. For strength gain, do 6-8 reps near 85% of your max load.

5. Strength Training can help prevent disease, particularly cancer and diabetes. Many specialists prescribe exercise for prevention and/or maintenance of diabetes. Research has shown that interval training is one of the most effective forms for this condition



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as building muscle increases the muscle's demand for glucose pulling it from the bloodstream and contributing to better body composition.

Strength training has also been shown to lower the risk of a number of cancers, particularly breast cancer. Teen girls who weight train experience a greater reduction risk of breast cancer later in life. But the benefit for cancer prevention extends to women of all ages.

6. Strength training improves hormone levels and reproductive function. Strength training increases both testosterone and IGF-1 in men, which correlates to leanness. In women, building lean muscle has been shown to improve the metabolism of estrogen, which in turn means lower risk of cancer and decreased body fat.

Give strength training a try. You will enjoy the results and be glad you did. As with any new exercise program, it is advised to consult your health care practitioner and to work with a qualified professional in developing a program to meet your individual objectives and physical ability.

Michael K Butler B.A.;P.T.A.;CSCS*D;RSCC*D NMT is co owner of Kinetix Health and Performance center in Palm Desert. He holds a state license as a physical therapist assistant, national certifications of distinction through the NSCA as a strength and conditioning coach, Poliquin International state coach and as a Full Body Active Release Techniques Practitioner. He is the fitness expert on a sports radio talk show (1010 xkps) once a week. He can be reached at 760-200-1719 or at michael@kinetixcenter.com.

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It Only Takes One Internal Champion Rallying the Troops for Change

We are lucky to have a variety of fun and inspiring opportunities here in the Coachella Valley to get healthy, or to remain so. Sometimes it is more fun, and often more successful, to participate in an activity as part of a group working together to achieve a shared goal.

Studies support the many benefits of group exercise. "Working out in a group provides support, accountability, and structure," says Lynne Vaughan, Chief Innovation Officer of the national YMCA. "People don't want to let their buddy or group down, which is terrific in terms of adherence to an exercise routine."

Sometimes it merely takes one internal champion to get a group moving. But where do you start? Programs like the Coachella Valley Health Collaborative Healthy Lifestyle Challenge (HLSC) make it easy. They provide a proven activity along with the tools necessary to get your group in gear.



From left to right: Eugenia Torres, Tami Scott, Sly Zelnys, Ann Marie Quintanilla, Samantha Hawley, Cindy Hansen. Represented by the "GCC Spirit Award" held by Eugenia is Josie Meza

programs exciting and different. La Quinta has offered different prizes and award categories to incentivize in the past, and has held recognition ceremonies honoring all participants.

Zelnys agrees and has kept the Cathedral City programs fresh each year. Their first competitions included two internal weight loss challenges in which more than 20 employees (some 2-timers) participated. Sly created the flyers and sent out emails to encourage participation. A group of health professionals was hired to do weekly weigh-ins and provide coaching. There was a \$56 buy-in for the 12-week program. The individual with the greatest percentage of body fat loss won 50% of revenue; second place got 25%; and the other 25% went to weekly winners. If anyone gained weight, it was a dollar a pound, so the kitty continued to grow. "Money was definitely a motivator!" adds Zelnys.

Cathedral City participated in the HLSC last year, and this year joined the worldwide Global Corporate Challenge. "Les Sept Femme" is their team named for the 7 women participating from finance, administration and human resources. "We are competing against 37,000 other teams around the globe!" Sly will also rally City employees to gear up for the American Heart Association November Heart Walk. "Towards end of summer, we will start rolling out info on that event, to hopefully generate a number of teams representing the City."

These two champions are making a difference for their groups and having fun doing it. Deeringer adds that the effort can be discouraging if you don't see the participation you'd hoped for, "but even if our collective efforts change one person's life through weight loss or healthier choices, then it makes it all worthwhile."

If you are looking to rally your office or group, the HLSC is an easy place to start. Now in its third year, the Challenge has seen hundreds compete against each other for bragging rights, "The Best of the Best" award, and most importantly, improved health amongst its participating members. Groups have been small and large, but regardless of the size, within each is an 'internal champion' responsible for distributing information and supporting the team with encouragement throughout the competition.

For more information visit www.mywellsite.com/cvhc or contact Gary Jeandron, Project Director, at (760) 341-2883, ext. 78163, e-mail gjeandro@csusb.edu.

Reference: 1) <http://www.everydayhealth.com/fitness-motivation/group-exercise.aspx>

"Communication is key and it is best to have someone who volunteers for the position versus someone assigned," says Sly Zelnys, Human Resource Manager for the City of Cathedral City. "HR is usually a good place to start." Sly volunteered to rally the troops a few years ago and has been promoting regular health challenges for their 165 employees.

