



Desert Health[®]

News from the Valley's Integrated Health Community

July/August 2018

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Meditation used to be reserved for hippies, gurus, and rock stars. The practice has now entered the mainstream, and the reasons are all around us. Chaos in the world, our dependence on electronics, and the need-it-now mentality create unrest and an extreme pace. Many are simply looking for a way to slow down or let go.

Those who say they can't meditate are usually the ones who need it most, and I was one of them. I used to think it would reduce my drive and surrender my "edge." This couldn't be farther from the truth; in fact, it's just the opposite.

When we are in that hypervigilant state, it often takes a lightning bolt (or a stiff drink) to bring us down. That elevated state is often our comfort zone, as it was mine, and meditation is something we will "get to someday." But taking the time to start today actually gives you more time, added energy and increased productivity.

You can easily find the many benefits of meditation online supported by both history and science, but I

believe the best reason is that it can actually make you a better person - both inside and out.

Meditation is a practice and there is no 'perfect.' Each day is different and presents its own experience and challenges; they are all part of the journey. The most important part is to simply show up.

You've heard that meditation can reduced stress, lower blood pressure, and calm the mind, but here are some of the extraordinary benefits you may not anticipate:

Meditation makes you happy

This one surprised me, but is very true. Meditation is like a car wash for your muddy brain; you come out sparkling clean, feeling lighter and brighter. The physiologic explanations point to a reduction in cortisol (the stress hormone); an increase in serotonin which regulates mood and behavior; and reconfiguration of the brain including reduction in the amygdala, the portion of the brain which controls anxiety and fear¹, and increased activity in the left prefrontal cortex, the calm, happy zone of the brain.

Continued on page 8



We need our bees. They pollinate our food and help our flowers flourish. It may be surprising to learn that one out of every three mouthfuls of food in the American diet is a product of honeybee pollination—from fruit to nuts to coffee beans.¹

However, bees are disappearing at alarming rates. The Center for Biological Diversity reports that 700 of the 4,000 native bee species in North America and Hawaii are heading toward extinction. Beekeepers have lost 30-50 percent of their colonies annually over the past decade (called bee colony collapse disorder), and if this rate continues, the managed beekeeping industry may be extinct soon, too.²

Our government has implemented a strategy to combat the issue pointing to pesticides, mites and viruses as the leading cause, yet not much is being done at the community level. Why is this? I believe it

comes down to fear. Many are allergic or have read about bees killing people, so their first instinct is to kill them. HOAs and pest management companies say they don't want to endanger the people they protect, so exterminating hives is often standard protocol.

This mindset needs to change. "To keep bees healthy, you need a good environment and you need your neighbors to keep healthy bees," said Nathalie Steinhauer of the Bee Informed Partnership and the Apiary Inspectors of America in a USA Today report. "Honeybee health is a community matter."

I recently became aware of this when a gardener pointed out a hive in my front yard. I was tickled pink to watch the little workers fly to and fro busily doing their job. They were nesting in an IID electrical box and I thought, "We need to move you guys to a safer location."

Continued on page 20



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Happy Summer

Summer in the Desert is a great time to take stock of your life... clean out your closet, finish that project, join a yoga class, or learn meditation.

We are doing just that at *Desert Health*, starting with our website which contains every article that has ever appeared on our pages – eight years of valuable health information! We've made it easier to search by categories such as pain management, mental health, yoga, and even inspiration. Or, you can pull up all articles in a single issue in our Print Editions section. Please check it out and let us know what you think!

We've also added a blog called "It's All about Balance." This is the common answer I give people who ask how I do so much, as well as those who graciously request that we publish more often. The name fits the goal of offering practical tips on living life to the fullest while maintaining your health and happiness.



So if you want more *Desert Health*, visit DesertHealthNews.com and read articles you may have missed, search your health questions, or sign up for the weekly blog to help fill the gap until the next issue arrives.

In this moment, we thank you for reading our summer issue which contains so much about – and for – the health of our community. We are all so lucky to live in this special place which offers so much to help us each thrive.

We look forward to celebrating the Greater Palm Springs Convention and Visitors Bureau's *Live Your Wellesst* campaign this fall! Look for our special section featuring promotions, practices and people in the September/October issue.

Go out and make it a great day! Until next time...

Here's to your health ~

Lauren

Lauren Del Sarto
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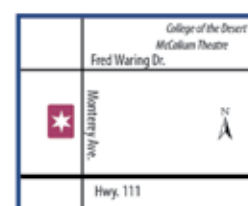
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NICHOLAS S. BAUMANN, DDS



Union Benefits Community

Desert Care Network expands services

By Lauren Del Sarto

The three local hospitals managed by Tenet Healthcare - Desert Regional Medical Center in Palm Springs, JFK Memorial Hospital in Indio, and Hi-Desert Medical Center/Hi-Desert Continuing Care Center in Joshua Tree - along with their region-wide outpatient health care centers have come together under one umbrella as Desert Care Network. The goals of the union include combining resources, continuity of care for patients, and the ability to recruit a greater number of qualified doctors and specialists to our region.

“We are excited to unveil the Desert Care Network brand, which signifies our commitment to meeting the health care needs of all the communities we serve and becoming the system of choice for both residents and visitors to this region,” said Michele Finney, CEO of Desert Regional and the Desert Care Network CEO. “Working as a unified system, we will help improve care coordination for the more than 125,000 patients we treat every year.”

On the surface, people will see the logo change and a new website as a single source for all facilities, but the underlying strategy includes a revitalization of all entities reflected in their new tagline, Health Blooms.

“As we look at collaborating and sharing services under one care unit, we are also looking at what is on the horizon for the network, and what additional services we can provide to improve the overall health status for our community,” said Linda Evans, chief strategy officer for the network. “Health Blooms represents a very positive, growth-oriented transformation, and revitalization of a comforting, trusted entity in a new light.”

While these hospitals are well known for their life-saving trauma care, comprehensive cancer care, intensive care unit for newborns, and their highly specialized stroke program, we asked if integrative health and wellness will be a focus for the new entity. According to Evans, the answer is yes. “As our foundation’s physician office practices grow, we will be able to add more integrative and wellness services.” This group of practitioners referred to as First Choice Physician Partners consists of 71 total providers (including 46 residents) regionally. With 11 Foundation office locations, the union makes recruitment for primary care and specialists easier as practitioners will now be joining the network versus a single hospital.

“Now doctors have the option to travel between the three facilities to meet the needs of each community,” adds Evans. “Where Hi-Desert may not have been able to sustain a full time specialist in the past, our doctors can now spend a few days there and other days in the valley adding a whole new level of service to that community.”

“We have physicians who are passionate to treat all patient populations, just like our hospitals do. Our union provides that balance and allows them to see every type of patient in our community. It strengthens our ability to bring more qualified practitioners, which benefits all.” Tenet is also investing in new equipment and services to support this growth. Two new MedPost urgent care facilities, one in North Indio and one in Palm Desert, will also be added this year.

Gary Honts remains as CEO of JFK Memorial Hospital and Karen Faulis remains as CEO of Hi-Desert Medical Center.

For more information visit DesertCareNetwork.com.

One Stop Shop for Health Resources

The Coachella Valley now has a website for health and wellness resources offering everything from hiking trails to adaptive sports; education to legal services; and weight management to food assistance.

Created by the Desert Healthcare District & Foundation (DHCD) in partnership with the City of Palm Springs, CV HIP (Coachella Valley Health Information Place) brings over 1,000 free and low-cost health programs and providers together in one place. Accessible in multiple languages, the site enables anyone to access information on health screenings, diabetes, food and nutrition, senior services, sexual health, counseling, pediatric health care, local sports and recreation, food assistance, financial and legal aid, and more.

Herb K. Schultz, DHCD CEO, says the program is the first of its kind locally. “We held extensive conversations with area social workers and case managers to understand the challenges they experienced while connecting people with the services they needed. These conversations revealed a common issue: it was a challenge to efficiently match people with the community organizations that could help them.”

Keeping the site current is imperative and will be a shared responsibility between service providers who can make updates directly and the DHCD. Non-profits, providers and others offering free or low cost services can also request to be added via the site.

Proceeds of the Mayor’s Healthy Planet, Healthy You 10-mile and 5K Race and Wellness Festival funded the program, and Palm Springs Mayor pro tem J.R. Roberts



CVHIP is a comprehensive site for local health and wellness resources.

has been a champion from the start. “CV HIP is for the mother dealing with food insecurity, not knowing where to go for urgently needed food for her family, and for the person who is homeless and struggling with the summer heat...It’s for first responders, 911 operators, and social workers – everyone – to help find free and low-cost health care and services for those that are distressed.”

Congressman Raul Ruiz, MD, said of the project, “One of the key access barriers found in my 2010 Coachella Valley Health Care Initiative was that many residents simply didn’t know what local services were available to them. This tool will help solve the problem.”

For more information visit CVHIP.com or call (760) 323-6113.

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Lung Health: Smoking Marijuana

Many people tend to smoke marijuana because they think that it's safer than smoking cigarettes. It's an herb and it's natural, but how safe is it?

On April 20 of this year (the unofficial day celebrating all things cannabis), local doctor Eric Presser, MD, was invited to KATU-TV in Portland, Oregon, to discuss marijuana and the effects it has on the lungs. Following are comments he shared:

KATU: Is smoking marijuana safer than smoking cigarettes?

EP: As a minimally invasive chest surgeon, the only thing that anyone should be breathing in is clean air. I tell my patients who smoke cigarettes that there's a one-in-six chance that they will get lung cancer and will live about 14 years less than nonsmokers. When it comes to marijuana, not a day goes by that I'm not asked about the health effects of marijuana. Unfortunately, we need more research on the topic.

The problem with marijuana is that most of the time when people smoke it, they're inhaling it very deeply and holding their breath. Just like in cigarettes, there are toxins in marijuana. Even though it's natural, the combustion is still creating these toxic chemicals that are detrimental to long-term health. I'm not advocating marijuana, but if you're going to consume, maybe consider edibles.



Eric Presser, MD, says even "natural" smoke in your lungs is still smoke.

KATU: What about vaping? Is that a safer option?

EP: Again, I say, the only thing you should be breathing into your lungs is clean air. When you light up a marijuana joint or a pipe, you're actually causing combustion. Combustion means that you're creating a flame and lighting everything on fire. When you use an e-cigarette or if you're vaping, you're heating the substance that's inside of the container. What that means is that when you look at micrographs of the THC, or the resin on the flower that you're smoking, because it's not being completely combusted, you actually get a cleaner hit. So you are not necessarily inhaling all of the toxic chemicals. It doesn't mean that it's safer or better, and there's no one who is going to tell you that it's better than breathing clean air, but it definitely has its benefits over smoking cigarettes.

KATU: How does marijuana affect the lungs?

EP: Anytime you breathe in any toxic chemicals, it's going to cause inflammation, which leads to a mucus producing cough. It's common sense; smoking anything and putting it into your lungs is going to be bad for you. Right now, we just don't have all the data available on the harmful effects of marijuana as compared to all the statistics we have on the dangers of smoking cigarettes.

Dr. Presser is a minimally invasive thoracic surgeon at First California Physician Partners and an associate professor at the University of California Riverside School of Medicine. He is also the author of An Empowering Guide to Lung Cancer, 6 Steps to Take Charge of Your Care and Your Life available at Amazon.com.

