



Desert Health[®]

The Valley's Leading Resource for Health and Wellness

January/February 2023

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Write it on
your heart that
every day is the
best day in the year.
— Ralph Waldo Emerson



The Coachella Valley is a uniquely special place, and much of that has to do with our longstanding fervor for fun and philanthropy. Early on, our ever-shining sun and spectacular landscapes set the stage for our "playground to the stars." Today, those same elements attract a variety of world-renowned events that entertain and support us.

But what is the *most special* thing about the Coachella Valley? It is no doubt the people behind all the good - and good times - we passionately cultivate and celebrate. We establish organizations to serve the greater good; we organize events and bring quality people together; and we attract gracious sponsors who enable us to thrive.

One of the first, and most recognized, events to bring celebrities, pros, presidents and spectators together for fun and fundraising was The Bob Hope Desert Classic. Originally launched in 1960

as the Palm Springs Golf Classic, the event has now raised over \$64 million for local charities. We will all gather once again January 19-22 in the name of good times, golf and giving back at what is now known as The American Express.

There is no question; we excel at socializing and service which is clearly reflected in the number of events held annually, along with the vast quantity of charitable organizations. In addition to national causes with local offices, there are over 1,200 non-profits established in the Coachella Valley, significant for a community of only 400 square miles and just over 450,000 permanent residents.²

"We're committed to backing our communities and continuing the longstanding legacy of supporting the Coachella Valley through our Impact Through Golf foundation," said Shiz Suzuki, Vice President Global Brand Sponsorship and Experiential Marketing at American Express.

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If you are a fan of *Desert Health*, you've probably heard many top docs say that the healthiest way to improve overall wellbeing is to cut sugar and carbs, leading culprits in today's chronic disease and obesity epidemics.

One of the easiest means is to remove processed sugars and grains, key principles behind Paleo and keto. Those of us who follow that path quickly realize the significant benefits, but often miss comfort foods like French bread, fried chicken, pasta and pies. Substitutes can always be found, but online recipes can disappoint, and packaged products are often filled with unhealthy additives.

Look no further because *It's a No Grainer Cookbook* has arrived, offering more than 180 delightfully gluten-free, grain-free, low-carb and keto-friendly recipes. The best part is that this beautiful compilation was inspired locally and created by Palm Desert resident Barbara Hankey-Rogers.

Rogers is not a professional chef, nutritionist or health care practitioner, just a self-proclaimed foodie who took her health into her own hands and researched all she needed to know to dramatically

improve her health. Her research included many of the books we've recommended in *Desert Health* over the years including William Davis' *Wheat Belly*, Permuter's *Grain Brain*, Bredesen's *The End of Alzheimer's* and local doctor Joseph E. Scherger's *Lean and Fit: A Doctor's Journey to Healthy Nutrition and Greater Wellness*.

In fact, it was Scherger who first inspired Rogers to write her book. In the beginning, she compiled a few recipes in a computer-generated copy which Scherger shared with patients and friends. Rogers was surprised when I showed her the copy I kept from nearly a decade ago.

Luckily for us, Rogers has summarized what she learned in an easy-to-digest introduction chaptered "No Grainer Basics," followed by the enticing benefits of living gluten and grain free. There are also valuable resources such as the world's 41 most nutrient-dense foods, a chart listing the glycemic index of foods and a section comparing keto to paleo, vegetarian to vegan, Mediterranean and more.

Next, you'll find nutritious recipes and colorful photos for pancakes, cookies, breads and pizzas,

Continued on page 4

 RINGING in the
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Welcome 2023

What words come to mind for you as we enter the new year? Fulfillment, peace, contemplation and excitement swirl through my head creating a warm and content feeling in my belly. Much of this stems from enjoying a "holiday season of old" with family gatherings, parties and events that have allowed me to feel connected once again. A renewed sense of security says, "Life is back. You can now continue with your dreams and aspirations."

What about you? Are you feeling ready to take the next step towards that "thing" you've been wanting to do - learning something new, adopting a healthier lifestyle, writing that book?

Well, we thank you for taking us along. We strive to offer inspiration, ideas and guidance for your life journey and are proud to now enter our 13th year here in the Coachella Valley. I love our community and am truly honored to be a part of it.

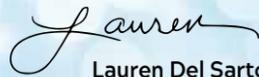
Our lead feature summarizes what I feel is the magic of our desert paradise - its people, and all we do to support each other and have fun. We certainly know how to play with purpose.

In this edition you'll also find a cookbook that makes grain-free living fulfilling and easy; suggestions for better sleep, clearer sinuses and more radiant skin; support for mental and physical wellbeing, and inspiration for your new year resolutions: is it the journey or the goal?

Think about the words that will lead you through 2023. Write them down, pin them on your dream board or tuck them away in a convenient place to reflect on throughout the year.

We look forward to seeing you out and about and thank you for taking us along.

Wishing you a (your word?) New Year ~



Lauren Del Sarto
Founder/Publisher

Photo by Loretta Vlach-Zimmer Photography.
Earrings courtesy of El Paseo Jewelers and 1965
dress compliments of Mom (Doris Steadman).



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Mobile Clinic to Serve and Educate

By Lauren Del Sarto

The Desert Healthcare District and Foundation (DHCD) and community partners have launched a new mobile clinic to deliver medical and behavioral health services to underserved communities throughout the valley.

Doctors from Desert Physicians Medical Group (DPMG), nursing faculty and students from CSUSB's Nursing Street Medicine Program and Desert Regional Medical Center residents are providing quality care to patients, creating an exceptional learning opportunity in community outreach.

