



Desert Health[®]

News from the Valley's Integrated Health Community

July/August 2017

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COCONUT ON Healthy Ones

By Lauren Del Sarto with medical review by Joseph Scherger, MD

You're on board with the modern movement towards a healthier lifestyle. You pride yourself on eating clean and thrive on fresh vegetables and quality protein. You exercise and limit your intake of sugar, carbs, and grains. You eat plenty of healthy fats like avocados and nuts, and use coconut oil as your go-to for cooking, skin care, and maybe even concentrated in your morning coffee.

You listen to advice from integrative leaders like Drs. Hyman, Davis, Perlmutter and Gundry. You feel on track - and really good.

Then the American Heart Association tells us that coconut oil is not good for us - it never has been, and that we should still be consuming polyunsaturated vegetable oils such as soybean, corn and canola.¹

Ugh.

Anger and confusion set in, and you start questioning all this new advice from the integrative world.

The good news? Those doctors you have been following - actually, most in the integrative medicine world - disagree with this latest Presidential Advisory and consider the data, which is based on studies from the 1960s-70s, old news and a rehash of the same guidelines that led to the low fat craze and demise of America's health today.

The new train of thought based on more recent research is summarized by Mark Hyman, MD, director of the Cleveland Clinic Center for Functional Medicine,

chairman of the board of the Institute for Functional Medicine, and medical editor of *The Huffington Post*, as such:

Let me cut through this confusion. The very idea that vegetable oils are better than saturated fats comes from the belief that they lower total and LDL cholesterol, so they presumably reduce our overall risk of heart disease. Following this type of advice means swapping out butter, meat, and lard for vegetable oils including corn, soybean, sunflower, canola, and safflower oils, which are all omega 6-rich, inflammatory polyunsaturated fats.² Counting evidence now makes it clear that in the absence of refined sugars and processed carbohydrates and starches, healthy fats [butter, lard, coconut] shut down cravings, accelerate weight loss and can help prevent and reverse disease...Fat is not the enemy; sugar and starchy or refined carbs and a high-glycemic, processed food diet are the real causes of weight gain, heart disease and type 2 diabetes.³

The web is full of rebuttals to the report and those in our community are speaking up as well. "It is amazing that the AHA is continuing this stance," says Joseph Scherger, MD, vice president of primary care at Eisenhower Medical Center. "What is most disturbing here is the complete lack of recognition of the inflammatory effects of many processed polyunsaturated vegetable oils. This is a gift to the food industry."

Continued on page 9



The third annual Desert Health[®] Wellness

Awards once again united the valley's doctors, health practitioners and health enthusiasts in an evening of celebration, education and recognition.

The sellout event began with an outdoor reception and dinner followed by guest speaker Joseph Scherger, MD, vice president of primary care for Eisenhower Medical Center and 2016 Integrative Practitioner award recipient. Dr. Scherger spoke on the movement in modern health care and what each of us can do today. The enthusiastic crowd cheered as Scherger proposed that the Coachella Valley become the world's next Blue Zone (places in the world where people live the longest).

The evening was hosted by KMIR's Janet Zappala who received an honorary "Superstar Award" for receiving the most nominations from supporters and fans. As our partner in health, we appreciate all she does in moving health forward!

Our silent auction helped to raise funds for Coachella Valley's Volunteers in Medicine, the valley's only free medical clinic. Doctors, nurses, dentists and the general public interested in volunteering their time to help the underserved in our community should contact Doug Morin at (760) 342.4414.

Of course, the evening highlight was the awards ceremony, and we are pleased to present our 2017 winners on page 16.

The evening ended with a beautiful Farmer's Market and guests filled their complimentary totes with the farm fresh vegetables of their choice.

A special thank you to our sponsors: Eisenhower Wellness Institute, KMIR-TV, PrimeTime Produce, Bonterra Organic Vineyards, Mad River Brewing Company, Salads in a Jar, and Maya Kato's Aesthetic Art.

And a sincere thanks to all who attended! We look forward to seeing you next year.

Continued on page 14

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For more about Joan's story, turn to page 3.



“Early Breast Screening Saved My Life.”

Surviving. Thriving. *Joan Petruzzzi, Teacher, CANCER SURVIVOR.*

Moving Health Forward

First and foremost, I would like to extend a sincere thank you to all who attended the 2017 Desert Health® Wellness Awards in May. It was a spectacular evening as you will see from the photos on pages 14 and 15.

We congratulate this year's winners and all nominees. Keep up the great work in moving health and wellness forward in our community!

Speaking of moving health forward, I was just starting to write our lead feature on 'living a life of awareness' when "Coconutgate" erupted with the American Heart Association's report promoting processed vegetable oils and condemning our new love for coconut oil.

Like many of you, I was angered and confused. It was against all we have learned from leading integrative doctors Hyman, Davis, Gundry, Perlmutter, and the like, and I had to get to the bottom of it.

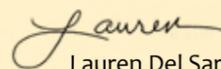
As suspected, most in the integrative community are extremely disappointed with this advisory which is based on studies from the 1950s-70s and are the same recommendations that led to both low-fat fever and the record levels of heart disease today.

I reached out to industry leaders and read through numerous online rebuttals and hope that "Coconut On, Healthy Ones" will encourage you to keep using coconut oil. While the AHA report is disheartening, the facts on both sides are certainly worth reading (also see Dr. Crossfield's column p. 18).

The bottom line...if you are eating healthy, using moderate amounts of coconut and/or MCT oil, and feeling really good, keep doing what you're doing. We just may be the new statistics celebrating our happy and healthy longevity.

Stay cool this summer and coconut on!

Here's to your health ~



Lauren Del Sarto, Publisher



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Increasing Access to Health Care

How is UCR's School of Medicine helping the community?

By Lauren Del Sarto

In the summer of 2015, the newly formed UCR School of Medicine welcomed its first eight family medicine residents. With goals of attracting more doctors to the valley and increasing access to health care, the program is now entering its third year with a total of 24 residents.

Has the program helped our community? The answer is an unequivocal yes.

More family practice doctors

Even before any of the graduating residents join as staff, seven family medicine physicians were brought on as working faculty: one internal medicine doctor, one physician dually board-certified in internal medicine and pediatrics, and five pediatricians.



UCR Medical School Resident Class of 2018

A family medicine clinic was also opened and saw more than 10,000 patient visits in its first year. The pediatric faculty also runs an in-patient service at Desert Regional with plans to expand to an out-patient program in the near future. "We hope to grow our services locally so we don't have to send patients outside of this region for care," says program director Gemma Kim, MD.

Additionally, seven of the original eight residents are currently applying for full-time positions at Desert Regional. This class will graduate from the three-year program next summer.

Increasing access

In addition to the clinic, the medical school has improved access to care through community outreach, including the street medicine program and sex education in schools.

Every other week, volunteer physicians and residents don backpacks and hit the streets to reach those less mobile. Working with Well in the Desert and local churches, the doctors treat anyone who needs their care, including many of the valley's homeless population. UCR is currently working with the Desert Healthcare District to secure a mobile van to increase the number of people they can serve.

Working with the Palm Springs Unified School District and Planned Parenthood, UCR is also sending residents to discuss sexually transmitted diseases and contraception to seventh and eighth graders. "Sex education in the schools is not new," says Kim, "but having a younger doctor present the information encourages students to ask more questions than they might of a parent or teacher." Female residents speak with female students and male residents speak with male students and feedback has been very positive. They are planning to add more topics, such as anatomy and physiology, along with more schools in the future.

"In two short years, we have accomplished quite a bit," says Kim. With their full ACGME accreditation obtained in 2016, the UCR School of Medicine is well positioned to continue increasing the number of doctors in our community and providing valuable programs for the underserved.

For more information on the UCR School of Medicine Family Medicine Residency program contact Nastassia Valenzuela (760) 561.7344.



\$2 Million Approved in a Matching Fund to Address Homelessness

Concerned about the recent closure of Roy's Desert Resource Center, an emergency homeless shelter located in north Palm Springs, and the increasing number of homeless in the Coachella Valley, the Desert Healthcare District (DHCD) Board of Directors voted to establish a collective fund with up to \$2 million as a challenge grant for a West Valley Homelessness Initiative.

DHCD is committed to helping raise matching funds to support this effort and will match up to \$2 million in contributions. This initiative will address short-term, mid-term and long-term solutions to address the needs of the valley's homeless.

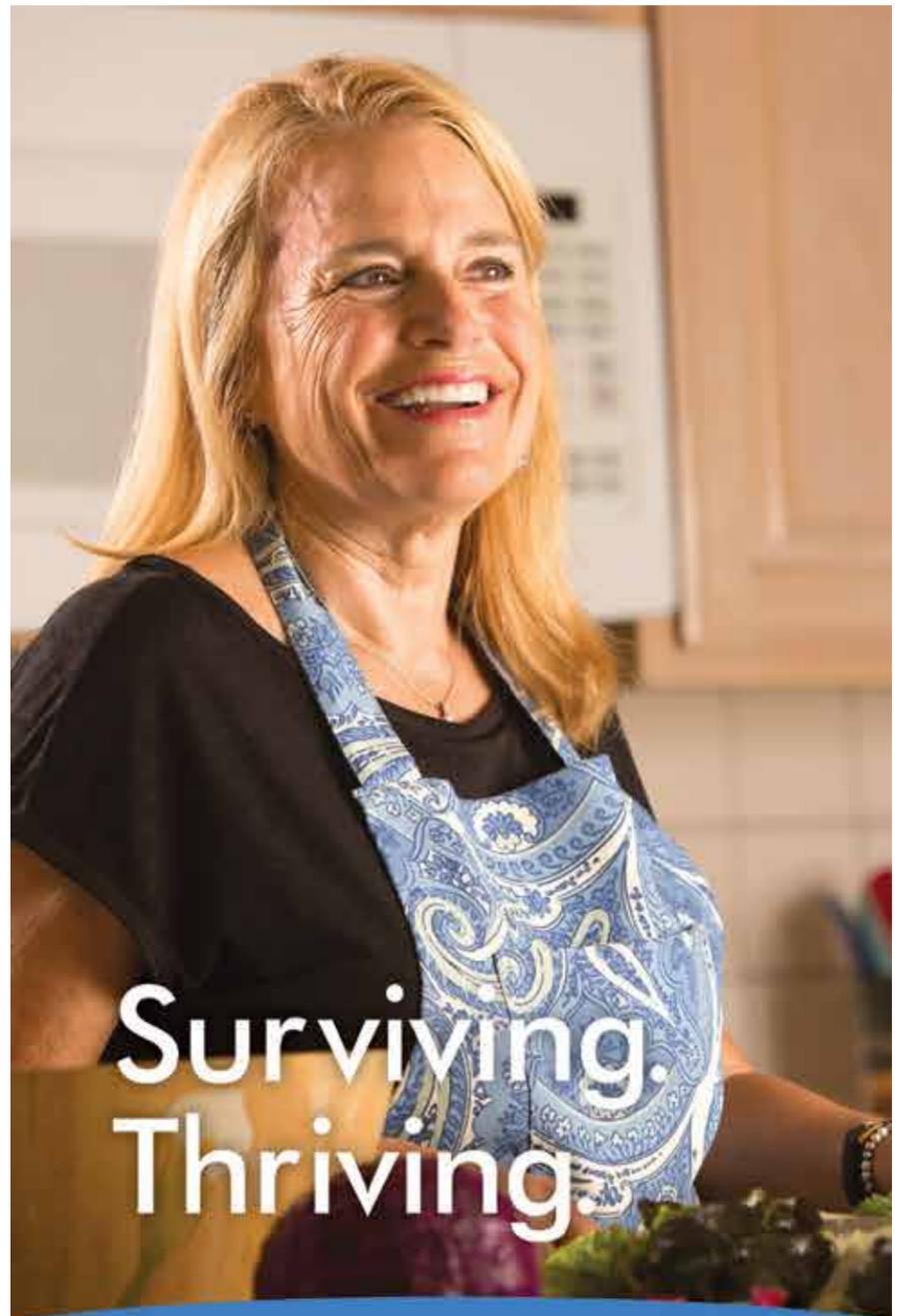
Through Board action, the DHCD is providing leadership in the priority areas of facilities (potential sites for the homeless), funding (matched proposals), policy (such as "Housing First" - stable housing paired with social services), and community awareness. Coachella Valley Association of Governments (CVAG) recently approved the District having a seat at the policy table for their Homelessness Committee. District and Foundation leadership efforts continue on a collaborative basis with partners such as the City of Palm Springs, CVAG, Riverside County and other communities, leaders, and residents. Some of these efforts include CVAG's West Valley Navigation Program and the City of Palm Springs's continued funding of homelessness services and programs addressed in their budget.

Homelessness in the Coachella Valley has reached a crisis. The Board of Directors of the Desert Healthcare District and Foundation, at their recent (and ongoing) strategic planning for FY 2018-2020, elevated the homelessness issue as a major community health focus.