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Our Mind Still Matters

A school's approach to managing mental health

By Simon Moore, M.Ed., MHA, EMT

Is there a mental health crisis developing in America, or just a popular topic in the media? National Institute on Mental Health (NIMH) 2017 statistics document a nearly 13% rate of depression affliction in teenagers, and nearly 7% in adults; hardly an epidemic, but concerning, nonetheless.

Every day, we all are faced with issues that challenge our ability to cope with regular activities of daily living. When our minds become fatigued, we need help.

While the rich and famous afflicted with mental health complications often make the news, we must also be aware that many of our youth also suffer. What happens when students experience mental health issues? The American Psychology Association (APA) confirms that 90% of those that commit suicide show common signs of withdrawal, hopelessness and depression leading up to the act. That's the good news, since we can do something about it. The bad news? People don't always intervene.

But has there been an increase in mental health issues? According to the National Alliance on Mental Illness, 20% of youth live with a mental health condition, and suicide is the third leading cause of death among 10- to 14-year-olds. Additionally, 37% of students with a mental health illness drop out of high school, while 70% of youth in juvenile justice systems have a mental illness. The numbers cross all racial, cultural and economic boundaries.

A 2017 study from the APA identifies financial problems as the second leading source of stress in the U.S. with 40 million Americans suffering from anxiety, which is often triggered by financial troubles (NIMH). From finances, anxiety, depression, relationship hurdles, personality conflicts, and social media bullies, the chances of the average American experiencing some level of mental health instability is ever-present. In the educational system, schools must remain vigilant about signs, while having a pathway to help for those who present with mental health affliction.

The key to hitting the problem head-on: more assertive models for managing mental health. Coachella Valley High School in partnership with OneFuture Coachella Valley has teamed up to provide Mental Health First-Aid Certification as a pilot project for teachers and later students. This program provides formal training for participants to be able to assist someone experiencing a mental health or substance abuse crisis. With the seemingly regular occurrence of violence and suicide signs, teachers and students must partner to first prevent, and then to respond to, a mental health crisis.

Students are often the first ones to hear about the student that was depressed, aggressive, or questionably violent, and teachers often spend more time with youth than any older person. Arming students and teachers with the tools to manage a mental health crisis could mitigate the crisis, resulting in help for the afflicted.

From lessons past, we all must remember, our mind matters, and we will see one another through.

Simon Moore is a teacher at Coachella Valley High School and the CVHS Health Academy Lead. For more information about Mental Health First-Aid, visit Mentalhealthfirstaid.org. For more information on OneFuture, visit onefuturecv.org.

Visual Needs of Stroke Patients

By Greg Evans, OD

Every year more than 750,000 people suffer a stroke, the most common disability for Americans. A stroke occurs when the blood flow to the brain is interrupted. There are two basic types: an ischemic stroke, most often due to a blood clot blocking a blood vessel, and a hemorrhagic stroke, occurring when a blood vessel in the brain ruptures. Often a stroke is preceded by a temporary interruption of blood supply, which is called a transient ischemic attack (TIA). Symptoms include temporary episodes of weakness, numbness, paralysis of the face, arm or leg (especially on one side of the body, difficulty speaking or understanding simple statements, temporary loss of vision (usually in one eye), intermittent double vision, a droopy eyelid and loss of balance or co-ordination. TIA symptoms typically trigger a referral to an internist or cardiologist.

Loss of visual field on one side (hemianopsia). About 50% of stroke patients will have a visual field defect/loss, of which hemianopsia (loss of 1/2 of the right or left visual field in each eye) is the most disabling. Visual field loss is quite disorientating for patients and can often be overlooked as clumsiness or vertigo. Stroke patients with visual field loss report the lowest quality of life scores. Therefore, visual field testing should be completed on all patients with a stroke history. The loss of visual field is typically permanent so, to compensate, lifestyle changes, or changes in the environment, are required. Special side vision awareness glasses (SVAG) allow patients to move an image from their seeing field into the non-seeing field with the use of prisms.

Double vision (diplopia). Temporary (and occasionally permanent) double vision is also common following a stroke. The easiest solution is to patch one eye. Amblyopia or lazy eye can develop from prolonged patching, so it's important to switch the patch from time to time. Early in recovery a prismatic lens can be used to correct double vision. Often a disposable prism lens called a Fresnel lens is used. As double vision resolves (which it does in a significant number of patients), a weaker prism lens can easily be substituted.

Eyelid paresis. Some stroke patients experience eyelid ptosis (droopy eyelid) which commonly resolves; massaging the eyelid regularly may help recovery. For patients with blepharoptosis (the inability to squeeze/close the eyelids) the concern is improper eyelid closure and exposure of the eye. External eyelid weights can be used to assist the eyelid muscles to close. Recovery is often not full, but the addition of an eyelid weight allows the eyelid to close enough to alleviate permanent damage from occurring.

Because of these visual problems, it is important for patients to be examined by their eye doctor as well as other medical providers following the stroke.

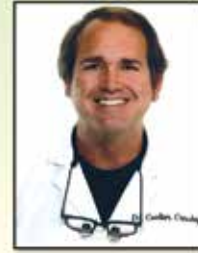
Dr. Evans is the founding owner of Evans Eye Care in Palm Desert and can be reached at (760) 674.8806 or online at www.evansyecare.com.

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Taking Care of Our Kids

Community welcomes Loma Linda Children's Hospital-Indio

By Lauren Del Sarto

You may find it surprising to learn that the number of children 17 and under in the Coachella Valley exceeds the number of adults 65 and over.¹ While schools and services are being built to support this growing demographic, our greatest need may be in medical care—especially in the east valley where the ratio of patients to doctors is an astonishing 8,407 to 1.²

As such, the community is graciously welcoming the Loma Linda Children's Hospital (LLCH) which opened in Indio in March. The stunning facility is a beacon of light that currently offers children (both with and without insurance) primary well care services, sick care visits, and sub-specialty support.

"There are great pediatricians here in the valley providing primary care and we support that," says Loma Linda University Children's Health Division Chief, General Pediatrics Alexandra Clark, MD. "We are not looking to take children away from others, but to fill the need that is not currently being met," she says, noting the large gap in sub-specialty pediatric care for which thousands of children currently travel to Loma Linda. "Our goal is to help limit that number by bringing those specialists here for routine follow up visits with, say, their rheumatologist, neurologist or endocrinologist."



Peter Vaccaro, MD, lead pediatrician at LLUCH – Indio and Alexandra Clark, MD, division chief, general pediatrics at Loma Linda University Children's Health

They work closely with other hospitals and pediatric services in the valley and refer children as needed. While they see patients with and without insurance, their primary goal is to assess whether a child meets the criteria to get insurance and to help the family navigate that system. The clinic has thirteen rooms with build-out to 20 and offers full body exams, well and sick visits, breathing treatments for asthma exacerbation, testing for lead levels and anemia, EKG, and more. Their "well care" services for kids of all ages include complete physicals, routine vision, hearing, developmental screenings and risk factors for autism, as well as referrals for families who may need other community services. Dental services are scheduled to open later this year, and physicians and sub-specialties will be added as demand increases.

The clinic has already brought in specialists to see existing LLUCH-Loma Linda patients for follow up appointments and is eager to grow that aspect of service. While bringing gastrointestinal, endocrinology, allergy, rheumatology and other specialties is viable, oncology is challenging as they cannot do chemotherapy onsite; however, they can draw labs and check on local patients when they are sick. Electronic medical records help streamline continuity of care for even their most chronic patients.

Plans for growth also include expanded hours, urgent care services, additional labs, IVs for dehydration, simple CBC for infection and hemoglobin, and radiology for broken bones and fractures. Their ultimate goal is telehealth for qualifying cases to increase efficiency. "It doesn't make sense for all visits, but certainly does for reviewing labs or discussing next steps, saving both families and doctors two hours on the road."



Additional services like radiology will be added with growth and demand.

Rooms are already prepped with computers for visual communication and technology that allows an LVN or PA to listen to the child's heart or perform an ultrasound while the practitioner at Loma Linda watches and listens along. The beautiful building which was designed with wellness in mind has many large windows and natural light. The entrance atrium has a "Jewel Box" design which throws colors across the room with the sun's reflection and will be used for educational programs on nutrition, exercise and wellness. Scooter's Bottomless Bookshelf is a gift from donors that ensures every child who visits selects a book to take home. The hospital has ample donations of books in both English and Spanish.

"There is a lot of opportunity for growth and we are working to ensure sustainability so we are here for the community long-term," adds Clark.

Loma Linda University Children's Health-Indio is currently open Monday through Thursday from 8a.m.-5p.m., Friday 8a.m.-4p.m., and Sunday 8:30a.m.-3p.m. (for sick visits or well care without an appointment). They currently accept many major insurance plans including IEHP and don't turn away children without insurance.

For more information visit www.lluch.org/indio.org or call (760) 477.0733

References: 1) HARC's Coachella Valley Community Health Survey, 2016 Executive Report; 2) 2010 Coachella Valley Healthcare Initiative.



The beautiful building was designed with wellness in mind.



Scooter's Bottomless Bookshelf ensures every child takes a book home.

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Why Meditate?

Continued from page 1

Increases energy

You take 20 minutes of out your morning to sit quietly and suddenly you have more energy throughout your day. How does this happen? We don't realize how much energy it takes to think, and negative thoughts enhance adrenaline using more energy than positive thoughts. Taking time to clear your mind helps revitalize your body and creates more positive energy.

Meditation also has many of the same brain enhancing benefits as naps: increasing focus and attention span, improving creative thinking, boosting memory and furthering the ability to multitask.³

Introduces you to your true self

One of the main philosophies of meditation, which tends to magically happen with regular practice, is letting go of the ego and getting in touch with your true self.

The ego is that part of you which puts "me/I" first. It wants to control all aspects of your life and the world around you. Your true self (often referred to as spirit) is more free, playful and curious. Your ego wants to win, while your spirit wants to share; your ego works to protect you, while your true self wants to explore; the ego comes from the mind, while spirit stems from the heart.

As humans, we innately lead with ego and may not know or trust our true self which often presents as intuition. Meditation can bring you closer to your true you and help create a healthier, more heart-centered balance.

Makes you kinder

A kinder and more compassionate you is a benefit of the philosophy above. Science supports that meditation enhances the right supramarginal gyrus, the part of the brain that increases compassion and empathy.²

Increases awareness, appreciation and wonder

Another philosophy of meditation is living in the present moment. By clearing your mind of past thoughts and future plans, you bring your awareness into the now, which enhances your awareness of everything around you. Trees look greener, the sky more blue and your life in that moment more beautiful. With regular practice you start to adapt an appreciation for everything - and everyone - around you. Coincidences (which begin to happen more often) create a sense of wonder that, when combined with your newfound happiness, feel almost magical.

Makes you more graceful

Think of someone you consider graceful. What attributes come to mind? Self-confidence, the way they carry themselves, calm and collected communication, a brighter light around them? These attributes stem from a more centered self which can be achieved through meditation.

Makes life richer

All of these attributes - happiness, increased energy, a closer connection to your true self, a kinder, more compassionate you, increased awareness, appreciation and wonder, a more graceful demeanor - add to a richer, more fulfilling life. You begin to step outside of your own thoughts and actions and become more in tune with those around you and the natural flow of the universe. In his meditation series *Manifesting Grace through Gratitude*, Deepak Chopra calls this "the hidden secret of being."

Where do you begin?