The City of La Quinta has participated in six of the HLSC competitions. Their internal champion is Terry Deeringer, Human Resource Manager, who notes that it is important to keep the



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How Women Differ from Men, Financially Speaking

Courtesy of Craig Rumbaugh

We all know men and women are different in some fundamental ways. But is this true when it comes to financial planning? In a word, yes. On the path to financial security, it's important for women to understand what they might be up against. Here are some simple steps to consider:

Take control of your money. Women live an average of 4.9 years longer than men.¹ Therefore, they need to stretch their retirement dollars further and will likely need long-term care. Married women are also likely to outlive their husbands, which means they could have ultimate responsibility for disposition of the marital estate. Create a budget, manage debt and credit wisely, set and prioritize financial goals, and implement a savings and investment strategy to meet those goals.

Advocate for yourself in the workplace. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, within most occupational categories, women who work full-time, year-round, earn only 81% (on average) of what men earn.² Have confidence in your work ability and advocate for your worth in the workplace. In addition, keep an eye out for advanced career opportunities, entrepreneurial ventures, and/or ways to grow your business.

Become a knowledgeable investor. Women sometimes are more conservative investors. Take the time to learn basic investing concepts, such as asset classes, risk tolerance, time horizon, diversification, inflation, the role of various financial vehicles like

401(k)s and IRAs, and the role of income, growth, and safety investments in a portfolio.

Plan for retirement. Save as much as you can for retirement. Estimate how much money you'll need in retirement, and how much you can expect from your savings, Social Security, and/or an employer pension. At retirement, make sure you understand your retirement plan distribution options and review your portfolio regularly. Also, factor the cost of health care (including long-term care) into your retirement planning, and understand the basic rules of Medicare.

Protect your assets. Without an asset protection plan, a woman's wealth is vulnerable to taxes, lawsuits, accidents, and other financial risks that are part of everyday life. Identify potential risk exposure and implement strategies to reduce that exposure. For example, life and disability insurance is vital to protect your ability to earn an income and/or care for your family in the event of disability or death.

Create an estate plan. To ensure that your personal and financial wishes will be carried out in the event of your incapacity or death, consider executing basic estate planning documents, such as a will, trust, durable power of attorney, and health-care proxy.

Craig Rumbaugh offers securities and investment advisory services through ING Financial Partners, member SIPC, and can be reached at 760.341.5010.

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References: 1) The National Vital Statistics Report, Volume 60, Number 4, January 2012; 2) U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, Women in the Labor Force: A Databook, December 2011

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[COMMUNITY MATTERS]

Craig is an active member of the community supporting many non-profit organizations including Indian Wells Rotary Club (President 2011); Director of the Community Foundation of Riverside County; and Director of the Steinway Society of Riverside County.

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

Inspired by the federal government's Healthy People 2010 program, which encourages fitness and disease prevention, the Desert Healthcare District built The Wellness Park at the corner of Via Miraleste and Tachevah Road in Palm Springs.

The beautiful 5-acre park offers a quarter-mile walking/jogging loop with drinking fountains and benches at regular intervals, five exercise/fitness stations, and various gardens – meditation, memorial, and a healing and fragrance garden with a bubbling fountain. The grounds were built in collaboration with the City of Palm Springs, the Desert Water Agency, and Palm Springs Unified School District.

Recently, the Healing and Fragrance Garden was redesigned with a variety of aromatic, medicinal, and colorful plants designed to attract butterflies and hummingbirds. Each plant includes a descriptive and educational sign indicating its healing and/or aromatic uses. Robin Kobaly, Executive Director of The Summertree Institute (www.summertree.org), was the designer, landscape installer, and creator of the educational signs.

Over 25 varieties of plants were added to the Healing and Fragrance Garden including **French Lavender**, long valued not only for its fresh, sweet smell, but also for its wide and varied therapeutic benefits. Its history goes back at least as far as the Roman Empire where dried lavender was used to freshen the wash water. Lavender oil was used to treat battle wounds. Other plants in this garden include **Peppermint**, used for the common cold, cough, inflammation of the mouth and throat, sinus infections, and respiratory infections; and **Scented Thyme**, a Mediterranean herb which holds its flavor in cooking and blends well with other flavors of the region like garlic, olive oil and tomatoes. Thyme is also considered to have antiseptic and preservative properties and has long been used medicinally, as well as in preserving meats.

A highlight of the redesigned garden includes the addition of two **Blue Chaste Trees** which have been revered by women for centuries for helping with reproductive problems and dazzle us with beautiful blue flowers in the spring.

The Wellness Park, along with its interactive gardens, is an integral part of the Desert Healthcare District's commitment to health promotion and community collaboration and partnerships designed to improve the health and quality of life for all District residents.

Desert Healthcare District is a government agency, established by the state of California in 1948, to improve and support community health programs within a 457-square mile service area in the Coachella Valley. The District also owns and oversees the lease of Desert Regional Medical Center in Palm Springs.





What’s Better: Saving or Paying Down Debt?