For more than 16 years, the Desert Healthcare District and Foundation has been a leader collaborating with many community-based organizations in their efforts to alleviate homelessness and elevate homelessness prevention in the Coachella Valley.

By aligning resources under the DHCD's collective fund umbrella, encouraging collaboration and prioritizing the "Housing First" system, the District's West Valley Homelessness Initiative provides the infrastructure the west valley needs to effectively reduce homelessness.

For additional information on the Desert Healthcare District/Foundation call (760) 323.6113 or visit their website at www.dhcd.org. For an online referral directory of health services and programs across the Coachella Valley (in English and Spanish), visit their Health Information Portal at www.CVHIP.com.



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Joan Petruzzi, Teacher, CANCER SURVIVOR



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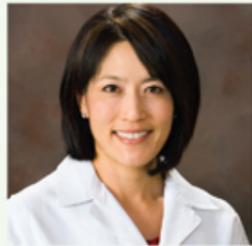
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Keeping Kids in School through Workplace Experience

By *Simon P. Moore, MHA, EMT*

At 93.8%, Nebraska boasts the highest graduation rate according to U.S. News & World Report while Florida laments the lowest, at 65.8% (Oct. 2016). California doesn't make the top ten (at 82%), though so many people want to visit, yet can't afford to live here. How could California improve its educational rankings, to increase the number of high school graduates to become more competitive in the college and career technical education (CTE) realm of the post-secondary workforce?

No one likes to do things that are boring and seemingly meaningless. High school makes the list of boredom and meaningless activities. According to a *Washington Post* article on education today, students must be engaged in more ways than one (Oct. 2013). Researchers at the University of Pittsburgh identified student engagement as having three equally important components: behavioral engagement – students get their work done on time and follow the rules; emotional engagement – students are excited about being in class and they're interested in the lessons; and, cognitive engagement – students work to apply the knowledge they learn in class and to life outside of school. CTE programs contribute to all of these engagement categories.

What role does a CTE program assume in the educational realm? "The average high school graduation rate in 2012 for CTE concentrators was 93 percent, compared to the national adjusted cohort graduation rate of 80 percent." (ACTE 2016) By increasing the hands-on experience and relevance of education to jobs that actually employ skills learned in and outside the classroom, CTE programs contribute to the overall successful outcome of the average student.

College is important for some careers; however, does the interest line up with the career? "The mismatch between what students are interested in doing, and what employers are willing to pay for, may be the biggest impediment to a rewarding career for the newest generation of American workers." (U.S. News & World Report 2012) The days of "just get a college degree" must be replaced by "get the training and education that employers need." Of course, the young adult must have an interest in the job or career; otherwise, employers experience attrition from a dissatisfied workforce that just "needs a job."

Some say CTE detracts from students who should otherwise attend college, earning a 4-year degree. Currently, there are too many degrees for too few jobs in the U.S. workforce, creating a disconnect between education and available jobs. "Many Americans don't have the skills that those available jobs require. It's called the job skills gap, and it has become a serious problem in the U.S." (CNN Money, 2016)

The mismatch results in over-educated Americans with no job to pay for their student loans. Forty-three percent of young workers with licenses and certificates earn more than those with an associate degree; 27% earn more than those with a bachelor's degree; and 31% of young workers with associate degrees earn more than those with a bachelor's degree." (ACTE 2016) Often, even those who attend college must work. With CTE certification and employment experience, students can then concentrate on obtaining that sought-after degree, with the foundation of career-technical experience to bolster their employability in the next salary bracket.

Simon P. Moore is an English teacher and health academy lead teacher at Coachella Valley High School. For more information on our local student workplace program contact Kim McNulty at OneFuture Coachella Valley: kmcnulty@onefuturecv.org.



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Treating Whiplash with Physical Therapy

By James Mawhiney, PT, DPT

Neck pain after a motor vehicle accident is extremely common, and often results in chronic pain, disability, missed work, and a decreased quality of life.¹⁶ The injury is often diagnosed as a whiplash injury which is defined as “an acceleration-deceleration mechanism of energy transferred to the neck that results in a soft tissue injury that may lead to a variety of clinical manifestations including neck pain and its associated symptoms.”

While whiplash is most commonly caused by motor vehicle accidents, it may also occur following physical trauma such as a fall, head or other bodily part injury, and even violent sneezing.¹¹

Recommendations for treating whiplash-associated disorder (WAD) include: education, parameters for returning to activity/work, joint mobilization, soft tissue mobilization, postural re-education, specific exercises, and pain relief/pain management.^{4,10,12} The often prescribed “act as usual” is not a sufficient plan of care and can often result in greater pain and disability.⁴ Returning to a general fitness program as the sole plan of care is also ineffective in reducing pain and disability.⁴

In the current health care market, physical therapists are uniquely positioned to guide patients during their return to normal activity as physical therapy (PT) can combine all of the recommended treatments for WAD in each session.^{5,6,7,10,12} Of the many interventions PT offers, the most effective for neck pain include a combination of a thorough examination, diagnoses and classification, patient education on the condition, self-management and coping strategies, active exercises, passive interventions, and a supervised return to activities as the condition allows.^{4,10,12}

In the event of a motor vehicle accident, early detection and intervention is very important in limiting the amount of time and potential for disability.^{1,8,13,15} If injured in a motor vehicle accident, you should consider the following steps in this order:

Seek medical attention. Go to the emergency room, urgent care, or to see your primary care physician to rule out spinal injury, head trauma, fracture, or other serious pathology. Seek help sooner than later if your symptoms show any sign of progression.

Consider physical therapy intervention. If you have a relationship with a qualified physical therapist, reach out to their office and inform them of your situation and arrange a consultation.

Monitor your condition. Often times symptoms are absent for 24-48 hours, or even several weeks. Therefore, keep track of any changes in pain, range of motion, limitations in activity, difficulty with concentration, headaches, or onset of fatigue.

If you have suffered a neck injury, the road to recovery may be long. Your primary goal should be to return to your normal activities and quality of life, and a qualified physical therapist can help get you there.

James Mawhiney is a doctor of physical therapy and the owner of Shelley A. Cooper, PT, in Bermuda Dunes. He can be reached at (760) 345.9934.

References available upon request.

What are Dental Implants?

By Nicholas S. Baumann, DDS

Even though the number of people keeping their teeth longer has increased significantly over the last few decades, it is still common for many people to be missing some or all of their teeth. This can lead to bone loss, esthetic problems, and difficulty chewing. Fortunately, great advances have been made in dentistry to improve treatment for missing teeth. One of the most significant advancements has been the improvement of dental implants.

Dental implants have actually been found in skeletons dating back to the Mayans over a thousand years ago where shells were shaped like teeth and implanted into the jaw. The 1960s saw the beginning of the development of modern dental implants. Today, a dental implant is a small post about the size of a tooth root that goes into the jawbone in order to replace a missing tooth. It is usually made out of titanium, but can also be made out of a porcelain called zirconia. Once the implant has healed into the bone, a second piece, called an abutment, is screwed into the implant. A crown is then attached to the abutment to finish the process. At this point, the implant feels and functions just like a natural tooth. Implants can also be used when multiple or all teeth are missing. They can be used to support either a bridge or dentures creating a better and stronger fit.



One of the most significant improvements in dentistry has been with dental implants.

The process of placing an implant takes time though. Depending on the density of bone, once the implant is placed, it usually has to heal for anywhere from three to six months before the abutment and crown can be placed, but there is generally little to no pain or soreness during this time. Given appropriate healing time, the body generally accepts the implant well with a fantastic long-term prognosis as long as they are kept clean like a regular tooth. In fact, the long-term survival rate in most cases is over 95% which is better than many other dental procedures including crowns and bridges.

Most people will be good candidates for dental implants. A few of the possible exceptions are smokers, uncontrolled diabetics, or anyone with a history of bisphosphonate use. While not absolute contraindications, anyone with these conditions must be aware that they may decrease the success.

Overall, dental implants are a fantastic choice to replace missing teeth. They are strong, long lasting, and help to restore a beautiful smile. Most people are good candidates for them, and if you are missing teeth, I strongly suggest you talk to your dentist about the possibilities of implants.

Dr. Nick is with Palm Desert Smiles and can be reached at (760) 568.3602.

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NICHOLAS S. BAUMANN, DDS



Six Pillars of Brain Health

This is the second of a six-part series on brain health from Deborah Schrameck, NC, PT, of the Eisenhower Wellness Institute. For previous editorial, visit DesertHealthNews.com

Pillar Two: Movement

Nan, my grandmother, understood what worked to keep her brain young and healthy. She never had a driver's license and she made sure she walked, gardened and even danced on a daily basis. When she broke her hip and was hospitalized, her cognitive decline set in at an alarming rate. The thing that caused the most frustration for her was not being able to get out of bed and move.



Exercise is a valuable weapon in the fight against cognitive decline.

Research connecting exercise with brain health has added to our understanding of the mechanisms that make exercise a valuable weapon in the fight against cognitive decline, dementia, depression, and diseases like Alzheimer's and Parkinson's.

I recently had the honor of attending the Institute of Functional Medicine annual conference: The Dynamic Brain. How exciting it was to be among leaders in science and medicine discussing the brain and what we can do to improve our brain health at any age.

One of the mechanisms thoroughly discussed as an important component of a healthy brain - my new favorite acronym - BDNF (brain-derived neurotrophic factor). BDNF is a protein that promotes brain function and encourages the growth of new neurons. An easy analogy, BDNF is like fertilizer in the garden of our brain. When we're depleted or running low, exercise and movement can trigger the production of more BDNF and therefore more growth. (For more on BDNF, see *Brain Health Top of Mind*, p. 17).



Social interaction can be one of the best motivators in maintaining an active lifestyle.

Any exercise can increase BDNF levels in the brain, but some types are more effective than others. Here are a few ways that are supported by current research to boost BDNF that we can all incorporate into our routines:

Do something enjoyable. Not only does BDNF increase more with activities we like, but we are more likely to stick with an activity we enjoy, gaining the brain-healthy benefits longer and more frequently.

Do something daily. Daily activity has been shown to be more effective at raising BDNF than less frequent stints of movement.

Make it complex. This is one time where the KISS principle does not apply. In a study done at the University of Illinois, rats that practiced complex motor skills produced more BDNF than rats that only performed aerobic exercise on a wheel. In his book, *The Genetics of Health*, Dr. Sharad Paul quotes a study by Madeleine Hackney showing that complex movements involving footwork, walking and impulsivity with a partner - the tango, for instance - have the greatest benefit in reducing dementia and improving Parkinson's disease.

Don't forget to be social. In the first pillar, I discussed the importance of social interaction and how it can improve brain health. It is often considered one of the best motivators in maintaining a daily active lifestyle.

What does this mean for us? Don't give up your cardio, but remember to include some exercises in your routine that involve coordination, agility and complex functional movements. If these types of activities aren't already a part of your routine, consider taking a class in dancing (especially tango), martial arts or gymnastics; learn a sport like tennis, pickleball, or rock climbing; or add some agility and balance drills to your workouts. Besides improving brain function and motor skills, these activities can also provide variety, making exercise more fun and sustainable.



Try the Tango or other exercise that requires complex functional movement.

I hope to see you in dance class! I'm learning to tango my way to a better brain.

Deborah Schrameck is a holistic kinesiologist, health coach, nutritional counselor and personal trainer currently working with the Eisenhower Wellness Institute, AcQpoint Acupuncture & Wellness Center and the La Quinta Resort and Club.

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Enlarged Prostate: Common Myths and Misperceptions Dispelled

By Lance Patrick Walsh, MD, Ph.D.

More than a quarter of American men (and their partners!) are dealing with an enlarged prostate. The medical term is BPH, or benign prostatic hyperplasia, a condition that causes a variety of urination issues, from slow/weak stream, to the urgent need to urinate night and day. This can mean restless nights and withdrawal from normal activities, causing a decrease in productivity and quality of life. So why are only a third of men who experience these symptoms consulting a physician? The answer is likely lack of education. Here are a few common misconceptions about the condition:

Enlarged prostate is just a part of getting older, so no need to see a doctor about it.

While it is true that the incidence of BPH increases with age (90% of men over 70 have BPH), most men who suffer from the condition are candidates for some form of treatment. A daily pill or a minor, minimally-invasive procedure could make a dramatic impact on quality of life.

BPH is harmless if the symptoms are manageable.

This is not necessarily true. Symptoms are the body's way of telling us there may be a problem, and urinary symptoms can indicate a bladder problem. If BPH goes untreated, the bladder can weaken, leading to the need for a catheter or invasive prostate surgery. Other problems like urinary tract infections, bladder stones and kidney failure can occur.

Treating BPH causes more issues than it's worth.

With certain treatment options, the side effects may have more negative impacts on quality of life than the original symptoms. Medications can cause dizziness, headaches, and sexual dysfunction. Surgical options can also cause sexual dysfunction. But there is a minimally invasive treatment option that has virtually no side effects. A prostatic urethral lift (PUL) procedure takes less than an hour and can be performed under local anesthesia in the doctor's office. Men that have been treated with the PUL reported few, to no, side effects and maintained full sexual function.