If you are inspired to give meditation a try, there are many resources available from free apps and online meditations to classes offered by local yoga studios and meditation centers. I recommend starting with instruction from a guided mediation or a class and trying a variety of styles to see what works best for you.



The many benefits of the practice may surprise you.

As one who likes to learn through lessons, I use the 21-day meditation series offered by Oprah Winfrey and Deepak Chopra which can be found at chopracentermeditation.com. Each meditation begins with inspirational words from Oprah and a few minutes of understanding and guidance from Chopra preceding the

meditation. The Chopra Center periodically introduces new series at no cost with the option to purchase at the end.

Getting started can be as easy as finding a quiet, serene place to sit, close your eyes and go within. Try a naturally lit room in your home or an inspiring outdoor space. The Greater Palm Springs Convention and Visitors Center has a list of the "Top 10 Places to Meditate" available at visitgreaterpalmsprings.com.

If you already practice meditation, please share your experience with us online to further inspire others at DesertHealthNews.com. Click on this article and leave your message in the comments field below.

Enjoy the journey! Namaste ~

Editorial by Lauren Del Sarto, founder and publisher of Desert Health.

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Dentures Got You Down?
New alternatives fix common dental woes

By Nicholas S. Baumann, DDS

Traditionally, when someone lost all of their teeth, removable dentures were the only option to restore a smile. With dentures come some compromises; they can be ill-fitting and uncomfortable, making chewing difficult. Today, technology has advanced and better options are available ranging from better fitting and more esthetic dentures to implant-supported porcelain bridges that look and function as well as natural teeth.

Often those with traditional dentures have difficulty chewing anything more than soft food. In fact, those with full dentures can only chew about 10% as well as those with all their natural teeth. With technological improvements, it's now possible to have better dentures. Instead of taking messy impressions requiring 5-6 visits over the course of months, digital scans of the tissue in the mouth can be made and a new denture can be digitally designed and 3D-milled. This can cut down on the time making a denture, improve the fit, and also lead to a stronger denture that lasts longer. Other techniques have also been improved that allow dentures to be much more natural and lifelike.

Even a perfectly made denture will still have some limitations. Using dental implants to support a denture can be a great way to improve function. This is called an "overdenture." Placing as few as two implants allows the denture to be anchored to them, which gives a much tighter fit than a denture alone. This allows a patient the ability to chew much harder foods with better stability. In addition, the patient's current denture can often be converted to fit the new implants which can save significant cost.

Finally, teeth can be created that function and look as great as a full mouth of healthy teeth to replace dentures all together. The procedure, commonly called "all-on-four" or "all-on-six," involves placing 4 or 6 dental implants and permanently fixing a porcelain bridge to the implants. The fabrication of this incredibly strong prosthesis means that patients can chew just about anything they choose with no issues. They are also much more comfortable and considerably less bulky than traditional dentures. They look beautiful and last a long time as well. For many patients, this is an ideal treatment and gives them back the teeth and smile they had when they were younger.

Many denture patients feel they are stuck with what they have and are unaware they may be a candidate for an alternative. If you or someone you know is unhappy with their dentures, speak to your dentist about options. In the end, having a beautiful smile and a healthy, comfortable mouth is possible and can do wonders for overall well-being and self-esteem.

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



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Sulfur-based Foods to the Rescue

Sulfur, which is present in every cell of our bodies, is the third most abundant mineral in the body and is crucial in forming a variety of sulfate compounds that perform a vast array of biological processes.¹ Many experts recognize we are at risk of sulfur deficiency due to diets high in grains, mineral-depleted soils, and acetaminophen use² in particular. Sulfur deficiency increases risk of conditions that are very common complaints today such as joint pain, acne, depression, early aging, and many other conditions which can be improved by increasing sulfur-containing foods and supplements.³

The two potent sulfur-containing amino acids are cysteine and methionine which are found in protein-rich foods like grass-fed meat, organic poultry, wild-caught Alaskan salmon, and eggs which offer the richest source. For vegans, acceptable sulfur-containing protein sources are nuts, seeds, soy products and other legumes. Dairy, some fruits, onions, garlic, cruciferous vegetables such as broccoli, cauliflower, and Brussels sprouts, as well as leafy greens like kale and spinach, also contain high amounts of beneficial sulfur compounds.

Our bodies have to contend with increasingly toxic environments that oxidize our cells such as chemicals, pollutants, inadequate diets, and high-stress lifestyles. It is becoming increasingly important to consume sulfur as it has a starring role in glutathione production, the body's master antioxidant. Sulfur also enables the removal of some heavy metals, such as aluminum and mercury, which can also contribute to abnormal cell functioning.⁴

The cruciferous vegetables have become popular for their anti-cancer properties as they are rich in the compound sulforaphane, which increases liver enzyme detoxification activity, protecting against cell mutations and cancer. Sulfur is also present in bile, which the liver uses to not only digest fat, but also to discard toxins in the liver. To optimize sulforaphane content in broccoli, it is best to consume lightly steamed, instead of raw or overcooked. Interestingly, the most potent concentration of sulforaphane is found in broccoli sprouts. For those with digestive issues, Epsom salt baths are a great way to support mood and detoxification as they provide sulfur in the form of magnesium sulfate and bypass the digestive tract.

A sulfur-containing compound found in most of the aforementioned foods is methylsulfonylmethane, or MSM, which acts as a potent antioxidant with anti-inflammatory abilities to control pain. MSM has remarkable effects on healing injuries, reducing muscle stiffness and even arthritis by supplementing in the range of 1-3 grams per day.⁵ If supplementing, it is important to start with a low dose and work your way up.

Sulfur is also one of the surprising key elements that give us ageless skin, shiny hair and healthy nails as it is used to synthesize collagen and metabolize biotin and other vitamins. Sulfur in MSM form is often credited to healing skin conditions such as psoriasis and rosacea.⁶ Collagen is abundant in muscles, bones, blood vessels, tendons and the digestive system which make sulfur imperative for whole body health and repair.

Keep in mind that this is a broad overview of sulfur. The benefits and sources of sulfur are vast, and as with any supplementation regime, it is important to speak with a qualified health care practitioner to determine what is best for you.

Tiffany is a certified nutrition consultant and functional diagnostic nutrition practitioner and can be reached at (760) 285.1221. For more information visit tiffanydalton.com.

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Detox Your Lymph for a Smoother Ride to Health

By Kristi Bixby

The body has seven basic ways of detoxifying itself: through the skin, lungs, liver, kidneys, colon, blood, and the lymph system. You can easily help the process with a little attention to your lymph system.

The lymphatic system plays a vital role in supporting both the cardiovascular and immune systems. Its main function is to cleanse toxins and protect against harmful invaders by transporting fluid throughout the body and ridding itself of metabolic waste.

Lymph comes from the word “water” in Latin. It is constantly working to flush out toxins from “dead” foods, alcohol, nicotine, caffeine, a toxic lifestyle, prescription or recreational drugs, and/or unbalanced hormonal activity. Unassisted, the body cannot keep up, and excess toxins build up in fatty tissues with limited blood flow. This is how cellulite is formed. A stagnant lymphatic system leads to impaired immunity, and may be the root cause of conditions such as chronic sinusitis; swollen glands, ankles and eyes; eczema; throat problems; upper respiratory, sinus and ear infections; colds; as well as tonsillitis, bronchitis and pneumonia.

The lymphatic system is considered to be a circulatory system. Unlike the blood, however, lymph does not move on its own because it doesn't have a “pump.” However, there are many ways to move and thus detoxify your lymphatic system.

Regular exercise is great for the lymph as the contraction and relaxation of muscles and joints pushes the fluid where it needs to go. Even fun activities like jumping on a trampoline for ten to thirty minutes have been proven to be effective in moving and draining the lymph.

Lemon water. Lymph is 95% water and a major cause of lymph congestion is dehydration. At the very least, one should consume half their body weight in ounces of pure water per day. Iced tea (even green) and sparkling water do not count. Adding lemon assists in the process by alkalizing and mineralizing the body and lymph. (Use a straw to protect your teeth's enamel from the lemon.)

Lymphatic drainage massage uses a specific amount of pressure and rhythmic circular movements to stimulate the lymph and has been shown in studies to push up to 78% of stagnant lymph back into circulation, encouraging its movement towards the heart for the drainage of fluid and waste.

Dry skin brushing. Using a dry brush with coarse bristles and brushing the skin towards the heart helps shed the outer layer of dead skin, opens pores, stimulates sweat glands and circulation, and moves the lymph. I recommend clients do this right before a shower.

Lymphatic drainage body wraps use creams with specialized vitamins and minerals that promote capillary flushing and lymph circulation, which in turn create a cleansing effect of the congested tissues (cellulite). I recommend and use a medical grade niacin cream applied to the skin which is then wrapped for an hour. A niacin-based cream was originally developed by a UCLA biochemist for patients presenting with circulation and edema problems.

Properly functioning lymph influences every part of the body, and yet it is one of the most overlooked systems. Giving it the attention it deserves is imperative to maintaining health. A happy byproduct is smoother, cellulite free skin.

Kristi Bixby is a certified colon hydrotherapist and neurofeedback technician with Natural Medicine Group in Palm Desert and can be reached at (760) 345.7300.

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Living Wellness

with Jennifer Di Francesco



The Power of Silence for a Mom and Her Millennial Daughter

Opportunity often presents itself at the most meaningful time. The door was recently opened for this mom, after a bustling work season, and her millennial teen's challenging and successful school year. An opportunity to get away from digital and social media promised to be rewarding. Our prescription for bonding was going to a silent meditation center in the beautiful and serene mountains, Zen Buddhist Center at Mt. Baldy.

When time is spent daily in silence amidst nature, many insights start to flow and the body and mind transition into receptive mode. By emptying the mind, we become more open to receiving the messages inherent within ourselves. The world we live in is full of distractions luring us to avoid looking inward and feeling the present moment. By training the mind to observe the reality of life as it truly is, one sheds the obsession with what "could be" or what "has been," resulting in liberation and freedom.

A silent meditation retreat starts with a release from all methods of communication. These restraints include no eye contact, no speaking, reading, music, or phones. Meals are taken in silence in the company of others also focusing on mindful eating. It is amazing how different a meal tastes when one is in her own space void of chatter and distractions.

Following our meals, yoga classes consisted of silent, still, seated meditation. All of the stretches were to facilitate sitting for long periods of time and meditating. Walking meditation was also a morning practice to become one with nature and to feel the natural stride of the body in space.

The use of mala beads strung together slipping through our fingers in rhythm with the breath while reciting a silent mantra helped to keep us focus. A common mantra used during this weekend was "body of light, mind of light, life of light." This is a powerful mantra to recite and to pause while allowing the mind, mantra and movement of the beads to be in sync. Moving the breath into the body is the closest thing to welcoming light into the body, so this mantra recited over and over has an illuminating effect of positivity!

The epic lesson of the weekend revolved around silent messaging on how to be in the moment. One spends most waking hours ruminating on the past or projecting far into the future; yet, we are rarely content with the present. For a 16-year-old millennial, the lesson will be taken back to school and practiced with discerning observation. At a young age, it is indeed epic to realize that digital communication consumes and disassociates us from being in the present. In addition, there are so many daily pressures on young people, and these silent practices can help alleviate this feeling of pressure.

Both mother and daughter took a mutual vow to stay committed to continuation of this practice in seated day-to-day stillness, especially in times of distraction. We can always find the rhythm of our breath and allow it to still the mind of its incessant chatter. Through this practice, we can take control of our "monkey mind" rather than allowing it to take control of us.