By Reesa Manning, Vice President & Senior Financial Advisor
Integrated Wealth Management

The Great Recession has drilled home a lesson many people seemed to have forgotten: debt can be dangerous to your financial health. For those who lost their jobs and ran out of savings, it was a lesson relearned the hard way. But for those who have managed to hang on—or had low levels of debt - it raises the question: is it better to save or pay down your debt first?

The answer depends on a lot of considerations unique to each individual, such as your age, how much you’ve already saved, what rate of interest you’re paying, and more. A review of investment planning basics is a good place to start. Following is an outline of how income (above and beyond your day-to-day expenses) should be allocated:

✓ First Priority: Insurance

One of the best routes to financial ruin is not having adequate insurance. So your first priority should be to have the right insurance policies in accurate amounts to protect you and your family. If you’re young and unmarried, this means having basic health insurance. Beyond that, if you have a family, you need life insurance as well as short- and long-term disability insurance. In each case, you’re attempting to provide yourself or your survivors with a replacement for the income you - and they - count on. The bottom line: if you have debt, make minimum payments until you’re properly insured and have the next two priorities covered as well.

✓ Second Priority: An Emergency Fund

Even if you don’t have a family, you need to protect yourself against job loss or a major unexpected expense. The rule of thumb is to create an emergency savings fund equal to three to six months of your income. Not only does this give you breathing space against hardships, it also affords you the flexibility to move in connection with a job change.

Make an emergency savings fund a priority. If you can’t take care of priorities one and two at the same time you pay for basic necessities, like groceries and gasoline, you’re living beyond your means and need to cut back on your spending.

✓ Third Priority: Retirement Savings

Finally, before you even think about making more than the minimum payments toward your debts, it’s imperative that you start saving for retirement, as soon as possible. Time is both the best ally and worst enemy of the saver. Start saving too late, and it may be impossible to accumulate enough for a worry-free retirement. On the other hand, even small amounts — as little as \$25 a month — put away early enough can grow to sizable amounts by the time you’re ready to retire.

With these three priorities covered, if you have money left over, it’s time to consider making extra payments to tackle your debt.

Guidelines for Debt Reduction

There are a number of factors to consider when you’re ready to start accelerating the pace at which you pay down debt:

Start with the debt with the highest interest rate.

Instead of paying more on every one of your debts, concentrate on the one that charges the highest interest rate. In general, these will be store credit cards, followed by bank credit cards like Visa and MasterCard. Use all your spare cash flow to pay them down one at a time.

Is it tax deductible?

Debt that you can write off against your taxes is generally considered “good debt.” In effect, the tax deduction reduces the interest rate by your marginal tax rate. In most cases, this means home mortgage interest.

What rate of return can you expect?

The most important consideration is whether you can earn more by investing your money than the interest rate you’re being charged on your debt. If you can earn more in the financial markets than your interest rate, you should invest your money instead of paying off the debt. If not, it’s worth it to pay off the debt.


How long until you retire?

This is a key consideration when you’re thinking of paying off your mortgage, especially if it’s near the end of its term. At that point, the tax benefits are minimal because most of your payments consist of principal, not interest. In addition, if you’re 50 years old or older, the monthly cash flow you’d free up could be devoted to the extra \$5,000 a year you can contribute – pretax - to an IRA or 401(k). On the other hand, if you have 10 years or more to go on your mortgage, it could be smarter to keep making the minimum payments to retain the tax advantages. As an alternative, consider the advantages of refinancing the remaining balance. At the reduced principal amount and with mortgage interest rates near historical lows, you may be able to reduce your monthly payments such that you can save nearly as much as you would if your mortgage were paid off.

Smart debt management is often overlooked as a way to improve your finances, yet it can be as powerful as smart investment management.

Reesa Manning is Vice President and 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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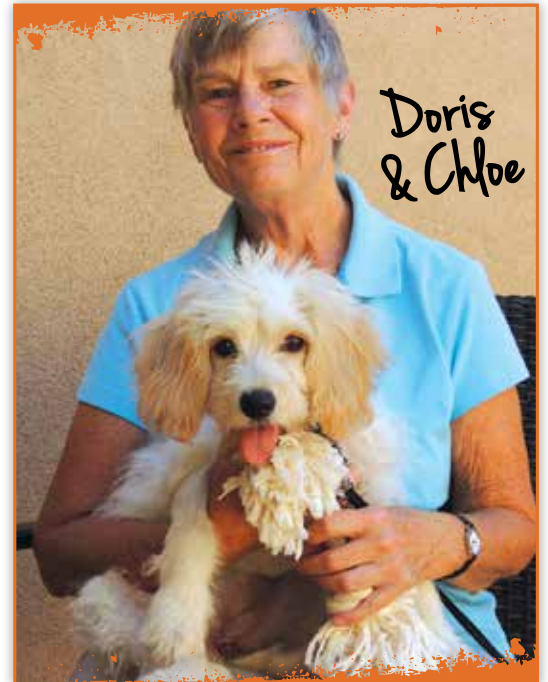
Furry Friends for Seniors

By Doris Steadman

I recently adopted an adorable furry friend from the Palm Springs Animal Shelter. While there I discovered they now have several programs for seniors interested in fostering or adopting cats and dogs. Studies have shown that pets can be very therapeutic and the shelter's philosophy is, "we want anyone who truly wants a pet to have one."