BPH is associated with prostate cancer.

The B in BPH stands for benign, meaning the growth is not cancerous. However, the symptoms for BPH and prostate cancer may be similar, which is why it is crucial for men to consult a physician if they are experiencing urination issues.

The only treatment options for BPH are medication and surgery.

Many men are already taking medications for other medical problems, and adding more daily medications increases the risks of interactions between medications. Medications can also be expensive and don't always provide relief of symptoms. For those who are not eligible or do not want to seek surgical intervention, there are other minimally invasive procedures available.

All BPH treatments cause sexual dysfunction.

It is true that medications, minimally invasive therapies, and more invasive surgical options have been shown to cause sexual dysfunction, but the PUL procedure does not involve destruction of the prostate tissue and men who opt for this treatment do not experience any sexual dysfunction afterwards.

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Shay Moraga was diagnosed with triple negative breast cancer at the beginning of 2016 and shares her journey with Desert Health® readers in an ongoing column...

Fear is a Liar and So Am I

It has only been six months since I went into remission. I can remember very vividly last year at this time I had no hair, no eyelashes or eyebrows. My body was bloated from all the medication and the heat was so bad. I had an abundance of Shay's Warriors surrounding me weekly and sometimes daily. I was more grateful and opened my heart up to more love than I ever had in my life. I ate well, rested, did a lot of self-care that included yoga and meditation, but most of all I prayed. I prayed really, really hard every time I felt the sense of fear start to fester inside my belly. I would reach out to my core family and friends who stayed by my side weekly. By doing all of that, I was able to beat the fear of Cancer and I truly believe beat Cancer itself.

When I saw my oncologist last December, he gave me the pep talk, "You are in remission. Go on, live your life. I will see you in six months." Blah Blah Blah... you know they have to prepare you because they set you free from the months of being surrounded in your safe zone with doctors, nurses and everything you had to keep you fighting to stay alive. Then he said something strange to me. He said, "You are a strong person but know that as time goes on, you will start to self-doubt. Your mind will play tricks on you. Learn tools to help you get through that phase of the healing. Not everything will be Cancer even though you might think that way." I immediately said to him, "No. I will be good. I will see you in six months." I just could not wait to get out of that office and be surrounded by positivity, my wonderful family and great friends. I could not imagine my mind going to a dark place again.

For four months I did really well. I got right back into volunteering, working again, packing my schedule with all the things that I had been missing over the past year. Things were going great. I would see friends out and about and they would ask, "How are you doing?" I would reply with, "Great! I feel good. All my hair is coming back, I joined a breast cancer group, doing my spin and yoga again, the weight is coming off and back to working full time. Life is good!"

All was going well until about six weeks ago. While I was in the shower I felt a lump. It stopped me dead in my tracks. Instantly, fear filled my belly. What my doctor told me would happen, did. I denied that I felt the lump. I buried it deep within me. When people would ask how I was I still said "great" and lied right through my smile. At night I would go home and behind closed doors feel the lump over and over again. I did not tell anyone. I never had any intention of doing anything about it out of fear that it could be very real again.

My mind soon took me to some dark places...more and more. The fear started to consume me like a big snowball. I soon felt depressed and withdrawn. I tried so hard to be positive and move the thoughts to a place of positivity. When I tried to reach out to some of my friends, life had moved on for them, too - back to "the busy." I would go to my breast cancer groups and they would understand, but if I missed the weekly group, I would spiral out of control.

Then one night at 1:14 in the morning, I broke. I sat up and wept silently like I never had before. I was scared. I had tried so hard to deny that there was a possibility the cancer was back. I didn't want to face this all over again. It was supposed to be a happy time.

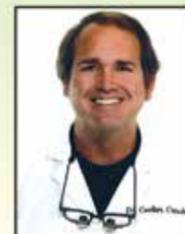
To view previous columns or to leave a message for Shay, please visit DesertHealthNews.com and search 'Shay'. For more information on triple negative breast cancer, visit www.tnbcfoundation.org.

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**Coconut On, Healthy Ones**

Continued from page 1

"These same recommendations were introduced by our government in 1977 as the 'Dietary Goals of the United States,'" notes Jeralyn Brossfield, MD, in her latest *Desert Health*® column (p. 18). "We are living with the results of this 'grand experiment' where the standard American dietary recommendations have promoted a low-fat diet and the overconsumption of vegetable oils and grains, and they are not good."

Most of us grew up on this advice and all the packaged, processed, low fat foods that followed. Today, many are turning back to natural grass-fed butter, animal fat, and coconut oil.

The new news for some?

It is in the absence of refined sugars and processed carbs and starches that these saturated fats are good for you. Those still eating Big Macs and bagels may want to bow out of the conversation; the AHA is right in that you should probably not be eating any additional fats. I recommend picking up Hyman's *Eat Fat, Get Thin* or cardiologist William Davis's *Wheat Belly: Total Health* and transitioning to a healthier lifestyle before consuming coconut oil for breakfast.

Here is what the Institute for Functional Medicine posted in response to the AHA report: *Every expert agrees that coconut oil can still be considered a health food due to its medium-chain triglycerides, lauric acid, and a general misunderstanding of saturated fat. It does, however, need to be consumed in an otherwise generally healthy diet in order not to cause additional inflammation in the body, and its status as a healthier cooking oil does not give carte blanche to eat tablespoons of it daily.*

Others emphasize the importance of using extra virgin coconut oil and 100% coconut MCT.

"The AHA campaign is backfiring because of the millions of people who already know that adding undamaged saturated fats into their diets makes them feel better," says Dave Asprey, whose Bulletproof Coffee (with grass-fed butter and MCT coconut oil) has added to the increased consumption. "They can feel the difference in their energy, see it in the mirror, and measure it in their blood work."

What did the AHA report fail to consider?**The new standard for measuring good vs. bad cholesterol**

The AHA recommends that your total cholesterol should be less than 200 mg/dL to put you at lower risk for heart disease.⁴ Integrative docs see it differently.

"It is the total cholesterol to HDL ratio, and the LDL particle number and size that are the most predictive of heart disease," says Hyman in an online blog. "In fact, small LDL particles are associated with three times the risk of heart attacks. Evidence suggests the biggest [indicator] of cardiac disease is the triglyceride to HDL ratio, not total cholesterol or LDL cholesterol."⁵

For example, if a person has total cholesterol of 300 mg/dL yet their HDL is 100 mg/dL, the ratio would be 3.0 and considered a lower risk (under 5) of heart disease than someone who has the same total number, but with HDL at 50 mg/dL as their ratio would be 6.

The second consideration is the LDL particle size: big fluffy particles are healthy and lower your risk of heart disease; small dense LDL particles are dangerous and increase your risk of heart disease.

The AHA reports that saturated fat increases cholesterol and thus should be avoided. However, saturated fat increases LDL particle size (fluffy) while lowering triglycerides and raising HDL (good) cholesterol. In contrast, a low-fat, high-carb diet leads to smaller and more abundant LDL particles. In their report, the AHA *did* mention that the advice they and many doctors have offered for years to replace fats with carbohydrates does not work and may even increase cardiovascular risk. For some reason, that news didn't make headlines.

Remember, cholesterol has an important job in your body as it helps to make hormones, vitamin D, and substances that help digest foods.

Unique and powerful properties of coconut oil

In Liz Moody's online response posted on MindBodyGreen.com, integrative doctor Sara Gottfried, MD, notes that in the many years the AHA has been pushing low-fat diets, there has been a growing epidemic of obesity and diabetes. "Coconut oil is unusual in that it contains medium-chain triglycerides that are well-proven to speed metabolism and assist in fat loss," she states. "Another component is lauric acid (MCT), found in breastmilk, which is antimicrobial."⁶

In his book *Eat Fat, Get Thin*, Hyman further explains:

The saturated fat in coconut oil is a very rare, very beneficial type called medium-chain triglycerides (MCT). These saturated fats actually reduce the ratio of total cholesterol to HDL (a good thing) and promote weight loss, and can even heal fatty liver caused by obesity. MCTs... have been shown to possess antioxidant and antimicrobial properties which help support the immune system. In the body, MCTs convert easily to energy; therefore, very little MCT oil is stored in fat, because it is used for energy. This is how MCTs help you burn fat and lose weight.⁷

Other foods being consumed with coconut oil

The saturated fats you eat don't increase blood levels of saturated fats; it's what you eat with it, says Hyman:

There is evidence that saturated fats cause inflammation in humans and animals, and that is not a good thing because inflammation is the underlying cause of heart disease, obesity, type 2 diabetes, cancer and dementia. But there are some important caveats. It seems that saturated fats cause inflammation only in the context of two things: low levels of omega-3 fats and high levels of carbohydrates.⁸

He further explains that these fats in the blood are not coming from the fats you eat; they are produced by the liver in response to the carbs you eat.

So, once again, Healthy Ones, if you are eating a clean diet full of vegetables, nuts, seeds, fish (and/or an omega-3 supplement), grass-fed beef and the like, coconut oil can be very beneficial and contribute to the healthy cholesterol levels described above; however, if you are eating a high-sugar, high-refined-carb diet, the combination can contribute to inflammation and increase your bad cholesterol.

"The 40-year old advice to cut total fat, saturated fat, and cholesterol has backfired on an international scale, bringing with it unprecedented type 2 diabetes and obesity," said *Wheat Belly's* Bill Davis in an interview with *Desert Health*. "The original advice was based on flawed studies, misinterpretations, even misrepresentations. Then why did the American Heart Association recently—and incomprehensibly—reaffirm its position?"

In his online rebuttal Davis concludes, "Perhaps in another 10, 20, or 30 years, the AHA panel will be saying something like 'Grains and sugars should be consumed in minimal amounts and, in the setting of strict carbohydrate limitation, the atherogenicity (heart disease-causing potential) of saturated fats is disabled. It is therefore clear that saturated fat consumption is benign and does not contribute to cardiovascular risk.'⁹"

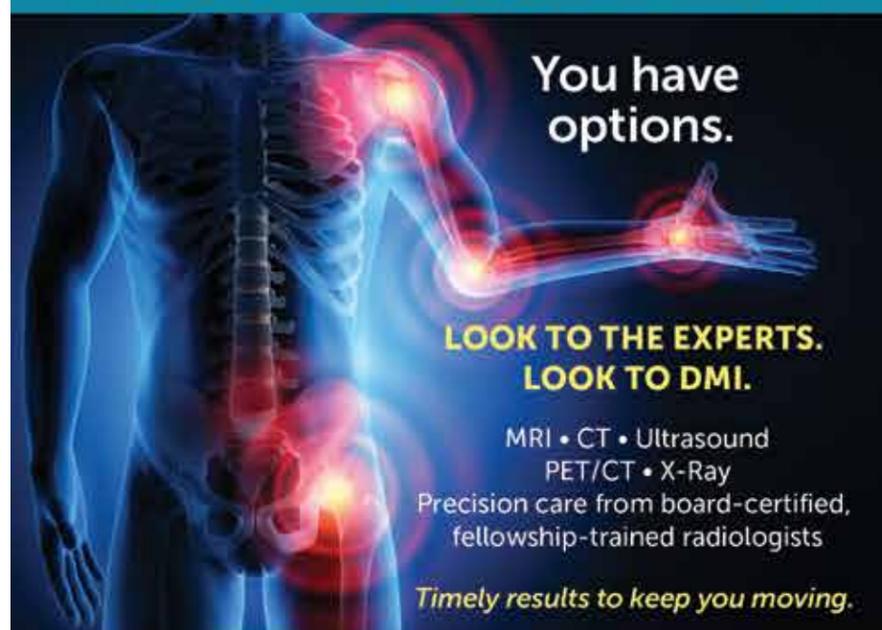
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It Takes Two

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

One of the most important questions asked by patients when they start a course of treatment is how long the regimen will take and how many sessions they will need to get the relief they seek.

Naturally, this depends on what condition is being treated, whether it is headaches; neck, back, shoulder or foot pain; vertigo or Bell's palsy; internal conditions such as indigestion or IBS, or stress-related problems. Also relevant is whether the pain/problem has been chronic for months or years, or is an acute condition from a recent injury. Often, if someone has just hurt themselves (they used improper technique when lifting, or suffered a sports injury), they can be helped in just one or a few sessions.

However, full and complete healing takes two: participation by both the patient and the provider.

It is very important for patients to take an active role in their own recovery, and follow through with their practitioners' recommendations to assist healing at home. Herbs and supplements won't work if you don't take them; physical therapy needs to be done at home; exercise may need to moderate until underlying inflammation is resolved. Too often when patients get treated for sports-related problems and then feel a little better, they go off and play 18-holes of golf, or too many sets at tennis, or overdo it cleaning the house or at the gym, and the pain rebounds. Unfortunately, they often then conclude that the therapy isn't working.