Mother and daughter at Zen Buddhist Center

The Meaning of Yin and Yang

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

Symbols are images which provide a visual representation of a concept. Upon seeing the Yin and Yang symbol, many have said they see good/evil, peace/war, feminine/masculine. The meaning and significance of this symbol goes far beyond what we see as opposites or opposing sides of one subject or topic.

This symbol represents Tai Ji or "Universal Ultimate" and expresses the interdependence of Yin, the black portion, and Yang, the white portion. It is the single most distinctive theory and foundation of Chinese medicine, philosophy, martial arts, and Tai Chi Chuan, derived from the book of changes *I Ching* dating back to 700 B.C.

Western logic, which is radically different to Chinese philosophy, is based on opposition of contraries, the fundamental premise of Aristotelian logic. The Yin Yang theory, contrary to Western logic, represents opposites with complementary and interdependent qualities.

These dualities are opposing and at the same time form unity, while transforming through stages or cycles as seen in nature. For instance, Yin represents the shady side of a mountain while the Yang represents the sunny side of the mountain. Without the sun there would be no shade and vice versa. Opposition is not absolute but relative to each other.

Nothing is either totally Yin or totally Yang which is reflected with the small dots expressing the seed of its opposite. The day belongs to Yang but after reaching its peak at midday, the Yin within it gradually begins to unfold and manifest into night. Therefore, each phenomenon may belong to a Yang or Yin stage but always contains the seed of the opposite stage within itself.

It is a dynamic and constantly changing balance.

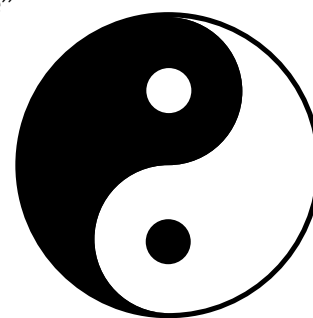
Although they are opposites, they are also interdependent. One cannot exist without the other and at the same time depend on each other to coexist. For example, the earth is dependent on rain and rain is dependent on the sky which in turn cannot exist without the earth. This translates in the same way as Yin cannot exist without Yang, and yet the two are opposites with complementary qualities.

In traditional Chinese medicine (TCM), the human body has organic unity; the physical body belongs to Yin while the body's activities or functions belong to Yang. Therefore, there cannot be activity without rest, night without day, contraction without expansion.

When either Yin or Yang is out of balance, they affect each other and change their proportion to achieve a new balance. While doing this they can inter-transform into each other. Yin can change to Yang and vice versa as summer changes to winter and day to night.

This theory of Yin and Yang combined with the 5 Elements (*Desert Health March/April 2018*) are the diagnostic foundation of TCM. Many patients who originally seek acupuncture treatment for pain also find the side effects of better digestion, elimination, sleep, etc., and often continue treatments at least four times a year, during the transition from season to season, to balance their body, mind and spirit.

Diane Sheppard is a licensed acupuncturist and doctor of traditional Chinese medicine. She is the owner of AcQpoint Wellness Center in Palm Desert and can be reached at (760) 775-7900. www.AcQPoint.com.



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The Impact of Emotions on Health

The Five Elements Theory

By Amanda Beckner, CN, HHP, PhD

Let's face it, we are all spiritual beings, and as we go through life we store emotions, worries, stress and trauma on a subconscious level. It is called our cellular memory, the very genetic blueprint that our consciousness draws on for "deep memories" which play a significant role in determining the state of our wellness.

Vulnerability to disease manifests in the human body when an individual resists feeling an emotion. Any refusal to accept responsibility for an experience is resistance. For example, when you blame God, your family, the universe, you give up your power; by assuming full responsibility for your life, you can fix anything. The idea of being responsible for creating your own illness – or wellness - allows you to take back that power to change the outcome.

This is a Chinese philosophical theory called the Five Elements which can be traced back 4000 years. It was used as a diagnostic and treatment modality that associates specific emotions to various organs and glands in the body. Each of the five elements - wood, fire, earth, metal and water - has a corresponding season, taste, color, odor, sound, physical, and emotional symptom along with other distinct correlations. The elements are kept under control by two basic forces: creation and discretion.

The theory states that key emotions stored within us need to be addressed and removed from the body. A chain reaction of unraveling basic emotions begins (some in our conscious mind; some in our unconscious) and helps answer the question, "How did I develop this disease?" Bringing awareness to a conscious level enables you to work on removing the emotion, allowing the body to heal.

The wood element represents our gall bladder and liver, and the emotions tied to these organs are resentment and anger. So if you hold onto resentment, that emotion will be held within the gall bladder, creating disease until that emotion is removed. If you hold onto anger, it can greatly affect the liver.

The water element represents our kidney and bladder, and the emotions tied to these organs are fear and irritation. Ask yourself, "What am I fearful or worried about?" or "Why am I so anxious and upset today?" Your body is very good at revealing the source, if you ask.

The metal element represents our lungs and large intestine. The emotions tied to these organs are grief and being stuck or unable to move forward in life. A lot of my clients with lung issues - from breathing to cancer - can usually relate back to an issue

Continued on page 18



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Food: What the Heck Should I Eat?

A Review by Joseph E. Scherger, MD, MPH

It is important news for the healthy nutrition world when Mark Hyman, MD, comes out with a new book. Dr. Hyman is the director of the Cleveland Clinic Center for Functional Medicine and chairman of the board of the Institute for Functional Medicine. He practices and directs the UltraWellness Center in Massachusetts and served as a personal physician to President Bill Clinton. He has 17 previous books, most notably the best-selling *Eat Fat, Get Thin* (2016).

In *Food: What the Heck Should I Eat?* Hyman surveys the latest science on all different types of food. He focuses more on food itself than the macro- and micronutrients, although these are discussed in detail, and promotes a "Pegan diet," a term he coined as a cross between the vegan and Paleo diets. While he states we should eat mostly plants, he begins the book by discussing meat, poultry and eggs and continues to survey dairy, seafood, vegetables, fruit, fats and oils, beans, grains, nuts and seeds, sugar and sweeteners, and beverages. I did not find any new information here, but having the latest nutrition science all in one place is very helpful.

Hyman then discusses what things you should keep out of your food such as processing and additives. He makes a strong argument for eating only organics when possible and discusses what you can add to your diet such as spices (mostly good), salt (in moderation), and healthy condiments, dressings, vinegars and sauces, as well as unhealthy ones.

Hyman also discusses supplements and those that should be considered, but he rightfully puts them in a minor perspective compared with eating healthy food. The healthiest people on earth who live in the Blue Zones do not require supplements and eat only the foods of nature.

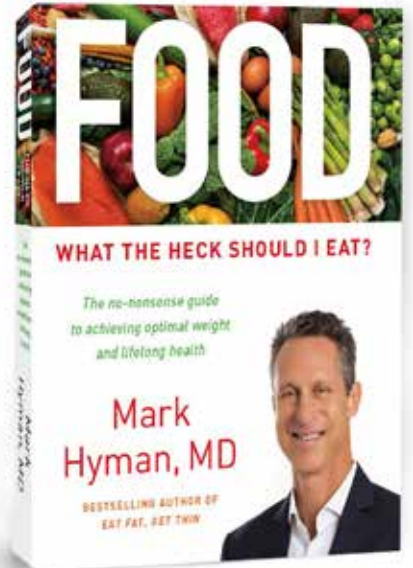
The book ends with a description of the Pegan Diet and how to eat for a healthy life. He covers how to detox from sugars and other high glycemic carbohydrates that are addicting and provides a lot of recipes, with more available on the book's website: foodthebook.com.

My only criticism of this book is that Hyman starts out discussing meat, poultry and dairy which sends an implied message of priority. Since we should eat mostly plants, I think it would have been more appropriate to start with plant-based foods. As all the information is there, that is only a minor criticism.

This has been an incredible decade of new understanding and change in what constitutes healthy nutrition. *Food: What the Heck Should I Eat?* provides an excellent review of where we are today. I am eager to find out what is next!

Editor's note: Dr. Mark Hyman is a featured speaker at WellSpring 2018 in Palm Springs October 26-28. For more information visit DesertHealthNews.com and search WellSpring.

Dr. Scherger is vice president of primary care at Eisenhower Medical Center. He is also the Marie E. Pinizzotto, MD, Chair of Academic Affairs, and Clinical Professor of Family Medicine at the University of Southern California Keck School of Medicine.



Shay Moraga is a triple negative breast cancer survivor and shares her journey with *Desert Health*® readers in an ongoing column...

Yoga, Cancer and Vulnerability

Do you ever wonder why so many people turn to yoga after a life changing experience? It is because yoga heals us in so many ways. Yoga and cancer both teach us to accept life as a journey; both invite us to practice vulnerability.

Many have said, "I need to get to your yoga class, but I'm just not that flexible." If those people only knew that the pose is not what yoga is really about. It's about vulnerability. It is about the journey.

As a practicing yoga teacher, I try to teach my students (who range in age from 3 to 91) that yoga is not about the clothes you wear or performing the perfect pose. Yoga is instead about what you learn inside yourself along the journey. In fact, yoga and cancer have many parallels. People refer to cancer as a journey. You go into cancer thinking you already know so much when in reality, you find out you knew nothing at all. With both yoga and cancer, you learn more about yourself than ever before.

Why can't we let go of fear and practice vulnerability? The answer lies in the parallel between being on a yoga mat and sitting in a chemo room. Practicing vulnerability allows others to be there for you. Just ask a cancer patient who sits in a chemo chair for five hours to just breathe or a new yogi who walks into their first yoga class only to lie on their mat. Both require courage and vulnerability to start a new journey. Vulnerability is a gift you give to others and to yourself. It takes a lot of practice, however, especially for us strong, independent types.

Each week when I teach Yoga for Cancer, I build space for vulnerability. I open each class with our first asana (pose) teaching that breathing starts within and vulnerability starts within. When we are able to think, see, and feel within, the magical change starts to happen. Like me, many of my students are still going through chemo, radiation, PTSD, or the process of healing. As survivors we want to take our lives back but we sometimes slip into old patterns we had prior to cancer. We lose some of the practice of vulnerability that we once found in the chemo room or as a beginning yogi. We forget that the practice of vulnerability requires letting go of control. We allow ourselves to open up, because we don't have expectations, and allow 'possibility' to flow through our hearts, minds and even deeper, our souls.

This simple practice of vulnerability allows our hearts to open and our minds to shift from fear and anxiety to possibility. I believe that teaching heart-opening poses will not only open the heart physically but will lead to an emotionally open heart

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Addressing Autoimmunity with Gut Health

By John R. Dixon, DC, CCN, IFM-CP

The prevalence of autoimmune diseases has risen astonishingly in recent years. The cause has been attributed to multiple environmental factors including toxic chemicals and heavy metals, dietary factors, ionizing radiation, prolonged emotional stress, medications, postmenopausal hormone replacement, bacteria and viruses.

The American Autoimmune Related Diseases Association estimates that at least 100 different autoimmune diseases have now been identified with more than 50 million sufferers in our country alone. Sixty to seventy-five percent of all autoimmune sufferers are women with the highest incidence occurring in their twenties when women's estrogen levels are at their peak.