To learn more, I spoke with Shelter Director Pat Brayer. In June, the shelter launched the "Furry Friends" program with Desert Samaritans. Designed for their senior members who would like to have a pet, but are unable to either afford or fully take care of one, the program provides both costs and care. Desert Samaritans received a \$20,000 grant to support the program which covers food, supplies and vet visits. They even have volunteers to walk dogs and to care for cats.

The initial idea was to have seniors foster a pet, but most indicated they would rather adopt than foster. Desert Samaritans assesses the needs of each senior and works with the shelter to find the appropriate match.



Seniors come into the Shelter to fill out the paperwork and to pick their new friends. They can sit in the lobby or the "meet and greet" areas where dogs are brought out to them, and cat lovers are able to sit in open rooms and play with the cats. Pat says that "dog adopters pick their dogs, but cat adopters are chosen by their new friends." In the first two weeks of the program, they have placed four pets, which they consider quite a success.

Lend A Paw is another collaboration with the LGBT Center in Palm Springs. It started as a senior program, but has grown beyond age specification. This is more of a foster program, which is great for the shelter as they are currently in need of about 50 more foster families. With Lend A Paw, the individual or family will foster a pet from one week to 1 to 2 months depending on the age of the puppy or kitten. Pets are brought in regularly for vet treatments, such as deworming and shots, which are provided by the shelter. Three pets placed in LGBT Center foster care have found homes already. "We lovingly call this a 'failed foster' as their foster parent or a parents' friend just couldn't give them up."

I also discovered with my own adoption that the standard cost for seniors is half price. This was a wonderful surprise, and what a joy to have my little friend around.

"We are all in favor of providing furry ones for those who want them in their older years," concludes Pat. "Often just having them around gives you that little extra reason for getting up in the morning."

For more information on Desert Samaritan's Furry Friends program call (760) 837.9066. For the Lend A Paw, call The Center at (760) 416.7790. The Palm Springs Animal Shelter can be reached at (760) 416.5718.



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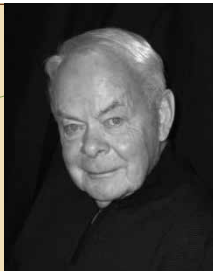
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With our mind open, the life of others can sometimes give us the heartfelt incentive needed for change, a 'kick in the conscious.'

Let me share an example with you.

Reading and music are my intellectual hobbies. As I do not play an instrument, I ventured into writing and listening. An autobiography was a goal I thought I could handle. To learn the craft, I bought many books and courses on nonfiction writing. With these arrows in my quiver, I felt prepared to start writing memories of my early years. I learned much about myself which I had forgotten. Fascinating stuff! But editing my ruminations gave me no literary satisfaction. With that, my enthusiasm diminished, but not my desire to write.

As the saying goes, "When the student is ready, the teacher will appear." And so he did! Where I found the book, I do not remember. 'Please,

not another one!' was my initial thought. But I could not resist taking home and promptly devouring *On Writing Well* by William Zinsser. Other books he wrote soon followed.

Zinsser was a journalist and editor of the New York Tribune, a professor at Yale and other institutes of higher learning, and a contributor to the *American Scholar*. He travelled widely but always lived in New York City. I thoroughly embraced his words and now use the professor as my guide for writing, as best as I can, with modesty.

I wrote to Professor Zinsser expressing my feelings and gratitude. His reply touched me deeply and shall always resonate in my soul. Among other sentiments, he welcomed me to the octogenarian years which he found to be surprisingly rich. It was only then I learned that he was turning partially blind beyond the ability to read or write. I cannot image blindness for any person, let alone a professional writer.

That is the sharing attitude of a brave individual. I cannot offer a more poignant example of a life-affirming attitude.

We are proud to welcome George Adolph of La Quinta as a regular contributor to our Senior Health section. George can be reached at ugadolph@live.com.

Stroke and Brain Injury Recovery Years of improvement can occur with targeted therapies and dedication

By Gina Malloy, PT, C/NDT, NCS

Throughout most of the twentieth century, neuroscientists believed that the brain was a static organ which reached its potential for establishing new pathways during early childhood. With advances in science, this theory has changed. 'Neuroplasticity' refers to the brain's ability to form new pathways throughout life in response to changes in behavior and the environment.

Neuroplasticity has long been associated with the neural connections formed during normal growth and development, such as in learning a new skill or storing information to memory. It is also the process that explains recovery of function following stroke and brain injury. Although the concept of neuroplasticity is widely accepted, stroke and brain injury survivors are often told by physicians and other health care providers that functional skills such as walking and talking will improve for up to one year following the injury. It is true that more rapid recovery usually occurs within the first six months, which can be attributed to reduced brain swelling and healing of the tissue surrounding the area of injury. However, physical, occupational, and speech/language therapists who treat these patients can attest that improvements, which evolve more slowly, can continue to be documented years after the initial injury.