Healing the root cause of a chronic condition is not done overnight. After all, it may have taken a long time for this condition to develop. As we heal, we must slowly start to make minor changes, which may be challenging. Many aspects of healing can start by adjusting our personal habits, particularly diet and exercise. Stress is also one of the biggest factors and a root cause of many conditions. Learning to adapt to problems and even change your thinking about issues can be a key factor to change.

When addressing a health condition, we need to build a team to get better. That team may include the right medical doctor or specialist, an acupuncturist, a chiropractor, and a nutritionist. However, among all the team members, the most important one is YOU, the patient.

It takes two to create changes that bring about health. The practitioner needs to address the issues and start to reduce signs and symptoms; the patient needs to participate by making lifestyle changes, and following through on recommendations. Attending to minor aches and pains now is better than waiting until you need surgery. Even if you do need surgery, you should be in the best condition possible to accelerate recovery.

Health is a team effort and YOU are the most important member of that team. Are you ready to take control of your health and to make changes to your lifestyle if necessary?

Dr. Sheppard is the founder of AcQpoint Wellness Center in Palm Desert and can be reached at (760) 345.2200. www.AcQPoint.com.

The Grass Is Always Greener

By Amy Austin, RN, Psy.D., LMFT

In your mind's eye, is the grass greener at times in your neighbor's backyard? Do you get green with envy thinking about someone else's car, spouse, partner, wealth, or happiness?

I recently observed a holiday called *Shavuot*, or the giving of the Ten Commandments to the Jewish people on Mount Sinai a mere 3,329 years ago, and was asked to give a talk on the last commandment, "Thou Shalt Not Covet." This was an interesting feat since I'd not really given much thought to the concept and was eager to delve deeper.

What is coveting? How does it affect our lives and our relationships? Is this commandment last on the list because it is the hardest as we are faced with it on a daily basis?

In the book of Deuteronomy, the word "desire" is also used in connection with the word "covet." For all of time it seems, and even more so today, there's always something new to love, yearn for, and buy.

The first part of the commandment is very specific: "You shall not covet your friend's wife, or his field, servant, ox, donkey, or anything else that belongs to your friend." You know exactly what you shouldn't covet, but why is it necessary to add the generalization "and all that belongs to your friend?"

A beautiful explanation is offered to teach a very crucial lesson and to make this commandment more palatable and easier to carry out. That is, to look at the bigger picture. I may want my friend's car, but do I want his heart condition? I may want my neighbor's spouse or partner, but do I want the struggle he or she has maintaining a peaceful home?

This reminds me of a story of a farmer who leaves his modest town. He comes to the city and sees the big, beautiful buildings and the king's castle. He knows the king has a young, beautiful daughter yet he doesn't give a second thought to ever meeting or being with royalty. His boundaries are clearly defined. But, the lines of our lives are more subtle and may be more difficult to define or to follow.

There's also an old Yiddish story that says if we put all of our challenges, heartaches, and struggles into the center with everyone else's, we'd probably, in the end, take back our own.

A tension of opposites coincides with this commandment. Where there is pain, there is wisdom; fear leading to strength; loneliness to reaching out. If we desire something that doesn't belong to us, or are jealous of someone's affluence, good fortune, or lifestyle, a mindful door can open. Now, we can view life as an opportunity of expression instead of a life of emotional oppression. We can forge ahead, knowing our lives are uniquely ours and we hold the reins.

Who is a wealthy person? A person who is content with their lot, a distinction made by the honorable Lubavitcher Rebbe Rabbi Menachem M. Schneerson, OBM. This is true only for physical wealth, of course. With regard to spiritual health and wealth, one must never be content with their lot. Keep learning, moving forward, and soaring higher. Jealousy, then, will have no place in our daily lives.

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



What is H. Pylori?

By Cheryl Kane-Banke, CCHT

Helicobacter pylori (*H. pylori*) is a bacterium of the stomach also known as *Campylobacter pylori*, which can be a factor in the development of ulcers in the stomach. Gastric acids begin to erode the stomach lining causing inflammation and creating an open sore (ulcer). *H. pylori* infection is a strong risk factor for certain types of stomach cancer as well.

H. pylori is an insidious adversary in that it has the ability to attach itself to the cell lining, hiding in the mucous covering the intestinal wall, enabling the microbe to escape the harsh effects of acid found in the stomach. Although the cells of the stomach lining slough off frequently, it has the ability, due to a specific pH sensitive protein (BabA), to detach from old cells and re-attach to the new cells on the stomach lining, before being banished into the lumen, thus recycling the infection.

How is this bacteria contracted? Surprisingly, *H. pylori* bacteria can be spread between individuals by sharing utensils, drinking out of an infected person's cup or glass, or even kissing. It can also be contracted through contaminated food or water.

Most people are unaware they have *H. pylori* infection because they never experience symptoms. If signs and symptoms of stomach distress appear, your doctor will probably test you for *H. pylori* infection. If results are positive, traditional treatment for *H. pylori* may include antibiotics such as amoxicillin, tetracycline, metronidazole or clarithromycin which are usually prescribed for a period of two weeks.

For those interested in a natural method of eradication of *H. pylori*, studies have shown the following to be effective in some cases:

- **Broccoli sprouts:** shown to reduce *H. pylori* colonization, but not completely eradicate it.¹
- **Olive oil:** 2007 study reveals polyphenols contained in olive oil have been effective.²
- **Licorice root:** A 2009 study determined that licorice root can inhibit the adhesion of *Helicobacter pylori* to human gastric mucosa.³
- **Green tea:** A 2009 study concluded that consuming green tea may help kill and slow the growth of *H. pylori*.⁴
- **Manuka honey:** Comes from a specific flower source and has been shown to possess bacteriostatic properties against *H. pylori*.⁵

Colon cleansing may also help to reduce the presence of unwanted bacteria, reducing stress on the nervous system and other organs and lending support to the entire immune system. Colon cleansing gently lifts unwanted mucous containing the *H. pylori* bacteria off the colon wall, encouraging the colon to heal. Supplementing with probiotic and digestive enzymes is a therapy advocated by natural practitioners – and more and more medical doctors – who feel that the digestive system benefits with the balance of intestinal flora.

Cheryl Kane-Banke is a certified therapist with *A Healthier You in Palm Desert* which is owned and operated by Deb McMahon, RN, CNHP. For more information call (760) 360.8877.

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The Many Benefits of Hemp Oil (CBD)

By Jessica Needle, ND

Do you know someone who uses hemp oil and touts its health benefits? Have you heard of CBD oil and wondered if it would be good for you? If so, read on to learn more about this herbal agent and its wide range of benefits.

Hemp is a plant in the cannabis family. It is related to, but not the same as the herb used for recreational and medical marijuana use. Hemp contains a natural constituent called cannabidiol (CBD) in large quantity, while marijuana contains much larger amounts of tetrahydrocannabinol (THC). THC is responsible for marijuana's psychoactive effects and is regulated as a drug. Because hemp seeds contain no THC they are for sale without a prescription, will not cause a "high," and can be consumed as food. Think of hemp milk or hemp powder on the shelves of your local health food store.



While in the cannabis family, hemp is not the same herb used for recreational or medicinal purposes and contains no THC.

Your body contains receptors for cannabinoids, the class of chemicals that includes CBD. When CBD binds to a receptor, one outcome is a decrease in pain signaling for a prolonged period compared to other methods of pain relief. CBD oil is especially well suited to treat neuropathic pain, the kind that causes numbness and tingling or shooting sensations.

In addition to pain relief, CBD has been used successfully to treat anxiety and insomnia. It has anti-inflammatory and anticonvulsant actions and is being investigated for the treatment of a wide range of conditions including cancer, rheumatoid arthritis, epilepsy, diabetes and Alzheimer's disease. Medications used to treat these illnesses may have unwanted side effects which are not found with CBD administration. For example, CBD does not elicit dependence, significantly alter blood pressure, or produce cognitive or motor impairment.

The human body produces substances similar to CBD that bind to the cannabinoid receptors. A deficiency of endogenous cannabinoids or receptors can occur if your diet is lacking omega-3 oils, the good fats found in fish, nuts and seeds. Such a deficiency may lead to irritable bowel syndrome, fibromyalgia and migraines. Taking supplements derived from hemp can help correct the deficiency until the body resumes making sufficient quantities on its own.

CBD comes in many forms including capsules, liquid drops, sprays, and topical salves. While CBD is generally safe, it may interact with certain medications, so it's best to consult with a health care practitioner if you take prescription or over-the-counter medications regularly. Also be aware that the dose found in CBD preparations can vary widely, from 1 milligram to hundreds of milligrams per serving. It's best to start with a low dose and work your way up slowly.

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

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Living Wellness

with Jennifer Di Francesco

Perfectly Imperfect



When I was a young girl my mother worked with pottery. Glazed bowls and vessels that looked earthy and imperfect adorned countertops. She stressed the importance of finding imperfect beauty in art and nature. I vividly remember a time she purchased a vase from an artist while a customer next to us was looking for the perfect piece free of cracks and imperfections. My mother was grateful to purchase the most imperfect vase that seemed to be discarded by many. She would say, "Look for the beauty in the warts." These early remembrances somehow extended beyond art and have allowed me to honor the human element with all of its bumps, cracks and messy complications.

There is an ancient Japanese concept called Wabi-Sabi. This teaching comes from a Buddhist approach which encourages individuals to honor imperfection. This practice extends to how Japanese Zen gardens are tended, or how Raku tea ceremony pottery is crafted. 700 years ago, Japanese nobility were considered "enlightened" if they could understand imperfection and the idea of emptiness through these arts. In Japan, a Kintsugi pot is made with an intentional crack which is filled with gold. This allowed the observer to remember where beauty comes from. Perfection cannot exist without imperfection. Musician and poet Leonard Cohen captured this beautifully with his words, "There is a crack in everything, that's how the light gets in."

How can we embody some of these ideas in our current culture which praises flawless beauty and perfect health? To some degree we have been corrupted by the idea of perfection with a critical eye and comparison. We tend to easily veer towards ideas that we are not smart enough, thin enough, fit enough, and the list continues. This preoccupied perfectionistic headspace can lead to anxiety, depression and, worst case scenario, a risk of suicide. This is especially prevalent with our younger generation. The ideal way to be mindful in accepting imperfection is to practice one or more of the following life experiences:

- Honor art at a gallery, or something personally created, that embodies imperfection. Be mindful of a tendency to be critical of imperfection.
- Spend some time hiking in nature or in a garden and look for the imperfections that create beauty surrounding you.
- Practice yoga, meditation or any form of movement where space is created in the body and where the instructor discusses honoring the manifestation of the moment.
- Instead of spending time doing things right, spend more time contemplating what is the right thing to do.
- Look in the mirror and ask yourself what you see. Quirks, cracks, creases, pimples, furrows? Can you honor these characteristics and see the story they tell or the evidence of your humanness?

We are all perfectly imperfect, and love of all the irregular is a basic sign of our potential freedom. The next time you feel broken, reflect on the imperfect Kintsugi bowl with a gold thread and imagine that your flaw is a part of your unique history and beauty. Your imperfection will be your "golden thread."

All Supplements Are Not Created Equal

By Sonja Fung, ND

As of 2016, the dietary supplement industry hit \$122 billion and it continues to grow. You can get supplements just about anywhere now, from Amazon and your grocery store, to your pharmacy and doctor's office. It is becoming more and more difficult to differentiate what you need, if it is safe for you, and if you're actually getting what you expect in the product.

With such fast-paced growth, it is difficult for the FDA to regulate all the supplements marketed. In 2010 the FDA issued a current good manufacturing practice (cGMP) guideline, but leaves it up to the supplement companies to voluntarily follow and report quality control methodology. In 2015, the New York attorney general's office issued a cease-and-desist letter to 4 major retailers: GNC, Target, Walgreens, and Walmart whose supplements failed to show they actually contained the substance on the product label.

One of the ways you can protect yourself from poorly made supplements is to use brands that follow industry standards for quality assurance including ISO 9001, ISO 17025, and third-party cGMP certification, such as NSF/NSFI, NPA, TGA, USP, and CL. Consumer and health conscious supplement companies will have passed FDA inspection and always use quality control measures such as independent testing for correct dosage, in-house testing, batch quarantine and batch testing to check raw materials for contaminants.

In addition to certifications, always read the label to see the "other ingredients" in your supplement. Avoid "inactive ingredients" such as preservatives (titanium dioxide, zinc oxide), food coloring additives (red/blue/yellow lake), binders and fillers such as microcrystalline cellulose, modified (GMO) corn starch, magnesium stearate, gelatin, and talc (clay) to name a few. Supplements in tablet form have the most preservatives, binders, and fillers, in order to keep it in its tablet form. Tablets can be more difficult to break down for older individuals or those with poor digestive function. Try dropping your tablet into a cup of water. If it doesn't dissolve in 30 minutes, you have your answer.