One of the functions of our immune system is to protect the body by responding to the presence of toxins, allergens, viruses and bacteria by producing antibodies which, like Pac-Man, gobble up foreign invaders. Under normal conditions, the body's immune response is not triggered to attack the body's own tissues. However, in some cases, the immune system can make a mistake and attack the very cells and tissues they are meant to protect. This can result in a variety of autoimmune diseases depending upon what part of the body is affected.

How has our food changed?

Allergens. Some of the recent research surrounding the cause of autoimmune disease focuses on intestinal barrier dysfunction (also known as leaky gut syndrome) and the role of food allergens, particularly gluten, in triggering an immune response. This research reveals that cooked food proteins may cause very different immune reactions than raw food proteins. It also reveals that different combinations of food proteins can cross-react with one another to cause a different immune reaction than when the food is consumed alone.

Food Proteins. Food proteins are made of sequence chains of amino acids. When the sequence chain of a particular food protein resembles one of the body's tissues or organs, such as the thyroid gland, there is a chance for these cross-reactive antibodies to attack the thyroid instead of the food protein. Proper laboratory testing can help to identify this process which is called molecular mimicry.

Added Hormones. Environmental estrogens (also called xenoestrogens or endocrine disruptors) are increasingly found in a wide variety of foods as well, including meat, eggs and dairy products from animals given exogenous hormones. These chemicals mimic the chemical composition of estrogen and can also be found in pesticides, plastics and plasticizers, and parabens in personal care products. Increased estrogen levels can fuel a process referred to as estrogen dominance. This process can result in the over expression of estrogen receptors and the formation of toxic estrogen metabolites which can lead to DNA damage and result in increased inflammation, unchecked cellular proliferation and autoimmune diseases.

Other research has implicated the Epstein Barr virus (EBV) infection as an environmental trigger of certain autoimmune diseases including systemic lupus erythematosus, multiple sclerosis, rheumatoid arthritis and Hashimoto's thyroiditis. It is believed the EBV infection drives the activation of genes that contribute to an individual's risk of developing autoimmune disease.

In functional medicine, many practitioners are turning to the 5R Gastrointestinal Restoration Plan as a natural treatment protocol for leaky gut and autoimmune disorders as follows:

Remove unfriendly microbes from the gastrointestinal tract with anti-microbials including garlic, berberine, and oregano. Avoid gluten and gluten-containing grains, all dairy products, peanuts and cashews, sugar/syrups, and all processed foods.

Replace with different types of digestive enzymes including hydrochloric acid (betaine HCL), pancreatic digestive enzymes, and bile. To do so, emphasize leafy green vegetables, grass-fed beef, fresh caught salmon and organic turkey.

Reinoculate good bacteria with probiotics, including 5 Bacillus, lactobacillus, Bifidobacterium lactis, and butyric acid-containing supplements.

Repair the gut lining with curcumin, zinc-carnosine, mixed carotenoids, and serum bovine-derived immunoglobulins.

Rebalance the gut through lifestyle choices to address imbalances that may have led to the issue in the first place.

General detoxification protocols for environmental estrogens and other endocrine disrupting toxins also include: NAC 2400mg; L-Glutathione 2000mg; C-bioflavonoid 4000mg; milk thistle 900mg; selenomethionine 300mcg; alpha-lipoic acid 150mg; 5-methylfolate 150mcg.

The new science shows us that autoimmunity can be reversed. Be sure to consult your health care provider before beginning any program to treat autoimmune disease.

Dr. John Dixon can be reached at the Natural Medicine Group (760) 345-7300.

Sources: 1) Conference notes and proceedings, The Institute for Functional Medicine annual conference on autoimmune disease, May 2018; 2) Diamanti-Kandaraki E et al, Endocrine Reviews 2009 Jun; 30(4) 293-342; 3) www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/17261796.

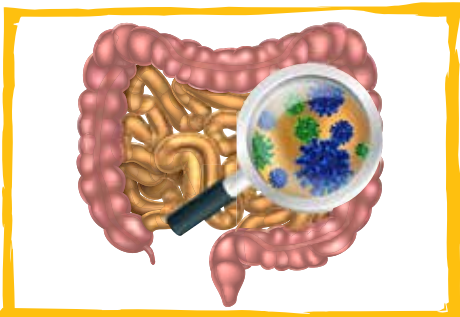
Yoga, Cancer and Vulnerability

Continued from page 14

as well. Whether you are sitting in a chemo room or lying on your yoga mat, you give yourself the gift of letting go of control of the expectations of doing yoga or the outcome of your cancer. You are open to breathe in things like strength, hope, compassion, love and kindness for yourself. Because when you allow yourself to be vulnerable, you don't hope for a particular outcome; you allow for the possibility of letting go of what does not serve you and embracing what does.

Today, as you go through your daily life, I challenge you to open yourself up and be vulnerable. You never know what possibilities await.

Shay Moraga is an E-RYT500 yoga instructor and can be reached at shay@namstewithshay.com, or find her on Facebook or Instagram @Namaste with Shay. For more from Shay visit DesertHealthNews.com and search 'Shay'.



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*Healthy Living Program (HeLP) funded in part by the Desert Healthcare District

The Connection between Alzheimer’s and Diabetes

By **Brian J Myers, ND**

It would be too easy to simmer the development of Alzheimer’s and other dementias down to a single etiology. Rarely are things so simple. Still the connection between dementia and diabetes has been acknowledged for many years now. Many have gone so far as to use the term “type-3 diabetes” in reference to Alzheimer’s and other dementias.

That may be a bit of a stretch. Type-1 diabetes is an autoimmune disease and type-2 diabetes is a chronic disease caused by poor nutrition choices and characterized by the body’s inability to regulate blood sugar by way of insulin resistance. Risk of developing Alzheimer’s increases significantly in those with poorly controlled high blood sugar. Put another way, people with high blood sugar experience worse long-term cognitive decline than their healthy peers, regardless of whether they’re technically diabetic or not.

Insulin resistance plays a role in Alzheimer’s as well as diabetes and cardiovascular disease. In all three, sugar, even in the form of simple carbohydrates, is driving the pathology. Insulin, which is produced in the pancreas, regulates blood sugar in healthy individuals by signaling the liver and muscle and fat cells to take in glucose (sugar) from the blood to be used as energy. If someone is subjected to too much sugar over a long enough period of time, the body’s cells stop responding to insulin with the same efficiency. When that starts happening, glucose can’t enter the cells as easily, leading to a multitude of pathologies.

Diabetes and Alzheimer’s are independent disorders that share common pathophysiological mechanisms. The good news is that management strategies for blood sugar control–nutrition being paramount–might help alleviate the progression of subsequent cognitive decline over the long-term.

According to David Permuter, MD, a neurologist and author of *Grain Brain* and *Brain Maker*, anything that prevents insulin resistance will ultimately also lower your risk of Alzheimer’s. A 2014 paper published by Dale Bredesen, MD, who authored *The End of Alzheimer’s*, stated that he was able to reverse Alzheimer’s in 9 out of 10 patients by addressing a number of healthy lifestyle parameters. The most basic goals are to eat a whole foods diet consisting of mostly plants, adequate healthy fats at every meal, and moderate intake of lean proteins in addition to plenty of clean, filtered water (and not out of plastic bottles, but that’s another topic).

There are several studies aimed at addressing the relationship between sugar and Alzheimer’s. I have included a few in my references, but there are many more. It is safe to say that excess sugar consumption is a recognized risk factor for cognitive decline and Alzheimer’s by way of increased insulin resistance, as well as, a couple of other poorly understood mechanisms. Call it type-3 diabetes if you want. The point is sugar is lethal in a multitude of ways; especially to your brain.

Dr. Brian Myers is a naturopathic primary care doctor with a focus on gastrointestinal and cardiovascular health at Live Well Clinic in La Quinta. For more information regarding how you can live longer and more healthfully, go to www.livewellclinic.org or call (760) 771.5970.

Sources: 1) <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4360697/>; 2) <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3045545/>; 3) <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4458503/>; 4) <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC5219633/>; 5) <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4265876/>; 6) <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4731873/>

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Facing the End of Life

Practical and emotional concerns

By April Hanig, MA, LMFT; and Anita Roark, MA

All of us will eventually have to face the end of life, but some of us will find ourselves confronted with that prospect more quickly and unexpectedly than anticipated—after suffering an accident, for example, or when diagnosed with a terminal illness. Or it may be that a loved one must suddenly prepare emotionally and in practical terms for their dear one's imminent demise.

At CancerPartners, the local nonprofit that provides free-of-charge emotional and educational support for all those affected by cancer, end of life issues come up frequently. Patients and their loved ones call upon us both for professionally led support groups and for guidance to other resources, especially if they or their loved one find themselves facing death sooner than anticipated. The purpose of this article is to share insights and resources we've been fortunate to gather.

Our list of valuable resources, besides friends and family:

- Social workers at the hospital where receiving care;
- Hospice care;
- Individual therapists (especially helpful for those unable to talk with family and friends);
- Support groups such as those at CancerPartners, for people with cancer, their caregivers, and children's and teens' grief and loss support groups;
- One's spiritual community;
- Websites and books such as *Peaceful Dying* by Daniel R. Tobin;
- The Cancer Legal Resource Center, especially helpful for advance directives, estate planning, custody and guardianship of minor children, wills and trusts, power of attorney. Assistance line: (866) 843.2572, cancerlegalresources.org; and
- Compassion & Choices, a nonprofit organization dedicated to care and choice at the end of life. (800) 247.7421, compassionandchoices.org.

A great deal of insight and practical information comes from Karen Morin Green, RN, a retired oncology and hospice nurse who now serves as the volunteer lead for Access Team Southern California of Compassion & Choices. Over the years she has observed how people react to their situation. The initial reaction depends on such factors as age and chronic illness—"The younger ones may have more they still want to accomplish."—but generally everyone experiences shock and initial denial. Then some reach out—they may even want to discuss death and dying but find that family and doctors are on a different page—while others do not. "We need to start conversations about death and dying earlier," Green says, "to help ensure everyone gets the end of life option they would like."

The Compassion & Choices website offers information on:

- Pain and symptom management—use of medications and other therapies such as massage, acupuncture and aromatherapy, to bring comfort;
- Hospice—focuses on quality of life rather than length of life, with the goal of comfort;
- Voluntarily stopping eating and drinking (VSED)—includes pain and symptom management, with families working closely with medical facilities staff, and in-home VSED medically managed to minimize discomfort;
- Declining or stopping life-sustaining treatment—treatments for health conditions or to prolong life, such as a feeding tube, dialysis or medications can be refused or stopped at any time. Pain and symptom management are used to ease any discomfort;
- Palliative sedation—being medicated to reduce consciousness (must be medically managed by a health care provider) to bring relief for extreme pain and suffering;
- Medical aid in dying—a safe and trusted medical practice in which a terminally ill, mentally capable adult with a prognosis of six months or less to live may request from his or her doctor a prescription for medication that they can choose to self-ingest to bring about a peaceful death. Seven states authorize medical aid in dying; California's law is currently being contested.

Because it's so important to communicate well with one's doctor, Green suggests turning to the website's "diagnosis decoder" for help. She also suggests you have an advocate at your side, someone else to listen to medical providers to help to understand the process.

Green stresses the importance of discussing your feelings openly with family and appointing a health care advocate who you know will stand up for your wishes, no matter what they are. She reiterates how helpful support groups are, whether in person or online, because "we know that those who talk to others who have gone through the same process feel less isolation—knowing and seeing others who are at various stages of a similar illness can be comforting and enormously helpful to patients."