The ability of the brain to change and adapt following neurological injury is an active process that must incorporate three basic treatment principles. Treatment must provide multiple repetitions of the task; the task must be specific to the desired function; and the task must be progressively more complex. The following serves as an example of this concept:

Three seven year-old girls are proficient at riding two-wheeled bikes with training wheels. When they are ready to graduate to standard two-wheeled bicycles, the fathers of the girls approach their training in three different ways: The first girl rides a stationary bicycle every day for 30 minutes for two weeks. The second girl rides the bike without training wheels three days per week for 30 minutes for two weeks. The third girl rides the bike without training wheels every day for 30 minutes for one week. After mastering this skill, she practices riding the larger bicycle every day for one week. After two weeks, only the third girl is able to ride a standard bicycle. In the first case, training was not specific to the task. In the second case, training did not include enough practice and the task was not specific. The third girl was successful because her training was not only task specific and provided adequate practice, but also increased in complexity as she transitioned from the smaller to larger bicycle.

The discovery that neuroplasticity occurs throughout life and that the brain has the ability to establish new neural connections following stroke and brain injury brings renewed hope for recovery of lost function. However, neuroplasticity is driven by repetition, task specificity, and complexity and therefore, the survivor must commit to intensive and challenging practice of the desired functional goal. This is vastly different from more "traditional" therapeutic approaches in which the exercises or activities are not linked to a functional task. The brain is not wired to translate isolated exercise, such as strengthening for the biceps or quadriceps, into the activity required to pick up an object or to walk. However, it is wired to respond to tasks that are meaningful. The more motivated the survivor is to practice the task, the more potential there is for establishing new neural connections and therefore, for recovery of function.

Gina Malloy is a physical therapist with New Beginning Physical Therapy, Inc., an in-home therapy company. She has advanced certifications in treating people with neurological issues, especially stroke and brain injuries. Gina can be reached at 760-218-9961 or online at NewBeginningPT.com.

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CVHS Students Dare to Care

By Simon P. Moore, CVHS Health Academy Lead Teacher

"Why do I need to know that," Jasmine spurts out – even before I could summarize the informational articles for rhetorical persuasion lesson. "Well," I attempt to patiently return, "if you can't persuade people of what you want, you probably won't get it." This seems to work; there's some moderate buy-in. Following a flurry of text messages sent from behind their oversized purses strategically placed on their desks, that I, of course don't see, students slowly commence their work. This is the ritual: present the lesson, make them feel the connection to something relevant to their interests. In this English class, we have an advantage. We're the Coachella Valley High School Health Academy, where students Dare to Care.

The CVHS Health Academy is a CA Partnership Academy three-year program. Students are chosen as freshmen. They begin the program their sophomore year and graduate their senior year, meeting the same graduation requirements as traditional students. Academy students participate in health-focused electives; wear scrubs and an academy T-shirt; have a community service requirement; and job shadow for ten shifts.

With the help of supportive business partners like JFK Hospital, teachers in the academy work together ensuring that students produce results. Without the hands-on work experience JFK provides, school lessons end in the book. My English lessons are integrated with Mr. Braithwaite's history or government lessons. Science teacher Sherry Peñaflor collaborates with Health teacher Mrs. Smith, ensuring students connect the

"need to know" science with the "why" in health careers.

Junior students like Isabel, Crystal and Gabriela job shadow at one of the seven sites throughout the valley. Job shadow is working with medical professionals to gain experience. "During job shadow, I was so glad I knew most of the medical terminology I learned in Mrs. Smith's class," Crystal confesses. "When the nurses and doctors talk to each other, and to patients, I know what they're saying."

Jocelyne Ortiz and Adela Lopez graduated this past May. "Thanks to the Health Academy, I have the love and support of another family," Adela declares in the recruitment video used to recruit freshmen. In the fall, Adela begins CSU Fullerton. "If not for the Health Academy, I would have been passed over." Adela job shadowed at JFK Medical Center in Indio, graduated with over a 3.0 GPA, performed more than 200 hours of community service and served as Partnership Academy Student Senate Treasurer during her junior year and President in her senior year. Jocelyne is one of a record three students who graduated 2013 in the CVHS top ten. "I can't believe people say they don't have time for anything," Jocelyne announces. "I did it all, and still made the top ten." In September, Jocey begins UC San Diego.

This mentoring of the future healthcare workforce doesn't even seem like a job. It's a contribution to so much more than I ever imagined or experienced in any job I've had.

For more information on the Health Academy contact Simon Moore at simon.moore@cvsd.us

Mourning Star and Camp Erin Remain in Kids' Hearts

By Lauren Del Sarto

Michelle Hernandez lost her Dad when she was 15. Michelle and her mom were left to cope alone. Fortunately, they found Mourning Star in Palm Desert, one of the nation's top grief and bereavement centers specializing in helping children, teens (ages 3 to 18) and their families develop healthy coping skills after the death of a loved one.