Pay a little extra for better quality. Don't go for the budget brands or the most expensive. Centrum, one of the top selling multivitamins, is a supplement line from Pfizer, a \$220 billion drug company. Centrum uses the above "inactive ingredients" in their products to keep costs low and increase shelf life. It also contains cheaper and poorly absorbed forms of vitamins and minerals such as cyanocobalamin (vitamin B12) and calcium carbonate instead of higher-quality, bio-available forms of methylcobalamin (vitamin B12) and calcium citrate.

Many of the highest quality supplement companies commonly sell directly to health care practitioners and cannot be found in retail stores. Examples of top quality companies that exceed cGMP standards and FDA requirements include: Xymogen, Thorne Research, Pure Encapsulations, Designs for Health, Ortho-molecular, Integrative Therapeutics, Klaire Labs, and Nordic Naturals Professional.

Above all, always check with a doctor or pharmacist knowledgeable in nutrition and supplementation before starting any new vitamin/supplement/herb, etc. even though the supplement store clerk or "Dr. Google" may have told you it would be fine.

Dr. Sonja Fung is a primary care naturopathic doctor with expertise in integrative cancer care, regenerative joint injections, nutrition, and IV nutrient replenishment. She is the owner and medical director at Live Well Clinic in La Quinta and can be reached at (760) 771.5970. www.livewellclinic.org.

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- 13) Guests left with their share of PrimeTime Produce vegetables from the complimentary Farmer's Market.
- 14) Elliot Lander, MD, and Krista Fleischner

A special Thank You to photographer Lani Garfield.
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Oh, What a Night!



15



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15) Maya Kato, MD, and James Park, MD

16) Guests left with their share of PrimeTime Produce vegetables from the complimentary Farmer's Market.

17) Steve and Reesa Manning

18) Lisa Beardeaux, Jenn Geyer, Tanya Niwa, Jessica Bush, Devlinn Clinton, Matt Amrine, and Joe Huard

19) Fatemeh Hadjian, DDS, and Saeide Tourkeman

20) Indio High Medical Health Academy volunteers with teacher, Jason Tate

21) The Eisenhower Medical Center team

22) Shay and Jaelyn Moraga

23) William and Lorraine Branham

24) Chris Christensen and Herb Schultz

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SUPERSTAR: Janet Zappala

This year, the Emmy award-winning reporter and KMIR evening anchor deservedly received the most nominations from the community. As an integral part of the Wellness Awards and our official Partner in Health, Janet was presented with the honorary "Superstar" award. Thank you for all you do, Janet!



INDIVIDUAL: Jason Tate

Indio High teacher Jason Tate says, if we want to stop the spread of chronic disease, we need to start with the next generation. Seven years ago, he developed a course to help students understand the effects of food on their body. He then developed the Health & Nutritional Sciences Academy of Wellness teaching pre-med, nutrition, yoga, functional medicine, and more to his Indio High students. The incredible results further inspired him to create the Human Health Initiative, a 501(c)3 non-profit organization which will work to incorporate the important life skills of nutrition, movement and stress management into every high school in America and beyond.



BUSINESS: Thrive Fitness Studio

Thrive is a transformational experience that starts from the inside out; 20 percent of their training focuses on mechanics, and 80 percent on mindset. "Thrive Tribe" members, who range in ages from 8 to 78, say they not only shed pounds and gain fitness, but establish mental strength for lasting change. "The formula for fitness has been taught backwards for way too long with the focus on muscle versus mind," says owner Jay Nixon. Thrive's unique fitness program also teaches gratitude, positive action, and spreading kindness that includes a daily quota of hugs, high fives and words of encouragement to others.



NON-PROFIT: Cielo Vista Charter School

Seven years ago, Ceilo Vista Charter implemented a comprehensive – and contagious - personal wellness plan at their school including healthy vending machines, a school fitness center open to students, staff and the community, monthly newsletters, workout Wednesdays, a ban on hot Cheetos and sports drinks, a school garden, chickens who provide eggs for healthy cooking classes, and more. Progress was measured through body composition testing and after the third year, student obesity rates dropped 70 percent in their tuition-free school comprised of 79 percent socio-economically disadvantaged students. Faculty, staff, student families and the surrounding community are all part of their plan for change.



INTEGRATIVE PRACTITIONER: Hessam Mahdavi, MD, DC, CNS

As a chiropractor before obtaining his medical degree, Dr. Mahdavi always understood the importance of combining holistic and traditional medicine to effectively treat disease. But it was a personal diagnosis of an autoimmune disease that inspired him to obtain his certifications in functional medicine. He now prescribes individualized lifestyle, nutrition, and supplementation along with medicine to bring about wellness. Dr. Mahdavi actively lectures and encourages other medical doctors to embrace integrative medicine. "The art and science of holistic and western medicine has had such a profound impact on my own life," he says, "that I am driven to give this knowledge - and gift - to others."



YOUTH: Jaelyn Moraga, RYT200

At 14, Jaelyn is the youngest certified yoga instructor in the country completing more than 200 hours of training in a rigorous adult program. She has dreamed of achieving this honor most of her life and she is passionate about her goal to help educate and teach her peers - and adults - the health benefits of yoga. Jaelyn is a straight A student who plays athletics, is on the student council, and volunteers a minimum of 5 hours every month to the community. "You are never too young to make a difference" she says. "If there is something you are passionate about, go for it."

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Videos of all finalists can be found on Desert Health's YouTube Channel
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Brain Health Top of Mind

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

Last month, brain health was top of mind at the annual Institute for Functional Medicine conference. It was discussed that, while it has been a generally accepted scientific fact that the human brain is incapable of growing new brain cells, we now know that brain cells do continue to grow throughout one's lifetime with the 1982 discovery of a brain growth hormone called brain-derived neurotrophic factor (BDNF). This process is known as neurogenesis.

Early in life, BDNF regulates the growth of brain cells. As we age, it helps repair failing brain cells and nourishes them to increase their survival and continued growth, especially in the memory center of the brain known as the hippocampus. This powerful hormone also increases the ability of brain cells to communicate by developing new connections in a process called neuroplasticity.

Both neurogenesis and neuroplasticity are directly related and enhanced by proper serum levels of BDNF. When BDNF levels are high, acquiring new knowledge is enhanced, and memory and mood disorders are improved. Unfortunately, when BDNF levels fall, the opposite occurs. Low levels of BDNF may serve as a novel predictor of dementia and Alzheimer's disease, especially in women, the group at highest risk for Alzheimer's disease.

In a recent issue of the *Journal of the American Medical Association*, researchers from Boston University measured the baseline levels of BDNF in a group of adults and followed them for ten years. They found that those individuals with the highest levels of BDNF developed dementia 50% less often compared to those with the lowest.

As we age, our BDNF levels naturally begin to fall; we may find it more difficult to do complex tasks. The good news is that there are several things you can do to help promote higher levels of BDNF. Recent research at Harvard Medical School has found a molecular link between a specific workout and a healthier brain. Aerobic exercise activates promoter genes and stimulates the brain to make more BDNF. It is theorized that neural activity involved in coordinated movements are responsible for this.

DHA is an omega-3 fatty acid (fish oil) that plays a central role in brain health and increases levels of BDNF. DHA not only turns on the growth of new brain cells, but offers protection for existing brain cells while enhancing the ability of brain cells to connect with each other in the process of neuroplasticity.

Research done at Leiden University in the Netherlands has shown a profound seasonal variation in blood levels of BDNF during months with the most sunshine. They were also able to correlate the diagnosis of depression with low levels of BDNF. This information may explain why some individuals become depressed during winter months or in areas with little sunshine.

Research now clearly shows that getting sunshine, engaging in regular aerobic exercise, and taking DHA are proven methods to increase BDNF and important factors to reduce your risk for dementia and Alzheimer's.

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

Sources: 1) <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2504526/> 2) <http://www.sciencemag.org/news/2013/10/how-exercise-beefs-brain> 3) Institute for Functional Medicine website: <https://www.functionalmedicine.org/>

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THE Paradigm Shift in Medicine Today

By Jeralyn Brossfield, MD

Job Security from the AHA Report on Fats

This last month, the American Heart Association released a Presidential Advisory titled, "Dietary Fats and Cardiovascular Disease." You may have seen attention-grabbing headlines such as, "Coconut Oil Isn't Healthy. It's never been healthy," or, "Health Alert: Coconut Oil is Just as Bad as Butter and Beef Fat, Heart Docs Say."

Obviously, the controversy about fat and deciphering choices to promote health is alive and well. Unfortunately, this is another example of "Fake News."

I am profoundly distressed by this report as it promotes confusion and poor health and will require valuable time and effort to sort through with each of my patients who want to do the right thing. This report rehashes multiple studies that have significant flaws but have been used to prop up arguments against saturated fat.

Under a barrage of mis-information and industry marketing about fat, we have eaten low-fat diets since the mid-1970s. In that timeframe, Americans have reduced our intake of fat from 43% to 33% with an even greater decrease in our saturated fat intake. Has this improved our health? No! In fact, we have seen a doubling of our obesity rates and a ten-fold increase in the number of Americans with type 2 diabetes.

The recent AHA Advisory culls the evidence for its recommendation from four "core" studies published in 1968, 1969, 1970 and 1979. They conclude that cardiovascular disease is decreased by replacing saturated fats (butter, beef fat, palm and coconut oil) in the diet with polyunsaturated fats (such as corn, soybean, and cottonseed oils along with other processed vegetable oils). There are many points of this assertion to argue, but one of the greatest flaws is that it is based on studies that show *correlation* but not *causation*.

In scientific studies there is a great tendency to assert that an outcome is due to a certain action (a *cause*), but most of the time there are other factors that might also cause the outcome. This is called *correlation*. A simple example would be the assertion that heart disease deaths dropped during the 1970s and 1980s due to decreased intake of saturated fats in the American diet. However, during the same time period there was a drastic decrease in cigarette smoking. So how can we be sure which factor caused the decrease rates of heart disease? In truth, we can't.

Despite the leap in logic from correlation to causation, the so-called "Diet-Heart Hypothesis" (the belief that high saturated fat intake causes high cholesterol in the blood which causes heart disease) is firmly entrenched in the dietary world. This hypothesis has its origins in the work of Ancel Keys who first created the "Six Country Analysis" showing that citizens in countries with higher fat intake experienced more heart disease. In 1956, the American Heart Association began promoting the replacement of saturated fats with margarine, corn oil, chicken and cold cereal. The Lipid Hypothesis was further propagated in the following decades through the infamous "Framingham Heart Study" which proposed that people with higher blood cholesterol levels were more likely to have plaque in their arteries and more likely to die from heart disease.

In 1977, the Senate released "Dietary Goals for the United States" recommending avoidance of foods containing saturated fats in meat, dairy and tropical oils such as coconut and palm oils. This paved the way for the multi-million dollar food industry to seize the marketing opportunity of playing on our fear of heart disease by promoting low-fat food options.

We are living with the results of this "grand experiment" where the standard American dietary recommendations have promoted a low-fat diet, and the over-consumption of vegetable oils and grains and they are not good.

Eating cholesterol has very little impact on the cholesterol levels in the body. Most of the cholesterol we eat is not absorbed because it does not easily cross into the gut wall. Peter Attica says it this way, "Plasma cholesterol levels (which is what clinicians measure with standard cholesterol tests) often have little to do with *cellular* cholesterol, especially *artery* cholesterol, which is what we really care about. For example, when cholesterol intake is decreased, the body will synthesize more cholesterol and/or absorb (i.e. recycle) more cholesterol from our gut."

Other factors that must be considered in whether any fat, saturated or not, will produce health effects in the body include whether the remainder of the diet is comprised of minimally processed, low-glycemic foods, and the person's internal level of inflammation.

This advisory from the AHA turns back the clock of progress in the quest to understand optimal nutrition for each of us. I'm sorry to say that this article is a stick-in-the-mud to the paradigm shift in medicine today. However, it challenges me to communicate the answers better and seek broader evidence for our dietary choices. I hope you'll join me in truth seeking!

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

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The Microbiome Solution

Live dirty, eat clean

A Desert Health Review by Pam Salvadore

The *Microbiome Solution* is not your ordinary diet book. It's more of an education in how our bodies work and how we can impact them to produce better health. Health expert and author Dr. Robynne Chutkan honed the information she shares in the book through observation, trial and error in her practice as an integrative gastroenterologist and founder of the Digestive Center for Wellness in Maryland.

Chutkan has made it her mission to help us understand how our body's microbes influence the state of our health and the power we have to change them for the better. She is a member of the medical advisory board for *The Dr. Oz Show* and a regular guest covering digestive health. She was the host of the National Institutes of Health Clinical Roundtable Series and a medical consultant and on-air talent for Discovery Health Channel. Chutkan has also been featured on *The Today Show*, *CBS This Morning*, and *The Doctors* and is frequently interviewed as a medical expert for the *Washington Post*.