The takeaway? Start the conversation early and familiarize yourself with resources now, even while in good health, so as to be in a more peaceful and knowledgeable frame of mind when the inevitable time comes.

April Hanig, MA, LMFT, is a facilitator and former program director at CancerPartners. Anita Roark, MA, is communications coordinator. They can be reached at (760) 770.5678, ahanig@cancerpartners.org or aroark@cancerpartners.org. More information about no-cost support groups and healthy lifestyle classes at cancerpartners.org.



While never easy, starting conversations on death early can be beneficial to all in the end.



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Three Tests That Could Save Your Life

The unthinkable happened recently. My friend who was an icon of health, an exercise model and leader in teaching healthy choices died at age 57. She was an inspiration and a genuinely wonderful person. She left kids and friends and a devoted husband. As we all reeled with the news and our questions of why and how echoed in our minds, I realized there were three tests I wished I could have each person perform and act upon to minimize the chances of unexpected tragedy.

Neuro-scan

The first test, touted as one that everyone should do once in their life, is a Neuro-scan, a scan of the brain to assess abnormal blood vessel formations. These abnormalities can be either aneurysms – weak spots in the wall of blood vessels – or can be tangles of blood vessels that are fragile and can burst. By doing this scan at least once in our lives, we can know if we have a propensity to this problem. Then we can take action to repair, clip, or remove the abnormal cluster or section of blood vessels.

This test is not often covered by insurance and can run about \$1,000 but is a one-time test as these blood vessel malformations are something we are born with, not something we tend to develop later in life. This test is especially important to choose if you have a family history of sudden death, stroke or aneurysm.

MTHFR mutation blood test

The second test has to do with risk for blood clots. This was the likely cause of death for my friend. Blood clotting abnormalities can run in families, so if you have a family history of blood clots or stroke, it certainly makes sense to have a complete blood clotting work-up with your doctor. However, the genetic test we should all have is testing for the MTHFR mutations.

There are two main genes labeled MTHFR that code for an enzyme that is crucial for folate function in our body. We get one copy of each gene from each parent, so of the four genes, we can have all copies working well or up to four copies that are mutated and non-functional. The impact of these non-functional copies is rarely realized and extremely widespread. 44% of our North American population has at least one mutant MTHFR gene and for every mutated copy, we have about a 30% reduction in efficiency of the work of folate in our body in repairing broken DNA, detoxification in the liver, prevention of blood clots and synthesis of neurotransmitters... just to name the more major functions.

Those who have MTHFR mutations need to supplement folate (not the synthetic folic acid often found in our food or vitamins); take precautions to prevent blood clots (avoid oral estrogens and consider taking nattokinase or a baby aspirin daily); and carefully avoid toxins in our food, water, vaccine and medication sources.

LDL-particle count

The third test on my "everyone should have" wish list is the LDL-particle count. Our leading cause-of-death in America is heart disease. The American Heart Association has done well in teaching us that we should "know our numbers." However, there is one rarely performed test that is most predictive of whether we have risk for a heart attack and that is the LDL particle number.

Our common lipid-panel tests for total cholesterol, triglycerides, HDL-C and LDL-C values; the HDL-C and LDL-C are calculated weights of high and low-density cholesterol respectively. The problem with these values is that they are not accurate predictors of risk. The LDL-C value is the main target when treating cholesterol in our Western medicine model. However, it is literally only 50% accurate at predicting who is safe from, and who will succumb to, a heart attack.

The most accurate number predicting heart events is actually the LDL particle number. This number counts how many pieces make up the weight referenced in the LDL-C value. So if my LDL-C is 103 mg/dL it could be made up of 1120 pieces or 2400 pieces. The higher the number of pieces, the higher the risk of heart attacks. Normal particle counts are values below 1000, and if the number of particles is high, there are natural methods such as soluble fiber, blood-sugar control and vitamin D support that can help a person normalize their counts and lower their risk.

These three tests are simple, can be requested from your physician, and can help you lower your risk of unexpected, life-threatening incidents. Ask your physician to order:

- 1) A brain MRA/MRI scan to evaluate for vascular abnormalities;
- 2) An MTHFR mutation blood test;
- 3) A NMR Lipid-particle test (also called Lipo-fit at Quest Labs).

Please be proactive in your health! You are valuable and your loved-ones want you here for a long time.

Dr. Brossfield practices functional medicine for men and women at her practice, XO Health, in Rancho Mirage and can be reached at (760) 573.2761.

The Impact of Emotions on Health

Continued from page 13

of grief onto which they still hold.

The earth element represents our spleen, pancreas and stomach. The emotions tied to these organs are low self-esteem and the feeling of disgust which can be within ourselves or directed at another.

The fire element represents our small intestine, heart, thyroid and adrenal glands, and the endocrine system. The emotions tied to these organs are vulnerability, excessive shock or joy, confusion and unresponsiveness. Maybe there has been a sudden death of a family member or close friend, and you don't know how to feel; it then becomes an unprocessed emotion that keeps recycling until it is removed.

All these emotions can be devastating to our system, especially if they are not addressed and buried. At some point they will resurface. Some people find it helpful to journal emotions; some may meet with a therapist. Others may release emotions through Neuro Physical Reprogramming (NPR) which directly addresses cellular memory.

Remember, we are not only what we eat, but also what we experience. How we deal with disease has a direct impact on how well our body will release and heal.

Dr. Beckner is owner of Your Body Code in Palm Desert which offers personalized nutrition and wellness programs. For more information, visit www.yourbodycode.com or call 760-341-BODY (2639).

Sources: 1) Inna Segal: The Secret Language of Your Body; foreword by Bernie S. Siegel M.D. 2007. 2) Theresa Dale, PhD., N.D.: Transform Your Emotional DNA (1995, 1996, 1997) 3) Dr. Amanda Beckner CN, HHP, PhD.: Your Body Code (2009).



Summer Essentials for Healthy Hair

By Elizabeth Scarcella

Sun, hot dry air, chlorine and salty water... we sure do torture our hair throughout the summer months. It's no wonder we complain about split ends, oily scalps and dull, lifeless locks. However, with the help of a few essentials, you have a good shot at keeping your hair healthy all summer long.

Trim Your Tresses. Summer seems like the most hassle-free time to grow your hair as you find yourself in messy buns and braids as opposed to a coifed up-do or a sleek blow-out. Yet, it is essential to cut the split ends before they become worse. Desert heat dries everything out - including the shaft of our hair. As hair grows, it continues to split up the shaft causing more damage and the inevitable need to lop off even more than you initially wanted. Book yourself an appointment now, and dust your ends.

Cover Your Coconut. Your hair is like any other part of your body...it needs protection from damaging UV rays. Also, it is a misconception that our hair will protect our scalp from sun damage. To protect your scalp and keep your hair shielded from becoming burnt (yep, that's actually a real thing), use coconut oil. Coconut oil is not only an antioxidant keeping the harmful rays at bay; it also has natural SPF as well. You can lather the oil onto damp hair as a deep conditioner, repairing your hair and protecting your dome, all while lounging in the pool. After all, why not multi-task? Get your pool time in and let the sun's heat work its magic.

Just Say No to Daily Shampooing. Unless you are washing the coconut out, washing your hair daily is really not recommended. Although seemingly counterintuitive, frequent washing actually increases oil production leading to an even greasier scalp and dry brittle hair - not a good look at all.

Instead go for a dry shampoo which helps to reduce scalp oil without drying out your luscious locks. For the adventurous souls, try this DIY treatment to control oil secretion:

Mix 2-3 tbsp of coconut water with the juice of a lemon. Apply the mixture to your scalp and massage it for 5 minutes before rinsing it with cold water. For best results, do this as a weekly treatment.

Water Thyself. Like all living things, we need water to exist. It cannot be overstated how imperative it is to drink copious amounts of water, especially during triple-digit mercury readings. The proper amount of water each person needs is different; however, newer research indicates that eight 8-ounce glasses a day are really not enough for proper hydration. A good rule of thumb is to drink enough water to produce nearly colorless urine. Feel good as you get your sip on, knowing water is our #1 defense against lifeless locks.

Regardless of how you tame your mane, the most important factor in achieving healthy summer hair is spending your days thinking happy thoughts, creating a sense of calm and peace within, and inspiring others to do the same.

Cheers to happy, healthy hair!

Elizabeth Scarcella, founder of Go Get Young and co-owner of Rx2Fitness, is dedicated to helping others find health in all aspects of life. For more information, find her at info@gogetyoung.tv.

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The Health of Our Kids

What is being done?

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

Over the past 15 years, poor nutrition and obesity of our country's youth has become a real health concern.

Multiple studies estimate that 40 percent of all youth ages 6-17 skip breakfast and snack all day. Of these, 50 percent are middle school students, while 36 percent are in high school. 26 percent skip meals twice a day and 64 percent once a day. Reasons stated include lack of time (43%), no appetite (29%), and 28 percent state no reason at all. Add this to the fact that high schools only recommend physical education for ninth graders, it's no wonder that one in six U.S. children is obese-up three times the rate in the 1970s.

Whether economics, laziness or poor education are to blame, the facts are that this current generation is in far worse shape than the previous one. With diabetes, cardiovascular disease and cancer as leading causes of death, it is estimated that this generation of kids might not outlive their elders.

So, what is being done? In researching food choices in schools nationally, I found that many school districts now have a nutrition link to their website for nutrition information and menu choices for breakfast and lunch. Although many of the breakfast choices had high amounts of sugar, it does give the student options and considerations. Lunches looked healthier as a salad bar appears to be popular in many states. Also, sodas and energy drinks seem to be banned in some states, while others offer water and Gatorade.

Harvard University School of Public Health website offers schools sound advice and examples of proactive education on nutrition, after school programs, and the promotion of safe walking/biking routes to and from school. The site also has tips on boosting faculty and staff health, in other words, how to lead by example!

Educating their parents is just as important as educating youth on nutrition. Over the years, I have had community seminars on youth nutrition and would get around 100 parents to attend. Hopefully, those 100 parents will tell their friends and, in turn, many more will attend educational meetings. Getting involved, doing home visits, and showing parents that there are healthier choices are helpful and productive. Conducting grocery store visits, reviewing food labels, and helping them determine what is acceptable and affordable is a great way to improve nutrition.

Fortunately, many schools are starting to make an impact with a more structured and healthier environment which gives kids choices and presents them with physical activity programs after school. Funding will always be an issue, but researching creative solutions and simply having healthier choices conveniently available is a great place to start.

For computer savvy kids, websites with good healthy ideas is another tool to use in education. However, limiting their time on electronic devices and getting them outside to play with their friends after school and on weekends are also important factors in improving the health of our youth.

Michael K Butler is co-owner of Kinetix Health and Performance Center in Palm Desert and can be reached at (760) 200.1719 or at michael@kinetixcenter.com.

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Health is a Choice

Continued from page 1

I emailed our HOA management company to report the hive and to ask their policy, emphasizing that we did not want the bees killed and would pay for a beekeeper at our own expense, if necessary. They said they would get back to me. I stepped out and returned to find a pest management technician in a big white suit exterminating my bees! In shock, I screamed at him to stop, but to no avail. My bees were gone and I was horrified.



The clubhouse at Trilogy at the Polo Club is cordoned off as bees are safely removed and relocated.

Sadness and anger quickly turned to action. Didn't they know about the plight of bees? Why wouldn't they hire a beekeeper to relocate them versus a pest management company to kill them? Who assessed the situation and determined the bees needed to be killed?