At first, Michelle was apprehensive about being in a room full of kids like her, but it wasn't long before she became passionate about her Mourning Star Family. She and her mom went every two weeks never missing a group, where parents and kids meet with their peers. Michelle attended for three years. "Two of us were really distraught about leaving at (the age of) 18. We would joke with Pamela and Melissa and say we were going to show up at the next session boycotting because we were not ready to leave." Pamela Gabbay, Mourning Star's Director thought about this and decided it was in their best interest to return for another year, so they got to attend one more year. "I wasn't done. That part of me was not yet healed; I still needed the center to learn to cope."

That year, Pamela and the Mourning Star staff introduced Camp Erin, the weekend summer camp for grieving kids. It was the camp's first year, and again Michelle was apprehensive. "I had just gotten used to Mourning Star, and the idea of a camp with 70 kids was a little overwhelming." But with further encouragement, she and a couple of Mourning Star friends signed up.

It changed her life. "I had the worst thing happen to me and Camp Erin was one of my most life changing events – for the better," she says. "I had grown up going to camp, but there is really nothing like Camp Erin. So much magic happens in that one weekend. You become a big family, tucked up in this corner away from life with no cell phone or other outside influence and you get to 'just be.' You are not 'that kid who lost a parent.' You get to be normal."

The next year, Michelle returned to Camp Erin as a volunteer and this year will be her 5th. "I have been fortunate to be a Big Buddy for 3 of the 4 years, which is where you get to know the kids the most and you are on this journey together."

Then, when Michelle was 21, her mom died. It was just a few months before camp, but not going was not an option. She needed to be there and the camp welcomed her with open arms. That year she "once again gained more than I gave."

To Michelle, there is no better way that she can give back to the Mourning Star family. "I was given so much from both these programs and the people within them – even after I was no longer a Mourning Star kid. They have always been there, and there is nothing I could ever do to repay them."

"Mourning Star and Camp Erin have given me the mechanisms to cope. I don't know what my life would be like without them, and I can't imagine what life is like for kids who are trying to cope alone."

Mourning Star and Camp Erin are a part of the outreach effort of VNA California. Camp Erin is 100% sponsored through donations. It costs approximately \$250 to send a kid to camp and attendees pay no fees. Donations are always welcomed. For more information on the programs or how to donate, visit VNACalifornia.org or call (760) 773-6260.



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Nature's Path to Wellness Health Fair

Nature's Path to Wellness Health Fair is coming to the Westfield Palm Desert Saturday, September 21st and Sunday, the 22nd. This first annual fair is produced by Bette King Productions (CanadaFest) and presented by Global Health Technologies, Inc.

This free event will present a variety of products and services for natural health and wellness, as well as cutting edge technologies by international companies. There will be exhibitor booths, professional presentations, author signings, giveaways, and drawings. Many natural products and holistic practitioners will be on hand to show their trade and answer your questions.

Presenting sponsor, Global Health Technologies, Inc, will unveil new technologies developed to improve medical conditions and detect undiagnosed conditions with its new 3D body analyzer. In less than 10 minutes, it provides an analysis of your physical condition - without radiation. This new approach to medical screening will be of interest to both the health care community and the public.

"There couldn't be a better presenting sponsor than Global Health Technologies, Inc, and we are proud to have them on board for the inaugural Nature's Path to Wellness Health Fair," says producer Bette King. "We also welcome Beltone as a bronze sponsor and are delighted that they will be giving away a free set of hearing aids at the event." New technology in hearing products will also be demonstrated by the three-generation owned company.

The fair will feature the Facial Myopulse referred to as the "Fountain of Youth" for non-surgical facelifts, buttocks lifts, cellulite removal, detox and more, as well as, a demonstration of the Neurocare 1000 Electromuscular Stimulator, a miracle breakthrough in pain management, physical therapy and rehabilitation. These incredible technologies are available to treat patients with no needles, drugs or radiation.

The event will serve as the international company launch of Global Health Technologies, Inc, and their new products. Special guests and dignitaries will be in attendance. A private showing of these cutting edge technologies will be held for medical professionals on Sunday, September 22 from 8am-11am and a light breakfast will be served.

Other participants include sponsor Synergy Wellness Centre whose motto says it all, "We have the answers. We have the solutions. No band aid remedies." Water Revolution, a water filtering system from North Carolina, is traveling here to be a part of the festivities.

The Desert Entertainer will be producing a special magazine; Money Radio 1200AM will be broadcasting live from the fair; and Desert Health® will be on hand to meet attendees. Also featured will be six organizations promoting their upcoming events (This is a special 501c opportunity only).

Remember, health has no season and no boundaries, so let's all get together at the Westfield Palm Desert, September 21 & 22 and walk down 'Nature's Path to Wellness' today and every day. Parking and admission are free!

If you are interested in participating as a vendor or being a sponsor, contact Bette King of Bette King Productions at 760-202-4007 or bettekingsproductions43@gmail.com.