In her book, Chutkan defines microbiome as "all the organisms that live in or on your body." She's talking about bacteria, viruses, fungus, and, yes, even worms. That's a whopping one hundred trillion microbes which can be found in or on your body at any given time. Referring to it as "the zoo inside you," Chutkan explains how this multitude of microbes work together to support bodily functions and the importance of keeping them healthy, happy, and properly balanced.

She begins with how we attain our microbes and emphasizes getting back to nature. The most natural arrival is believed to be that which is imparted to us from our mothers, through the processes of natural childbirth and breast feeding. From there, we pick up microbes from the foods we eat and the environments we come into contact with throughout our lives. Our environment, in particular, plays a key role. It used to be that we picked up these health cohorts when we went out to play in the woods or garden in the yard. Now, children sit in front of monitors and a majority of us sit at desks all day. Chutkan stresses the importance of this contact with nature in keeping your microbiome healthy and diverse. While you can take a probiotic pill she says, it will not come close to providing the complete range of microbes that your body has worked to collect over the course of your lifetime.

Chutkan goes on to explain how illness and obesity are quite possibly the result of an imbalance of good and bad bacteria in our microbiomes, known as dysbiosis. This imbalance allows the bad bacteria to take over, forcing good microbes and bacteria out and resulting in disease. Dysbiosis is the most common disorder Chutkan sees in her practice and she believes that it very well may be the underlying explanation for inflammatory bowel diseases such as Crohn's and ulcerative colitis. She is also convinced that dysbiosis could provide an explanation as to why so many people have trouble losing weight. Adamant about her theory, Chutkan even went so far as to conduct a nutritional study among twelve of her patients as a means of addressing their Crohn's disease and ulcerative colitis symptoms, and it worked! Her study found that dietary changes restored balance to her patients' microbiomes and significantly relieved their symptoms. Addressing dysbiosis could well be the most simple and profound treatment for a variety of medical conditions.



Live Dirty: Chutkan recommends getting outside and getting your hands dirty to "re-wild" your microbiome.

restock the good bacteria lost to years of neglect and sanitation. Re-wilding is easily attained by stopping the bad behavior that's killing off your bacteria and throwing your microbiome out of whack. Stop medicating your bacteria, stop scrubbing your skin every time you come in contact with an unfamiliar environment, and get outside more often. By stopping the behaviors that kill microbes, your body will be better able to regain what was lost and foster the growth and strength of the good microbes you need for optimal health.

Second, we need to feed our bacterial friends the foods that will keep them in balance, so they are able to support our health. Start eating prebiotics, foods that feed your good bacteria and encourage them to do their jobs, and stop eating junk. These two simple steps can restore harmony to your microbiome, therefore restoring overall health.

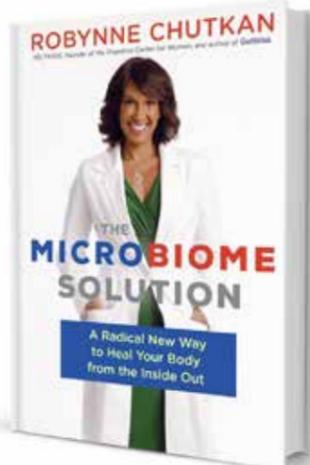
Chutkan's "Live Dirty, Eat Clean" plan is a realistic and well thought out lifestyle program that's full of information, recipes, and steps that allow you to take back control and influence your health for the better. Her mantra is "live a little dirtier and eat a little cleaner."



Eat Clean: Feed your microbiome the nutrients they crave - and need - to thrive.

The *Microbiome Solution* is an insightful, well-written and easily absorbed book that provides the education and tools to influence your health for the entirety of your life. I strongly encourage anyone interested in better health and living well to indulge in this educational insight in lieu of trendy diets that vilify, restrict, and berate food and lifestyle choices.

Pam Salvadore of *La Quinta* is a nutrition journalist. For more information from Pam visit her blog pamsalvadore.wordpress.com The *Microbiome Solution* is available at national book retailers and online. For more information visit Chutkan's website, www.gutbliss.com.



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Summer Grooves

By *Jayne Robertson, E-RYT 500*

The dog days of summer are upon us as we have just passed the summer solstice here in the northern hemisphere. What this means for us year-round desert rats is long hours of daylight, soaring temperatures, fewer crowds and open roads.

Just as winter draws people into hibernation, our summer does something quite similar. We know that to maximize our time outside and minimize how the summer heat can drain energy, we are called to move early in the morning hours or head indoors to a cooler environment. Of course, the practice of yoga is perfect year round, and a great alternative to trying to beat the heat outside.

But something else is also calling us; the summer slowdown is beckoning us to turn inward.

Summer in the desert is an opportune time to deepen practices of contemplation, self-care, relaxation, and healing. With less to do on the social calendar, we have time to dive into our reading list, take time to work on (rather than in) our businesses, or explore new and creative offerings for the fall.

The summer months allow us to embrace things that got postponed during the high season. For me, this is time each week to clear clutter from my desk, delete old emails, brainstorm on ideas that had been tucked away over the winter, and undertake self-study and personal development. Those things that get placed on the back burner waiting for the "perfect time" to move forward can now come into focus. Summer can be that perfect time. Whatever seeds we've been planting over the winter and spring months can be more deeply nourished to manifestation in the quiet long days of summer.

With quieter days and schedules, we can perhaps begin to dig the grooves for supportive habits to carry with us into the busier winter season. Creating ritual and routine are important in supporting a consistent type of practice, whether it is an exercise regime, meditation or contemplation practice.

In yoga, these habits are called *samskaras* and are described as brain ruts or grooves. If we have a behavior that we've been defaulting to for years, that groove can be deep. It can seem as though we have no other choice than to fall into a familiar rut when triggered by something. When we slow down and connect to what is important to how we are living, we begin to dig a new groove creating a fresh *samskara* of behavior.

These can be translated as healthy habits and if we consistently connect to how we wish to be in the world, we create a deeper and wider groove...one which is reflective of our highest intentions.

Our slower summer months are the ideal time to dig new grooves within our daily choices. Since we have more space in the day, fewer commitments, and often fewer deadlines, we can raise our level of consciousness to what we wish to have today as well as in the future.

Now is the time... the perfect summer time!

Jayne Robertson, E-RYT 500, is owner and instructor at Desert Yoga Therapy in Rancho Mirage. For more information, visit www.desertyogatherapy.com or call (760) 456.5160. jayne@desertyogatherapy.com

100,000 Mile Check-Up

By *Stacey Clarke, DPM*

We may take better care with our car tires than our feet. We rotate the tires regularly; we switch them out with uneven wear and also replace them at a certain mileage. For the average adult, the 100,000 milestone for the feet comes around the age of 50, according to the American Podiatric Medical Association. At this point, while not possible to switch out your feet, it might be a great time to evaluate the status of several different parameters related to your feet.

SHOE SIZE CHANGES. To some, it might appear that the feet are "growing"; they could be changing size, but not by growth. We have 107 ligaments in our feet. With age, these ligaments tend to stretch with wear and tear allowing movement of the joints to occur which can contribute to flatter arches or wider feet. If you have not had your feet measured (while standing) in quite a while, it is recommended. You might find added foot comfort with a half size bigger.

TOENAIL FUNGUS. However cute Digger the Dermatophyte was on commercials a few years back, there is nothing appealing about toenail fungus. This abnormal appearance of nails can be yellow, thick, and crumbly. Treating toenail fungus early prevents spread to other nails, allows more comfort to your toes now and in the future, and helps prevent spread of the fungus to the skin. Toenail changes can also be a window to diagnosing other problems in the feet, too.

CIRCULATION. Getting the circulation down to the feet is the longest route the blood travels in our circulatory/ arterial system. As the population is living longer, it is becoming more common that circulation changes can be diagnosed in the feet. There are two pulses in each foot. These can be easily tested at an office visit. Other easy testing is also available in the office to better understand the circulation status of your feet, such as an ankle brachial index.

NERVE PROBLEMS. A pinched nerve between your toes is very uncomfortable. This can feel like a "wad of sock" in your shoes, and may be diagnosed as a neuroma. Other nerve problems can be diagnosed with a nervous system exam on your feet and legs. Neuropathy or abnormal feeling to your feet can cause burning, sensitivity to light touch or even complete lack of feeling in your feet.

STRUCTURAL. While flat feet may be easily recognized, other foot problems can be just as problematic. Hammertoes, bunions, bone spurs are more common to see in our middle age and later. This can challenge shoe fit, comfort and performance.

GENERAL. As we age, we tend to lose the natural cushioning to our feet. Carrying extra weight on your frame may also affect the padding earlier. Therefore, the shock absorption and overall comfort may decline. Corns and calluses may occur related to newly created pressure points due to lack of padding. Specific shoe recommendations, medical grade insoles and brand specific socks can all impact comfort related to this problem.

In summary, foot problems reduce mobility. Less walking may occur, reducing independence and leading to a cascade effect on your overall health. Feet are vital to health through mobility and support.

Dr. Stacey Clarke is a podiatrist and Muscle Activation Technique specialist. She combines 26 years of traditional medicine with this complementary modality for integrative care. Dr. Clarke can be reached at (760) 285.7723 or visit www.footdoconfoot.com.



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Medicare: The Good, the Bad and the Ugly

By Cindy Kleine

The good news is...you have made it to 65 years young. Happy Birthday!

The bad news is...you will start receiving mail regarding Medicare approximately 8 months before you get to blow out the candles. Some of the mail is from the Social Security Administration; however, most of it is from insurance companies and insurance agents.

The ugly part is the learning curve.

Hopefully, after reading this article, you will cherish this little birthday gift.

Where to start?

Here are the many "parts" to Medicare which can be confusing:

Part A covers hospitalization (most people have worked to have hospitalization provided).

Part B covers doctors and outpatient visits (the government charges a premium for this).

Part A + Part B is "original Medicare" which pays approximately 80% of your medical expenditures.

Part C is the Medicare Advantage Plan which provides Parts A and B, plus extra benefits and Part D.

Part D is prescription drug coverage.

Supplements

Then, there are "supplements." These insurance "plans" (not "parts") are purchased by the consumer from insurance companies with the assistance of an agent. These plans (A, B, C, D, F, G, K, L, M, or N) help fill in some - or most - of the coverage that original Medicare does not cover. The most comprehensive Plan is F.

Supplemental plans allow you to obtain medical care anywhere, provided the doctor accepts original Medicare.

Part C is known as a Medicare Advantage Plan. These plans are HMO plans. They are affiliated with a network of primary doctors. Someone on this type of plan would select a primary care physician (PCP) from a contracted network. Referrals to a specialty doctor would be necessary. Medical care must be sought within a geographic area, unless it is an emergency or on an urgent care basis.

Most of these plans in our area are offered at zero premiums and include Part D. They also provide some additional benefits that are not available with original Medicare such as a basic fitness membership, transportation, vision and a nurse hotline, to name a few.

Part D stands for "drugs." If you choose to enroll in a Part D plan, you can only do so through a private insurance company that is contracted with Medicare. While the government does not require you to have a Part D, should you wish to join a plan later, it will impose a late enrollment penalty or LED. The lifetime penalty will be in addition to your premium payment.

This information is a general overview and there are additional rules, regulations, premiums, enrollment periods, medical care and coverage items you should consider before jumping into the Medicare world.

Starting in 2020, there are new regulations regarding Supplement Plans F and C and their future availability; the Medicare Access and CHIP Reauthorization Act of 2015 (MACRA) will be making an impact.

Therefore, read, research and/or partner with a licensed professional to help make the transition into Medicare a happy one.

Cindy Kleine is an independent sales agent with Kleine Financial & Insurance Solutions, Inc. in Palm Desert. Serving the Coachella Valley (license #0B7732). For more information, call (760) 346.9700.