Lori Albert, CEO and president of Albert Management which manages close to 50 HOAs and approximately 10,000 homes, says that it is very rare that they hire a beekeeper. "It is my understanding that there is not a qualified beekeeper that resides in the Coachella Valley and that [removal] is quite expensive." She added that as HOA management it is their job to rely on the advice of experts and to protect both humans and animals in their managed properties. She referred me to her expert Lori Fahnestock of Powerful Pest.

Fahnestock was quick to express the dangers of bees and sent me numerous articles on people locally who had been killed and the lawsuits that ensued. It was obvious to me that they had no means of removing bees, no place to relocate them, and no incentive to bring in a beekeeper – even claiming that she didn't know of any that were licensed and insured. I asked that she share the work order for my bees and saw them labeled as "aggressive," not a true assessment at all. The cost of extermination was \$245.

With not much effort, I found several licensed and insured beekeepers including Lance Davis who has worked locally for over 30 years. Davis grew up managing bees and has several registered apiaries. Last year, he even won the Greater Palm Springs Convention & Visitors Bureau's Oasis Award for Sustainability. He confirmed my suspicion that pest management companies don't often refer jobs, adding that if they label the bees as aggressive, they are within the law to exterminate them. The cost for bee removal starts at \$125 with access as the primary factor for pricing.

Continued on page 25



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Natural Treatments for Sunburns

Sunburns from intense or excess sun exposure can cause immediate pain and long-term skin damage. Treating sunburn immediately can limit unnecessary discomfort and harm. Sunburn begins with excess sun exposure but can continue to worsen even after the sun exposure is over, so it is important to treat sunburn early to reduce inflammation and pain. Excess sun exposure can also cause sun stroke, so with any sunburn watch for additional signs of dehydration, lethargy, confusion, or heat intolerance.

Cold Water

When coming in from excess sun exposure take a cool to cold shower or bath to reduce skin inflammation. A cool shower can reduce the 'burn' happening beneath the surface of the skin that can appear minutes to hours after sun exposure.

Aloe Vera

Apply pure, organic aloe vera gel which can be used topically to reduce inflammation and limit skin damage after a shower. It can also reduce pain. Use aloe vera gel topically every few hours as needed to reduce discomfort and swelling.

Anti-Inflammatory

Take a natural anti-inflammatory with anti-oxidant properties to avoid free radical damage of sunburn, such as turmeric, white willow bark, and vitamin C. These supplements will limit the inflammation of sunburn and protect the skin from excess long-term damage.

Vinegar Soak

If sunburn causes extreme discomfort, a vinegar application can reduce skin pain. A thin washcloth soaked in a diluted mixture, half and half ratio, of apple cider or white vinegar and water and placed topically on skin for several minutes at a time can reduce pain. Repeat as needed to treat physical skin discomforts.

Calendula Gel

Calendula gel is a soothing product to reduce inflammation that can be used topically for pain and to reduce swelling. It can be used in addition to, or in place of, aloe vera gel.

Hydration

Beginning immediate hydration with water and electrolyte-balanced beverages such as coconut water can soothe skin inflammation and prevent dehydration associated with sunburn. It is very important to hydrate immediately and continue for several days after to keep skin moist.

It is important to treat even mild sunburns with inflammation mediating agents and to also watch for other signs such as confusion, agitation, dizziness, and lethargy as signs of dehydration. Be sure to seek medical attention if blistering occurs or any additional symptoms associated with possible sunstroke or dehydration continue.

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

To Know You Is To Love You

By Amy Austin RN, PsyD, LMFT

You look across the room and there they are...the person of your dreams...your soulmate. The One!

In the movie *Moonstruck* Cher says, "Snap out of it!" Good advice, as it is often wise to step back and take a breath before jumping into those initial feelings, which may be simply lust versus true love.

Love isn't usually fast and furious. Long-lasting love is about finding someone suitable and creating "the one" by committing to random and very conscious acts of kindness on a daily basis. Love takes time, nurturing, authentic curiosity, being interested as well as interesting, and giving of oneself unselfishly. It's about entering a relationship thinking, feeling, and behaving on a pretty even keel, and meeting someone like-minded. Both people can then complement one another instead of coming together to heal unresolved issues, unmet expectations, and unfinished business from the past. It's about fighting fair without name-calling or recrimination, or impulsively slinging long-held resentments. Love is work.

Unfortunately, divorce rates are high, especially with marriages after divorce. It might behoove a couple to seek pre-marital or pre-relationship counseling to explore a myriad of aspects about one another before time and emotions are invested. If people were as passionate about counseling as they are in the throes of a whirlwind romance, there might be less chance of potentially ending up disappointed and dismayed, as well as emotionally hurting minor children that come into the relationship dynamic.

Below are some questions that might be explored during pre-relationship counseling:

- How well did you know your mate before you both committed yourselves to one another?
- How long did you date before transitioning to a committed relationship?
- Did you give it a lot of thought to commit or was your decision an impulsive one?
- If you've had many long-term relationships, have you taken some time to explore why your relationships have not been successful?
- How resilient are you? Are you able to bounce back from adversity in a timely manner?
- How well do you communicate with your mate and are you open to talking difficult things through?
- Do you get angry easily? Do you have unresolved traumas from your childhood that might impact your current functioning and relationship?
- Did you come into your current relationship in financial debt? Do you have any problems with drugs or alcohol and other addictive behaviors?
- Are you close or distant with your extended family? Are you ready to be part of a blended family?
- Do you like to laugh and have fun?
- Is it important for you to have a partner with the same religious beliefs?

The topics are endless because human beings are perfectly imperfect and may have complicated histories. Pre-marital/pre-relationship counseling can often help open your heart and mind and ease the way. Remember, it's what you know about a person after you think you know everything about them that counts.

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.

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Creating a Workplace Wellness Program Desert Oasis Healthcare shares their success

By Kristi Vaughn and Megan Guerra

Desert Oasis Healthcare, two-time winners at HARC's Workplace Wellness Awards, shared their company's success with attendees at this year's event in June. We asked them to also share with *Desert Health* readers in an effort to inspire other valley businesses to follow suit.

Desert Oasis Healthcare (DOHC) serves the residents of the greater Coachella Valley and surrounding desert communities of Riverside and San Bernardino counties. We have 1,100 employees who proudly serve 70,000 members. Our Workplace Wellness and Engagement Program is fondly referred to as our Employee Success Program. In sharing some highlights of our program, we hope to inspire others to also create healthier, more engaged employees.

A very important early step in creating a workplace wellness program is to establish support from senior leadership. Fortunately, our senior management team, including those directly involved in our program - Dr. Teresa Hodgkins, Dr. Brian Hodgkins, and Dr. Edith Jones-Poland - understand the value of happy, healthy employees. Instrumental in our program's success are these concepts:

Make a plan. We were able to make our case for a workplace wellness program (WWP) by developing a written plan with actionable items to meet our goals.

Always remember your employees are the foundation of your program. Your employees are one of your greatest assets and they should always be the driving force for your WWP. Take care of your team and they will take care of your customers. It's a mutual commitment between the organization and its employees. A healthier, more engaged workforce leads to service excellence.

Celebrate and promote your success! When your team has worked hard to create change, let them know where they succeeded - and keep striving for improvement.

We use multiple methods to communicate including employee intranet posts, emails, and surveys. A banner hangs in the courtyard of our main campus in Palm Springs: "Treat employees like they make a difference and they will." This banner lets our employees see and KNOW that they are essential to our success. Satisfaction our employees feel in serving our members and our community has earned us our most recent recognition, the "Great Place to Work®" Award, which is a direct result of employee surveys and feedback. 91 percent of our employees agreed with the statement: "When I look at what we accomplish, I feel a sense of pride." And 94 percent agreed with the statement: "I feel good about the ways we contribute to our community." More results can be accessed here: <http://reviews.greatplacetowork.com/desert-oasis-healthcare>.

Listen to your team. Our initiatives are directly linked to what is important to them. We also did extensive research about what has worked in other organizations; we did not reinvent the wheel. Our programs are evidence-based as we used data and research to develop them.

Create education and action. Our ongoing employee education includes flyers on topics like stress management, parenting support, healthy eating, smoking cessation, financial and life planning, and more. Some of our other programs that make a difference in our employees' lives are our walking groups, hiking club, yoga, and massage on-campus, and our Weight Watchers at Work program, for which DOHC funds 50% of the cost. Weight Watchers at Work was our very first Employee Success Program initiative, and because of that it is near and dear to our hearts. Our employees have collectively lost over 2,600 pounds in two and a half years!

Encourage community engagement. Our employees are encouraged to contribute time and donations to our community partners. Past drives have benefited local food banks, animal shelters, senior centers, and shelters for victims of domestic violence. We have sponsored special events like bringing Guide Dogs of the Desert to our campuses, giving employees an opportunity to meet the dogs and their trainers. Our senior management team raffled off employee spots at the recent "Dog Day Afternoon" fundraiser for guide dogs, so employees could represent us and network with other community partners because health and wellness is not just about physical fitness, it's also about mental well-being.

Our employees also enjoyed a lunchtime karaoke contest, our first annual "DOHC IDOL." The winning singer performed at our employee appreciation banquet and also sang the National Anthem at Palm Springs Stadium for our DOHC-sponsored community event, "Dads and Grads at the Park."

Be creative and remember that sometimes "no" is not the only answer. When you encounter a challenge, don't let that stop you. You may get some no's and run into some non-believers along the way, but don't lose sight of your goal to create a better workplace for your employees.

Last but not least: Start small and dream big! We worked with a tight budget and a small team of very passionate and driven volunteers. We have accomplished many goals, but we have a lot more we want to achieve.

As Platinum Sponsor of the 3rd Annual Coachella Valley Workplace Wellness Awards from HARC, Desert Oasis congratulates the applicants for this year's awards and wishes everyone success in their own efforts to bring workplace wellness to your employees. It truly has the potential to make a profound difference in their professional - and personal - lives.

Kristi Vaughn is director of research for Desert Oasis Healthcare and Megan Guerra is a service excellence specialist. For questions, email DOHC-EmployeeSuccessProgram@mydohc.com.

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Summer Watercress Salad
By Janet Zappala

This light salad is simple to throw together and very refreshing on a hot summer day. The addition of blackberries, capers and red onions combine sweet, salty and tart to delight the taste buds and satisfy any craving with a healthy indulgence...just toss, serve, and enjoy!

Prep time: 10 minutes
Serves: 4



- Ingredients:**
- | | |
|--------------------------------------|--|
| 2-3 bunches of fresh watercress | 3 tablespoons fresh lemon juice |
| 1 tablespoon capers | Salt and freshly ground black pepper to taste |
| ½ cup red onion, thinly sliced | Shaved Parmesan or Pecorino Romano cheese (optional) |
| ½ cup fresh blackberries halved | |
| 2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil | |

Capers are pickled flower buds that are used as a garnish or, as in this recipe, a seasoning.

Rinse the watercress under cold water; pat it dry. On a cutting board, keeping each watercress bunch intact, cut off the root, discard, and trim about 2 inches off stems. Cut the bunch across into quarters.



In a large salad bowl, toss together the watercress, capers, onion, and blackberries. Drizzle with the olive oil and lemon juice. Season with the salt and pepper. Using your hands, toss the salad lightly to coat. If desired, top with shaved Parmesan or Pecorino Romano cheese and enjoy!

Janet Zappala is an Emmy award winning anchor and reporter and host of KMIR's Your Health Matters.