Health is a Choice

Continued from page 1

about me, what I was eating, and how it affected my body."

Throughout her career, Gaete has worked on nutrition education projects with the County's Department of Health including HEALnet, a Coachella Valley community coalition for obesity prevention; and CVEP Health Industry Council's Nutrition Work Group, which creates opportunity for youth to aspire and grow into nutrition-related professions.

In 2009, she created the 'Champions for Change' program for Riverside County which trained people and students about the importance of eating healthy. These champions would then reach out to their communities (schools, neighborhoods, churches, etc.) to further spread the message. The County's goal was to train 15 champions, but Sarah trained 265. The program was cut due to government funding, but the concept and success stayed with her – give average people the tools to learn themselves, and then to teach others within their inner circles. "There aren't enough dieticians in the world to effectively spread the word on healthy eating, and doctors don't have the time," states Gaete. When her friend and neighbor, Jeralyn Brossfield, MD, introduced her to Take Shape for Life, it clicked. Their coaching and educational services have helped hundreds in the Valley change their lifestyles and lose thousands of pounds collectively. She became a Certified Health Coach and is passionate about the program's primary focus: teaching people healthy eating habits.

"Sarah's professional projects and personal commitment to changing lives has had deep and lasting impacts in our county and region," says Donna Sturgeon, the Director of Work Based Learning Programs at CVEP. "She is the most passionate, dedicated nutrition professional in our valley and a true leader - and a foremost change agent - in her work regionally."

Gaete combines her class and community outreach by incorporating a food insecurity assignment into her curriculum. "I thought this would be a great way to get students out of their own heads - and their own little world - to become aware of the problems in the community." Students do four hours of service at the location of their choice such as FIND Food Bank or Coachella Valley Mission. They write a follow-up paper about their experience and what they learned about hunger and obesity in our community.

With the current focus on health care, she has definitely seen an increase in interest in her class which maxes out at 50 students. This increase thrills her as much as seeing many of her students transform through the semester as they become conscious eaters and adopt healthier habits. Recently she was approached by a student who asked if she remembered him. Not only did she remember him, she recalled that he sat in the back, ate three fast food meals a day, and worked at In & Out Burger. He also changed his habits during her class and lost 40 pounds. "I want to thank you for changing my life," he said. "I am leaving for Camp Pendleton this weekend and have lost a total of 90 pounds. I would not have been able to do this if it weren't for you."

"I say this all the time," concludes Gaete, "As a society, we don't value the cost of being healthy. We value our data packages and big screen TV's. And we are paying the price for it now. Health care costs are going up, and they will go up the most for those who are least healthy. We need more champions out there promoting the value of nutrition, and it starts with each one of us making healthier choices."

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Palm Spring's Alicante

A Desert Health Review

When restaurateur Mindy Reed, owner of award-winning Zin American Bistro, was looking to rebrand her second restaurant, Zini Café, her top priority was to satisfy leading requests from her customers.

First on the list was a name change as Zin and Zini often created confusion when meeting friends. Second was the menu. "We see more and more people moving towards healthier choices, smaller plates and specific dietary preferences," said Reed. "So that was a leading consideration." Thirdly, was the desire for late night dining. "We heard many tourists as well as locals comment on the lack of restaurants offering late night dining when desert weather is often its best."



The result is Alicante, a casual and friendly indoor, outdoor café serving Spanish Mediterranean-inspired cuisine focusing on fresh offerings and a large variety of hot and cold

tapas. The vibrant restaurant located in the heart of Palm Springs serves dinners until 11pm Sunday through Thursday and until midnight Friday and Saturday. In addition, they offer separate gluten-free and vegetarian menus to make choices easier for these customers. "We had so many requests - and offer such a large variety of both - that we thought individual menus were the answer."

And indeed they are. No need to browse through a full menu of enticing entrees to find what you can eat. The entire menu is just for you. And if your guests enjoy a wider variety, the main menu will not disappoint.

We were captivated by the concept and immediately began sharing a variety of small plates. From the Ensalada de Verano salad with strawberries, oranges,



almonds, coconut and gorgonzola cheese to the citrus marinated olives with fresh mango... so much flavor in each selection! Unique tapas combinations include the grilled artichoke, asparagus, fried egg, Serrano ham and Manchego cheese, and the grilled calamari stuffed with Spanish chorizo, fried parsley and capers. Each dish was pleasantly spiced and kept the taste buds dancing.

Our friendly server, Patrick Gonzales, has celiac and proudly calls himself Mr. Gluten-free. He provided input on Alicante's menu and is partial to their selection of gluten-free pizzas. The prepared dough is made with rice, corn and quinoa and offered with Italian, pesto chicken and vegetarian toppings to name a few. Many dishes contain cheese, but will be made dairy-free upon request.