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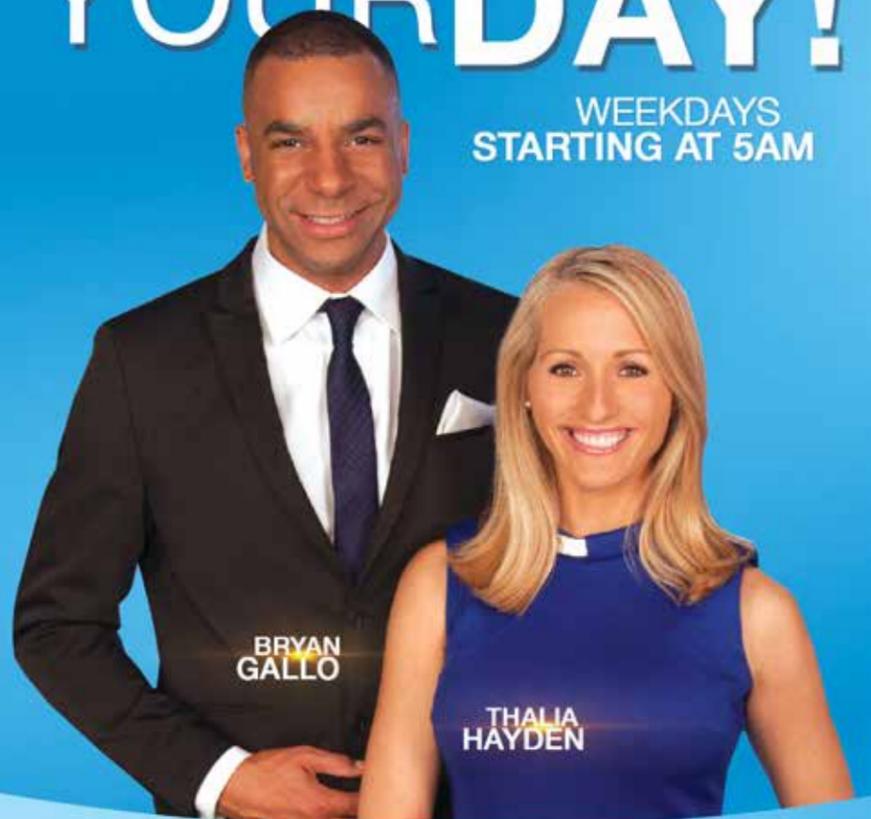


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Stress Buster Smoothie

By Dipika Patel

Have you ever stopped to ask yourself the following questions: How is my day going? Does this situation stress me out? How is this stress affecting me emotionally, mentally and physically? Have I asked or reached out for help? Whatever your answer, I most certainly urge you to ask yourself these important questions, so that you are aware and can heal yourself from the dis-ease of stress.

Stress can be silent, but deadly. I have seen it ruin many lives, relationships, businesses, families, health and much more. It can destroy civilizations; you see it in our history and also in our current times. Whether it is due to financial situations, our home environment, relationships, politics, health, or anything else, we must start recognizing our stressors, acknowledging them, understanding that we are not controlled by them, and managing them without taking drugs.

According to the Global Organization for Stress, over 75% of adults report experiencing moderate to high levels of stress in the past month, and nearly half report that their stress has increased in the past year. It is about time that we take responsibility and create strategies to help us combat stress, and to heal ourselves from the inside out.

I want to share with you what I do when I feel stress often due to overworking, not feeding my body the correct nutrients, not getting enough rest, not hydrating myself throughout the day, and/or having distressing thoughts. I can recognize the feeling of stress right away as my back starts hurting and I am emotionally and mentally challenged. To help me through the process, I have created relationships that support me when I am out of alignment. With the support of others, and by nourishing myself with nutritious foods and supplements, I can manage my pain mentally, physically and emotionally.

At times, when I am feeling overwhelmed with life, I make a point to increase my intake of anti-inflammatory foods rich in vitamin C, magnesium, zinc, and B vitamins. I also love making this smoothie. Enjoy this nutritious drink while relaxing with some soothing music the next time you feel overwhelmed and are looking for ways to reduce your stress.

Stress Buster Smoothie

The berries and apples in this recipe are filled with antioxidants that can counteract the effects of stress hormones like cortisol. The potassium in avocados helps lower blood pressure levels, while the cineole in ginger also helps lower stress levels.

Ingredients:

- 1 handful spinach
- 1 apple
- 1 handful blueberries
- ¼ avocado
- 1 chunk ginger
- 1 tablespoon chia seeds
- coconut water to the max fill line



Place all of the above ingredients in a blender, blend and serve.

Remember, stress can either help you perform under pressure and motivate you to do your best, or you can let it control you. The choice is yours.

Drink your way to calmness with this superfood smoothie.

Dipika Patel specializes in holistic health by empowering clients to activate balanced lifestyle of the mind, body and soul. For more information, visit www.dipikapatel.life or contact her at Dipika@dipikapatel.life.

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Fruit Makes It Fancy

Increase your intake with bedazzled H2O

By Megan Goehring

As July temperatures spike into the 100-teens, we desert dwellers emerge into baking parking lots and remember the importance of hydration. Most year-round residents have a lukewarm bottle of water rolling around under car seats and a liquid-bearing vessel on our desk at work; yet, many of us walk around in a perpetual state of near dehydration, accepting that thirsty feeling as a necessary component of living in SoCal.

But dehydration is dangerous in both the short- and long-term. The immediate effects are often confused with stressful living – headache, muscle pain and fatigue.¹ Denying ourselves the water our bodies need to function can ultimately lead to a whole host of problems including constipation, ulcers and kidney stones.

In an age when we're told that overconsumption is the root of most evils, it feels counterintuitive to realize we're not getting enough of something. So how much consumption will get us back to where our bodies want to be? The conventional "8 x 8" rule sounds familiar to most (8 oz. of water, 8 times per day), but it doesn't take into account the wide variety of body types. Dr. Darrell Wolfe, a renowned functional medicine practitioner, recommends instead that we divide our body weight by half in pounds and then drink that amount in ounces before 5 p.m. daily. (A 200 lb. person would consume 100 oz.)²

The next conundrum comes with parsing out the dizzying array of beverages available to most Americans. At least 2 aisles of drinkables line the midsection of every grocery store. Should tea, coffee, sport drinks and fruit juice count? All of them begin with water as their base, right? The trouble with those options are two-fold: the acidity and sugar content. Tea and coffee require our bodies to expel more water to neutralize the acids they add, and pre-bottled sport drinks or juice can cause sudden elevation in our blood sugar levels, taxing our pancreas.³

Regardless of the sobering statistics, those newly committed to a hydrated life may find the idea of drinking 3 – 5 quarts of water daunting, not to mention, frankly, boring to taste buds accustomed to being dazzled. Mary Stupin, a health coach based in Cherry Valley, advocates Dr. Wolfe's water regimen to "eliminate toxicity and improve your body's overall environment." A second-generation fruit farmer, she suggests sweetening the deal with pieces of whole fruit and even fresh herbs submerged in the water. Her favorite flavor combinations are basil with strawberries, cucumber with mint or plums with tarragon.

Mary also suggests whole fruit as a mid-afternoon snack. Her go-to pick: watermelon. In addition to being 91% water⁴ watermelon offers fiber, more vitamin C than oranges and lycopene, an antioxidant which repairs the body from damage from chemical pesticides and food additives.⁵ In fact, do like Mary – cut up a big juicy watermelon, hand everyone in the family a big slice and eat it for dinner out on the patio. Why not? It's hot and dry and who wants to cook anyway?

Megan Goehring is the Palm Springs manager and community liaison for the Certified Farmers Markets of the Coachella Valley and is passionate about improving access to fresh, high quality food for everyone in her community. For more information about locally sourced food from small California farms, check out www.certifiedfarmersmarkets.org or call (844) 732.7628.

References: 1) <http://www.care2.com/greenliving/13-symptoms-of-chronic-dehydration.html>; 2) <https://www.docofdetox.ca/doc-of-detox/daily-water-consumption/>; 3) <http://www.foodmatters.com/article/are-you-chronically-dehydrated/>; 4) <https://health.clevelandclinic.org/2014/07/dehydrated-these-7-foods-will-satisfy-your-thirst-and-hunger/>; 5) <https://draxe.com/lycopene>.

Do You Zoodle?

By Lauren Del Sarto

One of the best gifts I ever received was my spiralizer. It is the perfect kitchen tool for turning zucchini into noodles, or "zoodles."

These colorful creations from carrots, yellow squash, zucchini and the like can be added to salads, side dishes and of course, to make an ideal pasta substitute for those of us on the grain-free bandwagon. You can top them with your favorite pasta sauce or experiment with the many recipes found on the web.

However, prepping your zoodles for pasta replacement (or any cooking) requires a few key tips to ensure satisfying versus soggy consistency.



Zucchini noodles with tomato and feta

water. Replace the top layer with fresh towels and then roll them up and place them in the fridge while you prep your toppings. You can do this for 5 minutes or up to an hour; the end result will be a crispier zoodle.

Once you've prepped your toppings (maybe sundried tomatoes with Kalamata olives, or feta cheese and basil), place about a 1/2 tablespoon of coconut oil in a pan and heat to medium-high. Remove the zoodles from the fridge, unroll, and sauté for 3-5 minutes. Cook larger portions in 2 or more batches so all are lightly cooked.

Remove from the pan and arrange directly on the plate before adding your sauce. I find that sauces with an olive oil base or thicker consistency work best, and you don't need too much. Sprinkle with grated Pecorino Romano (sheep's milk cheese) and enjoy!

Feeling adventurous? Here is a great resource for unique and tasty zoodle recipes:

<http://www.livingchirpy.com/2016/15-must-try-low-carb-zoodle-recipes/>



Spiralizers like the one pictured here can be found at Amazon, Bed Bath & Beyond or even Walmart (for under \$20). They are a much better solution than the hand held twisters which can wear you out. I find that 2-3 medium size zuccs will provide a substantial zoodle meal for two

Squash contains a lot of water naturally, so you want to absorb the fluid a bit to avoid a soggy supper. Once you spiralize, place the zoodles on a thin layer of paper towels and sprinkle with salt. Place a few more paper towels on top and pat them to absorb the



Zoodles make exceptional additives for salads and side dishes

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Gluten-Free with Tiffany



The word "collagen" is derived from the Greek "kolla," meaning glue. It is the most abundant protein in our body forming the musculoskeletal system and all connective tissue. Experts often refer to it as the fountain of youth. As we age, our body's ability to make collagen begins to slow down. Consequently, our skin, hair, tendons, cartilage, bones, joints, organs, and intestines start losing their structure, causing signs of aging and poor health.

Collagen is made of primarily amino acids, many of which need to be obtained through diet. There are delicious foods that help replenish collagen, but supplementation may benefit you more efficiently and in more ways than just beauty.

Research shows our skin is made of approximately 70% collagen. In some studies, consumption of collagen peptides was seen to significantly reduce eye wrinkle volume by up to 20 percent and this effect was long-lasting.¹ Other studies show how after 6 months of use, collagen led to a clear improvement of the skin appearance in women suffering from moderate cellulite² and stretchmarks.

About 33% of collagen is made from the amino acids proline and glycine. Today, it can be difficult to obtain therapeutic amounts from diet alone. Hydrolyzed collagen protein (powder) is arguably the easiest way to increase collagen levels. Hydrolyzed simply means the proteins are broken down into easy-to-use molecules. Two highly reputable brands are Great Lakes and Vital Proteins (I have no affiliation with either). Taking 2 tablespoons at breakfast and at night have shown to be enough to experience benefits. There is virtually no taste or smell.

Bone broth, commonly used centuries ago and popular again today, is abundant in collagen, minerals, and other special anti-inflammatory properties. From your kitchen or health food store, it's easy to sip on broth like tea, or use in soups and stir fry. Bone broth is high in protein and supports the immune system. It is particularly useful for gastrointestinal health and in reduction of inflammation.³

In our daily diet, fish, meat, bones, and organs are the best sources of collagen. Vegetarians can depend on beans, cheese, eggs and wheat germ. Here's a great tip: Adding vitamin C from berries and greens will increase the utilization and production of collagen, in addition to the mineral copper, and sterols derived from aloe vera.⁴ You can get copper from sources such as sesame seeds and cashews.⁵

Aside from the beauty benefits, collagen's amino acid profile can be life changing for everyone. It supports mood, gut health, joint⁶ and post-exercise pain.⁷ Its high content of proline, shown to be significantly present in wound healing,⁸ and glycine, an important inhibitory neurotransmitter as well as a natural anti-inflammatory⁹ are of significant interest in research today.

With consistent use, anti-aging, improved digestion, detoxification, restful sleep⁷, brain function, as well as weight loss are all benefits of collagen consumption you can look forward to experiencing. For those of us who want to beat the clock, stay pain-free and look younger, collagen may just be your secret weapon.

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Summer Beauty Tips

By Michele McDonough

Use non-comedogenic products. Non-comedogenic beauty products are designed not to clog pores which can lead to irritation and blemishes. This is important to remember for sunscreens, but may impact you more if you moisturize often and are prone to acne - especially in the summer. Hot and humid weather leads to sweat which takes a longer time to evaporate off your skin. Combining that with oily products isn't exactly a party for your pores. Go the oil-free or non-comedogenic route to ward off pimples.

Stay moisturized with good clean/organic products. A faithful moisturizing routine can do so many beneficial things for your complexion. Your skin is a barrier that protects you from environmental factors like pollution, bacteria and moisture loss, and keeping it moisturized helps keep that barrier working properly. Dry skin is unhappy, damage-prone skin, so apply a light moisturizer to protect it from summertime drying agents like sunburn, salt and chlorine.



Be sure to switch up your beauty routine for summer sun and exposure.

Exfoliate at the right times - and don't overdo it! Not only will it help you maintain a fresh fake tan (when your dead skin cells flake off, the old tan will come off with it), but gentle facial exfoliation will help keep your skin free of clogged pores and create a better canvas for makeup application. However, keep in mind that exfoliation reveals new, sensitive skin that can be more prone to burning in the sun. Reserve your exfoliating habits for the evening (and not right before a special occasion), or for days when you aren't heading straight from the shower to the pool.