Health Benefits of Cinnamon
By Jessica Needle, ND

Cinnamon is well-known as an aromatic spice that people enjoy adding to oatmeal and baked goods. Less well-known is the fact that it can also be used therapeutically to improve several common health conditions including high blood sugar, high cholesterol and high blood pressure.

Cinnamon is derived from the bark of several species of Cinnamomum trees. The type of cinnamon sold as a condiment is cassia cinnamon. It is less expensive but also has lower antioxidant molecules that stop cellular damage in the body. Ceylon cinnamon (Latin name Cinnamomum zeylanicum or Cinnamomum verum) is more expensive and harder to find, but contains more antioxidants and, therefore, has increased health benefits.

High blood sugar is an all too common condition associated with insulin resistance, metabolic syndrome and diabetes. Eating as little as one gram of ground cinnamon (1/2 teaspoon) per day can lower blood sugar by up to 29%.¹ One study found that the insulin-lowering effect of cinnamon began immediately after eating and lasted for 12 hours.² Cinnamon can also work in conjunction with anti-diabetic medications such as glipizide to lower hemoglobin A1c, a measure of excess glucose attached to red blood cells.³

Cinnamon is a rich source of polyphenols, chemicals which provide the health benefits of plant foods. Polyphenols can lower a key cholesterol-making enzyme and bind to circulating cholesterol so it is easier to excrete from the body. A review of 13 studies found that cinnamon supplementation not only lowered total cholesterol, but also lowered triglycerides, a type of fat in the blood that increases the risk of stroke. The positive effects did not seem to be related to the dose of cinnamon consumed, meaning that a larger amount such as 6 grams did not have a greater effect than a smaller amount.⁴

The micronutrients in cinnamon can also lower blood pressure by dilating blood vessels, improving vessel function and repair, and reducing inflammation. A study of women aged 26 - 45 with hypertension found that average blood pressure dropped from 145/93 to 130/85, a significant decrease. The results were achieved using 1 gram of cinnamon, and the reduction lasted a full week after administration.⁵

While there are many benefits to taking cinnamon, be careful when consuming capsules containing cassia cinnamon. It contains coumarin, a compound shown to cause liver toxicity in laboratory animals. Ceylon cinnamon contains much less coumarin, making this form the preferred choice. The amount of coumarin ingested in food is unlikely to be problematic, and supplements are only a concern for people with pre-existing liver damage.

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

References: 1) Diabetes Obes Metab. 2009 Dec;11(12):1100-13. doi: 10.1111/j.1463-1326.2009.01094.x.; (3) The potential of cinnamon to reduce blood glucose levels in patients with type 2 diabetes and insulin resistance. Kirkham S1, Akilen R, Sharma S, Isiami A.; 2) Diabetes Obes Metab. 2007 Nov;9(6):895-901.Effects of short-term cinnamon ingestion on in vivo glucose tolerance. Solomon TP1, Blannin AK.; 3) Nutr Res. 2012 Jun;32(6):408-12. doi: 10.1016/j.nutres.2012.05.003. Epub 2012 Jun 14. Cinnamon extract improves fasting blood glucose and glycosylated hemoglobin level in Chinese patients with type 2 diabetes. Lu T1, Sheng H, Wu J, Cheng Y, Zhu J, Chen Y.; 4) 4. J Clin Lipidol. 2017 Nov - Dec;11(6):1393-1406. doi: 10.1016/j.jacl.2017.08.004. Epub 2017 Aug 12. The effects of cinnamon supplementation on blood lipid concentrations: A systematic review and meta-analysis. Maieran SM1, Serban MC2, Sahebkar A3, Ursioniu S4, Serban A5, Penson P6, Banach M7; Lipid and Blood Pressure Meta-analysis Collaboration (LBPMC) Group; 5) Does Cinnamon Lower Blood Pressure? By Jon Yaneff, CNP - December 18, 2017 <https://www.doctorshealthpress.com/heart-health-articles/blood-pressure-articles/does-cinnamon-lower-blood-pressure/>



Basic Principles of a Healthy Smoothie

By Dipika Patel

It's no wonder smoothies have become the trend. They take minimal time to make, there are all sorts of tasty recipes, and you can consume a lot of fruits and veggies in one meal. However, it is important to remember that your smoothie should be more about the vegetables than fruit. The addition of a little natural fruit is a bonus to make your smoothie palatable, but not sweet like candy.



Another important thing to remember is to mix it up. Don't overconsume one type of green, but rather vary the greens so the body receives a variety of nutritional properties in balance.

I follow this principle: greens, veggies, small piece of fruit, fat, fiber, superfood and liquid for hydration. Here are some helpful and healthy guidelines to follow:

Smoothie Recipe Guidelines (Serves 1)

- Dark leafy greens:** (Choose one or two of the listed greens; approx. 2 cups total)

Arugula	Dandelion greens	Green and red lettuce varieties	Swiss Chard
Beet leaves	Kale		
Carrot leaves	Mustard greens	Romaine	
Collard greens	Parsley	Spinach	

Note: freezing your greens adds a chill and thickness to your smoothie and helps them last.

- Lemon juice or grated frozen lemon with rind** (to taste). Normally I add the juice of a whole lemon as I like that sour taste. Keep in mind that lemon will also cut the bitter taste of some leafy greens.

- Protein or filler of your choice:** (choose one or more Protein powder of your choice from this list)

Chia seeds	Maca powder	Cacao powder
Flaxseeds	Super greens powder blend	Kelp powder
Nuts of your choice (presoak them the night before)	Fresh coconut meat	Oats (presoaked)

Herbs & Vegetables:

Parsley	Tarragon	Cucumber
Cilantro	Lemon Grass	Celery
Mint	Green Pepper	

Fruit: (¼-½ cup)

Green apple	Banana	Cantaloupe
Pineapple (with core)	Grapes	Watermelon

Healthy Fat: (choose one)

Coconut oil	Fresh coconut meat	Fresh avocado
Coconut butter or	Olive oil	Ghee (not my preferred choice due to taste)
Coconut manna	MCT oil	

Liquid: (choose one or more)

Water	Homemade cold brewed	Peppermint tea
Coconut water	herbal tea (no added	Green tea
Milk of your own choice	sugar)	Ginko Biloba

Add all ingredients in a blender and blend. You can also add a little ice to chill your smoothie for a refreshing summertime treat. Enjoy!!!

Dipika is a holistic health coach who empowers clients to activate balanced lifestyle of the mind, body and soul. She can be reached at Dipika@dipikapatel.life or www.loveyourlifehealthly.com.

Health is a Choice

Continued from page 20

What can we do at the community level?

First, if you are afraid of bees, don't plant foliage that attracts them; use natural bug deterrents in place of harmful pesticides; know that bright colored clothing and fragrances attract bees; and, if you see a hive or swarm in your yard or common space, don't panic. As with any wild species you may encounter, keep a safe distance and contact a qualified professional - a beekeeper - to assess the situation and safely remove them.

Lastly, please join me in encouraging your gardener, HOA and HOA management



Our relationship with bees starts with a positive mindset.

company to adopt a policy to save bees whenever possible by first assessing a situation and then safely removing them.

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Beekeepers release bees in places that allow them to continue to do their important job of pollination.

References: 1) The White House Office of the Press Secretary June 20, 2014; https://www.fs.fed.us/wildflowers/pollinators/documents/PresMemoJune2014/PollinatorFactSheet-PresMemo.pdf; 2) Natural Resource Defense Council, https://www.nrdc.org/stories/buzz-about-colony-collapse-disorder

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Eisenhower's David Renker and The Vintage Club's Michelle Vonderhaar

Health and wellness industry leaders gathered in May at the Cambria Gallery to celebrate past Desert Health Wellness Award nominees. Networking, healthy nosh, and vibrant enthusiasm ensued as plans for the 2019 Wellness Awards were unveiled.

The Greater Palm Springs CVB was also on hand to present their *Live Your Wellest* campaign launching later this year.

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Desert Oasis Healthcare's Barry Dayton



Cambria's Susan Farley



FRESH Juice Bar's Marcie Madain and Wildest Green's Denise Dubarry Hay



Nutritious apps were provided by Michelle and Kevin Steadman's Salads in a Jar.



FIND Food Bank's Barbara Ben David and Desert Healthcare District's Lisa Houston



Lauren and Tom Del Sarto



Dr. Fatemeh Hadjian with Lawrence and Cathy Serif



Desert Health's Rich Whitehill with wife Carolyn



GPSCVB's Vicki Higgins and Jeff Miraglia present the upcoming *Live Your Wellest* campaign.



Shay and Jaelyn Moraga speak with Jay Nixon of Thrive Fitness.



Act for MS's Margot Nelligan and Jennie Rayner



Dr. Diane Sheppard takes home the prize.



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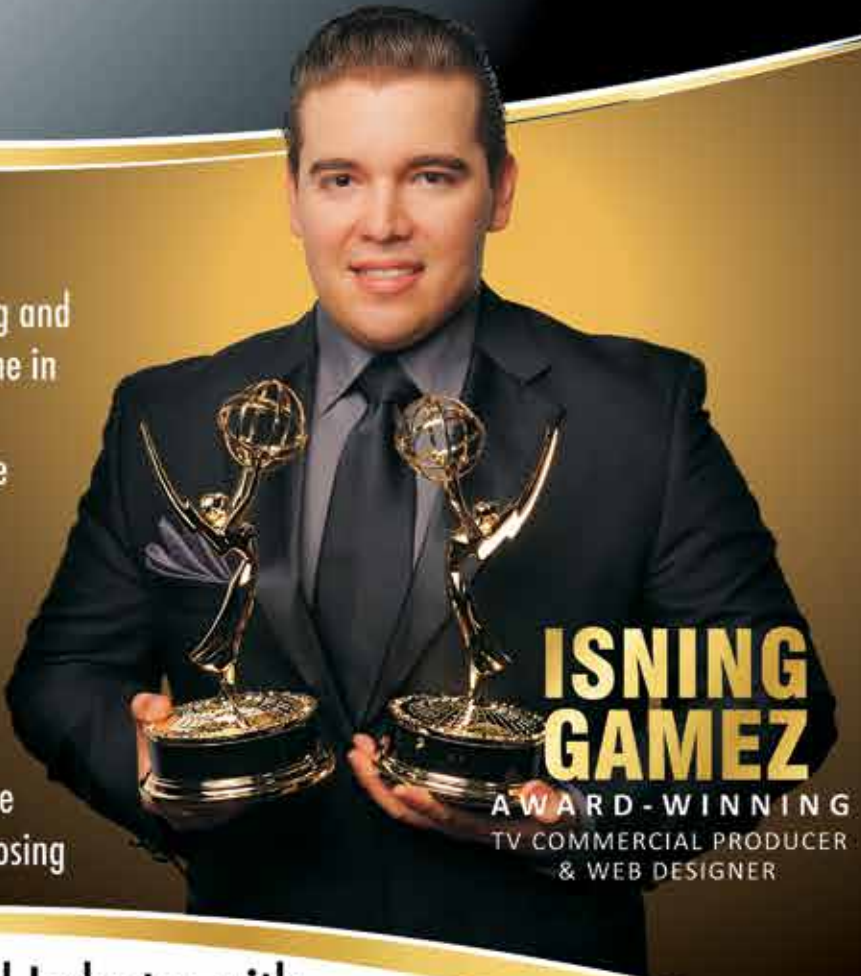
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