It's no surprise that Alicante also boasts a large array of international wines considering that Zin is the winner of Wine Spectator's Award of Excellence for six consecutive years. Predominantly Spanish, French and Italian varietals are listed by price simplifying this selection as well (\$6 glass/\$20 bottle, \$8/\$30 and \$10/\$40).



Alicante is overseen by Zin's Executive Chef, Christopher Bowman, who has established himself as one of the premier chefs in the Coachella Valley. Reed adds that she and Chris really wanted to create an affordable menu that captures the diversity of food and wine from the Mediterranean coast in a way that encourages guests to try something new each visit.

They have succeeded at that! Alicante is welcoming, warm, and fun with a diverse menu designed for today's health conscious diner (and their friends!).

Alicante is located at 140 S. Palm Canyon Drive. Breakfast, lunch and dinner are served daily from 11a-11pm Mon - Thurs.; 11a - midnight Fri; Sat. 10a-midnight; and Sun. 10a-11p. Summer specials include a 3 course \$19 prix fix menu available from 4p-6p and Sunday is Spanish night featuring a variety of fresh paella dishes. For more information visit AlicantePS.com or call (760) 325.9464.

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FRESH JUICE BAR: Replacing fast food with living food

A Desert Health Review by Marley Benshalom

As many people are switching from coffee to green drinks these days, and from fast food to living foods, juice bars are essential to every community. Fortunately, we now have Fresh Juice Bar, the Valley's newest stop for a healthy snack or meal. The smells of fresh fruit and vibrant greens fill your senses as the light illuminates inside Fresh where owner Marcie Madain and her team offer 99% organic ingredients and a variety of healthy - and affordable - options for on the go. Made-to-order meals include:



Green Drinks, which are a great alternative to coffee because they have 0% caffeine and 100% vitamins. I recommend the PHix made with spinach, chard, lemon, pear, celery, cucumber, parsley, and ginger. It may not sound like a satisfying alternative, but one taste and you'll realize that fresh greens served like this can truly be addictive.

Fresh Smoothies start with homemade almond milk (not sugary juices) and it's hard to choose from the large variety, but the MacaMama is sure to please. Raw maca, a medicinal plant that helps calm stress while increasing energy, is combined with raw coconut manna, coconut water, raw cacao nibs (the bean that chocolate is derived from), cinnamon, banana, and sea salt. Another great alternative is the Black Forest smoothie, a green smoothie made of all the right ingredients to satisfy cravings. It is a blend of kale, black cherries, almonds, coconut water, raw cocoa powder, banana, and vanilla bean.

Fresh Bowls have quickly become a fan favorite. These big, hearty meals-in-a-cup have an ice cream-like consistency, but are full of good-for-you ingredients like acai and pitaya. Acai berries and pitaya (also known as dragon fruit) are high in antioxidants and fiber and low in sugar. These frozen berries are blended and topped with bananas, granola, berries, and optional agave syrup. (Watch the natural sugar quantity in these!)

Fresh Juice Bar has also teamed up with Desert Detox and Fit in 42, two popular weight loss programs here in the Valley, to offer tailored fitness drinks - such as protein shakes and detox drinks - good for promoting healthy digestion and eliminating toxins whether you are in these programs or not.

Fresh has created a community environment where we can all come together in the name of health. Be sure to stop in to cool off from the heat and try one of Fresh Juice Bar's brilliant creations.

Editor's Note: Marley is our resident 20-something and introduced us to Fresh. Upon numerous visits, I noticed that hers is the average age, which tells me the next generation GETS IT! But you are never too old to embrace healthier habits, so we encourage you to make Fresh a part of your routine.

Fresh Juice Bar is located near the corner of Hwys 74 & 111 in Palm Desert. They are open daily from 7am-5pm (Mon-Fri), 8am-4pm Saturday and 8am-2pm on Sunday. Made to order delights range in price from \$5.95 to \$8.99. (760) 837-9777





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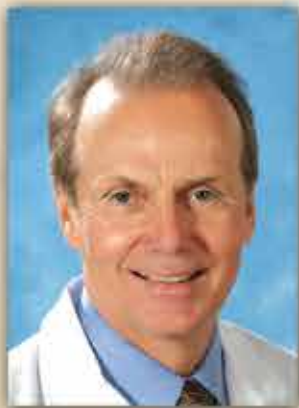
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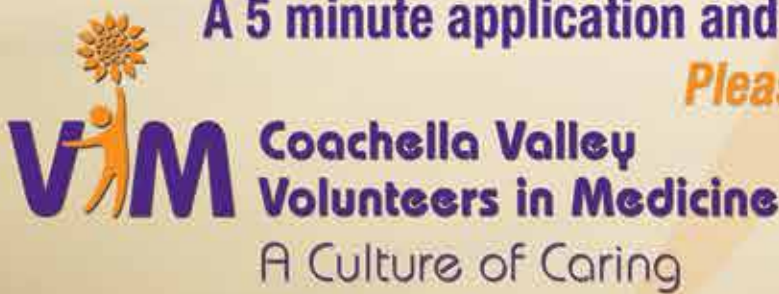
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