Aloe can be your new best friend during the summer. It is a known anti-inflammatory that also provides moisturizing relief. Applying products containing aloe vera after sun exposure will calm and soothe your skin, leaving you far less likely to experience that awful scaly dryness that comes with summer. It's also said to contain antioxidants that can help repair damaged skin and prevent free radicals from doing their undesirable work. Keep an aloe plant in your backyard or even your kitchen and use when needed!

Invest in moisturizers that work on wet skin when best absorbed. Don't skip the after-bathing rehydration! Many brands now make body washes that provide hydration via their oil ingredients with many that you apply even before you towel off.

Buy quality sunscreens. Look beyond the SPF and buy quality sunscreens with safe ingredients. Reapply every hour or so, and if you take a dip in the water, reapply when you get out. Water attracts the sun (like snow), creating a glare that can cause sunburns.

Michele McDonough is a strategic consultant and executive recruiter in the field of health and beauty. She is also co-founder of Women's Power Circle and can be reached at mmcdon4946@aol.com.

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Optimal Sun Care and Protection

The adverse effects of toxic sunscreens have become a regular conversation in health and wellness magazines, blogs, and other educational forums. Sunscreens that are not specifically marketed as “made with non-toxic ingredients” are toxic. It is important to look at the quality and ingredients of sunscreens, especially for young children who are highly susceptible to the effects of toxins. Non-sunscreen options such as clothing and shade should also be considered to reduce the risk of sunburns, skin damage, and future health issues caused by excess, unprotected sun exposure.

Why consider “safe” sunscreens? Ingredients in toxic sunscreens such as oxybenzone and octinoxate can cause hormonal disruption which affects thyroid health, as well as estrogen and testosterone levels. Other ingredients such as avobenzone and retinyl palmitate can also cause free radical damage and may actually increase rates of skin disease from sun exposure.

Non-toxic sunscreens do need to be applied more frequently, can be harder to apply smoothly, and can leave a white residue; however, the benefits far outweigh some of the inconvenience.

The most comprehensive list of non-toxic sunscreens available is published by Environmental Working Group (ewg.org).

It is important to note that both non-toxic and toxic sunscreens do lose potency over time, so be sure to replace your sunscreen products every six months to maintain optimal sunscreen protection.

Non-sunscreen options. The best sunscreen protection is actually provided by clothing, hats, and sun shades. There are no topical products that can match the benefits of clothing and umbrella-type coverage. Cover yourself and your children with clothing and long sleeve swimwear when in the sun. There are light and breathable clothing options to stay cool and covered for the summer months. Wear a hat at all times in the sun - even in the water when that is a viable option. Bring sun shades and umbrellas when shade is not provided and sit in the shade as often as possible. Consider using an umbrella while walking outdoors and make sure you have a shade over strollers, wagons, and baby carriers.

Getting your vitamin D. Sunscreen and clothing coverage do limit the body’s ability to make vitamin D, and D deficiency is also a growing concern with both children and adults. Thus, I recommend a maximum of 15-20 minutes per day of direct sunlight and daily vitamin D supplementation of 2,000 IU (or more as needed) for adults and 400 IU per day for children.

According to HARC surveys, skin cancer is the most prevalent cancer here in the Coachella Valley, so keep in mind that excessive sun exposure can cause sun damage, future skin health issues, increased free radical damage, and a suppressed immune system. Prevention is imperative to reducing risk of future health issues.

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



Welcome to the 21st Century

At no period in history have we experienced the galactic environmental and social changes of today. It is a natural consequence of our evolution. The times are fascinating and challenging. It is not surprising we can feel lost, stressed, and out of date. The speed of technology, access to knowledge, and instant communication are measured in nano seconds, and the speed is accelerating.

For those who have grown up in the 21st century, technology may seem natural. But for those just learning while in advancing years, it can be overwhelming, frustrating, frightening.

Changes are inevitable in nature. They are also causes of cosmic opportunities and consequences. As always, the choices are ours to analyze, accept or reject.

In spite of lacking scientific academic background, I am trying to make sense and learn from it with an open attitude. Great minds have offered their thoughts, and I have drawn from their opinions in the quotes below, all taken from TheWeek.com 2012 article *Technology: Is it making addicts of us all?*

“With smart phones, tablets and other digital devices reshaping how people work, communicate and spend their free time, scientists and psychologists are starting to question what our reliance on these devices is doing to our minds.

There is a growing concern that technology is taking over people’s lives. It is a cultural recognition that people have a pathological relationship with their devices; people feel not just addicted, but trapped.” (Matt Richtel, *The New York Times*)

“We’re paying a steep price for our digital obsession... Constant use of these devices is already rewiring the physical structure of our minds... Over time, a brain habituated to these quick fixes shrinks the structure used for concentration, empathy and impulse control, while growing new neurons receptive to speedy processing and instant gratification.” (Tony Dokoupil, *Newsweek*)

“Americans use on average 122 more hours per year than Brits and 378 hours (nearly 10 weeks) more than Germans on these devices.” (Alexis Madrigal in *TheAtlantic.com*)

As Silicon Valley tech guru Soren Gordhamer has said, “We are in a phase of ‘What have we done?’”

“There is a good treatment, if not a cure; it is called nature. When we go out into the great outdoors, the illusion of control technology provides disappears and we are deflated, humbled and in awe all at once. In the vast “natural cathedral” we are reminded of a world much larger than ourselves – one that predates us, will outlive us, and at whose mercy we exist.” (Nicholas Kristof, *The New York Times*)

I believe in this with all my heart, soul and mind.

To escape our “postindustrial self-absorption” we all need to leave our iPhone at home at least once a week and take a walk in nature. Your devices will be waiting when you return and you will be a bit saner when you rejoin the endless conversation.

George can be reached at ugadolph@live.com.



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Local Teens Selected for First Tee® Nationals

By Lauren Del Sarto

Two local teens from the First Tee® of the Coachella Valley were selected among hundreds of applicants to attend the organization's national events. Dana Condon (17) of Palm Desert and Caroline Wales (14) of La Quinta will join more than 90 junior golfers (ages 14 - 17) from across the country at The First Tee® Life Skills and Leadership Academy in East Lansing, Michigan, July 26 - August 1. Condon is also one of 24 elite junior golfers selected by a national panel of judges to attend The First Tee® College Golf Prep Academy in West Palm Beach, Florida, July 11 - 18.



Dana Condon of Palm Desert

These programs will further prepare both for, not only a future in golf, but also important life lessons. The Leadership Academy provides valuable character education and leadership instruction; attendees develop and hone skills to become leaders in their local First Tee® chapters, schools, and communities while experiencing championship golf, career exploration and dorm living at host Michigan State University.

Both young players are eager to learn, and even more excited about meeting other players from across the country. "I'm looking forward to meeting other participants and seeing what they have learned so I can share it with my local First Tee® chapter," said Condon in an interview with Desert Health®. The 4.0 student who has been playing since she was seven will be a senior next year and hopes to attend a Division II or III college and to major in education. Her experience at the college prep academy which

includes 18 to 36 holes a day, as well as team building activities and education, is certain to help prepare her for life as a collegiate athlete.

Wales, who will attend Palm Desert High in the fall, is also a regional all-round gymnastics champion which she feels really helps her game. "Gymnastics helps with golf fitness including distance, balance and flexibility," she says, adding that her nutrition choices do the same. "In gymnastics, you can really feel what you eat, so I taught myself what is healthiest to eat." She cuts down on sweets and always tries to eat good protein, like grilled chicken, with vegetables. She is gluten, dairy, and egg-free and gets her carbs from alternatives such as chick pea pasta, overnight oats, and fruit. "I eat small meals throughout the day and love bell peppers, carrots and sweet potatoes." Wales hopes to obtain a Division I golf scholarship before going on to play in the LPGA.



Caroline Wales of La Quinta

Both players have also applied to play in the First Tee® program at the Pure Insurance Championship at Pebble Beach in September and will learn if they receive this honor in July.

The First Tee® is a wonderful program for young people and teaches much more beyond the game of golf. In speaking with both Condon and Wales, it is easy to see that they are both inspiring examples of the organization's core values, as well as the sport.

Encouraging others to join, Condon adds, "The First Tee® is a lot of fun. Bring a friend along, but if not, everyone there is very friendly and it's easy to make new friends. It's not all about the grind of golf; it's about interacting with other people and having fun at the same time."

To learn more about The First Tee® of the Coachella Valley, visit TheFirstTeeCoachellaValley.org or call (760) 779.1877.

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Choosing the Right Exercise Program for Fall Prevention

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

When we were kids, it seemed like there was nothing we couldn't do, from climbing walls, to jumping off roofs, skateboarding on handrails, and even skiing down double black diamonds. Then it happens, age sets in; it's twenty years later and while stepping down off a tall ladder, you miss a step and down you go, slamming to the ground in tremendous pain and with possible broken bones. What happened?

I hear stories from clients saying they have climbed ladders all their lives without a problem, then all of a sudden, they just don't seem to have the strength in their legs like they once did. Some say there are times they can't feel their toes, but they simply blame it on aging.

These stories are very real and our aging population is increasingly prone to falling due to lack of balance and strength.

One of the key components to preventing falls is spatial awareness of one's surroundings. As we age, we lose the ability to feel the ground due to diminishing proprioception. When starting a client in balance conditioning, I often begin by teaching individuals to always pick up their feet and not to bend forward to look at the ground. At first, mostly due to weakness, they will scoot across the floor and walk very stiffly and guarded, leaving them prone to falling.

When considering an exercise program for fall prevention, ensure that it addresses all of the following:

Balance: In addition to the traditional standing on one foot, reaching forward for an object at different heights is a good exercise, especially as this is a necessity at home. Sitting on an exercise ball and shifting weight in all directions with both feet on the ground is also a good practice.

Agility: I recommend practicing agility using ladders (with a qualified practitioner, of course) to incorporate multidirectional movements like high knees forward and sideways, the tricky shuffle cross over step, and facing the ladder moving in/out, etc.

Strength: The legs seem to give out first as we age; they start to feel heavy and sometimes hurt. Doing useful leg exercises such as sit-to-stand squats with a hip hinge are the best due to the fact that there is no weight on the spine and movement can be easily controlled. Upper body general strengthening may include standing cable chest presses where one must brace to perform the exercise.

Flexibility: As we age, joints begin to deteriorate, tendons and ligaments become less resilient, and muscles become tighter with compromised blood flow. A daily stretching program will help structures from becoming stagnant, can increase blood flow, and help joints to start feeling better.

The optimal program is one that has all the above phases in them, emphasizing good posture, good body control, and spatial awareness.

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 can be reached at (760) 200.1719 or michael@kinetixcenter.com.



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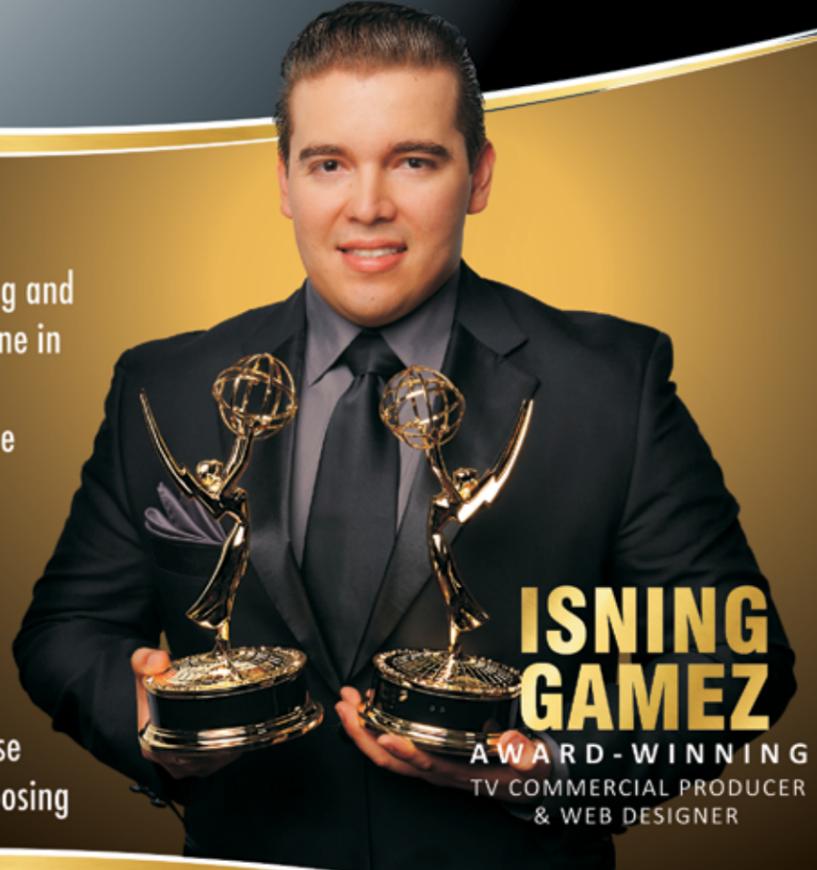
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