In addition to primary care services, patients can receive mental health assessments from the nursing team with results reported to a psychiatric nurse practitioner. Patients are interviewed online and prescribed medications from the mobile clinic as supplied by Desert Regional. Foot soaks are also offered to the most vulnerable populations.

"We are so grateful to the District and DPMG for the opportunity to provide unique behavioral telehealth services to the vulnerable populations in the valley and increase the availability of psychiatric medications for persons with mental health and substance abuse issues," said Diane Vines, director of the Nursing Street Medicine Program.

"The mobile clinic offers the District and its great partners another opportunity to put health equity into practice in the Coachella Valley," stated Conrado B rzoaga, MD, DHCD CEO. "It removes many of the barriers that exist for vulnerable residents seeking medical care, such as taking time off from work or school and finding transportation to the nearest health care facility."

The mobile clinic is a collaboration between DHCD, Coachella Valley Resource Conservation District and Growing Coachella Valley (GCV), an association of farmers and community professionals supporting our valley's vast agricultural industry.

"The ability to tell my employees that we will provide them with health care services onsite, during work hours, is a success story for all involved," added George Tudor, GCV's founding board member and current president.

"We are so excited to bring our vision of bridging health and community into reality so we can continue to provide the highest quality and personalized patient-, family-, and community-centered care to the underserved populations in the valley," said DPMG's Chief Academic Officer Gemma Kim, MD.

For more information visit www.DHCD.org.



(Top): DPMG doctors and Desert Regional residents gather for the mobile clinic launch in December. (Bottom): Members of the CSUSB Nursing Street Medicine Program were also on hand for the ribbon-cutting ceremony.

Long COVID: Is it a "Thing"?

By Bernadette M. Greenwood MSc. RT (R)(MR)

As the pandemic morphs on a regular basis, with new case numbers ebbing and flowing, many people are still recovering from COVID. Whether infected once, twice, three times or more, a subset of patients feel they never fully recovered as their COVID symptoms appear to linger.

For some, symptoms may include chronic fatigue and malaise - a sense of tiredness that is severe, persistent and in some cases debilitating. Some people describe a vague sense of brain fog, fuzziness or forgetfulness that make daily activities difficult. This neurologic symptom has been described in the medical literature as a byproduct of the virus' attack on blood vessels of the brain. Others describe new joint pain or stiffness that limits their mobility and daily activities with some experiencing trouble getting out of bed or remaining bedridden. Unfortunately, symptoms are often dismissed causing sufferers to seek second (or third) opinions and diagnostic testing to validate and affirm their ongoing, unexplained issues.

Frustrated patients have formed support groups to learn more about their condition and share helpful resources. A common complaint is that they are told their symptoms are a normal part of aging, have psychological causes or are related to an underlying mental health condition - even though long COVID has been defined by the World Health Organization and the Centers for Disease Control.

There is a local case study of a middle-aged woman who had documented COVID-19 two times by positive rapid COVID test and likely a third time based on symptoms alone. Interestingly, she had been fully vaccinated and boosted, as recommended by state and federal guidelines. Following two months of debilitating illness, her post-acute sequelae included fatigue, malaise, severe joint pain and decreased range of motion.

Searching for the source of her symptoms, she underwent a battery of diagnostic tests which all were inconclusive. New tests have been developed in the wake of COVID to specifically measure inflammatory markers in the blood. A test was offered to her to measure markers including one called sCD40L.

A number of research papers have described the role of the SARS-CoV-2 virus in the alteration of blood platelets and elevated inflammatory markers, one being sCD40L. This biomarker has been studied in the setting of pancreatic cancer, cardiovascular disease, sepsis and COVID. While it is not a specific marker for long COVID, it can measure the body's level of inflammation.

Healthy people have low level inflammatory processes that place their sCD40L levels around 5,000 to 10,000. Levels go up with illnesses, injuries and inflammatory conditions. This patient had levels exceeding 35,000 and no other underlying medical condition suggesting what was believed to be long COVID. She was able to work with her medical team to pursue anti-inflammatory treatments and diet, physical therapy and mild exercise to speed recovery. She also was able to move forward with the understanding that her symptoms were, in fact, real and not "all in her head."

Researchers are working hard to discover fast, accessible tests to help diagnose and manage the after-effects of a COVID infection. If you have had COVID and continue to experience symptoms that are affecting your quality of life or limiting your ability to perform or enjoy activities, talk to your doctor. Clinical trials may also be available to help get to the root of the problem and get you on your way to good health and a complete recovery.

Bernadette M. Greenwood is chief research officer for HALO Diagnostics in Indian Wells and a PhD candidate at Radboud Institute of Health Sciences. She can be reached at bernadette@halodx.com. This article is for informational purposes only and should not be considered medical advice.

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Grain-Free Goodness

things you may think forbidden with a grain-free lifestyle. There are also nutrient-dense comfort foods and dinners featuring meat, fowl and seafood. She even shares her "love affair with bacon" including the uncured version (free of nitrates, antibiotics and other additives) in several recipes.

More and more people are finding that eliminating foods that bother them reduces inflammation, bloating, low energy and even aging, she says, but unless you keep it fun, many won't maintain these healthier habits.



Continued from page 1

Rogers donates a portion of proceeds to the valley's Loving All Animals.



Banana coconut pancakes with lavender sprinkles



Cauliflower cheese bread

sustained energy, ideal weight and overall wellbeing to her grain-free lifestyle. But like many, it took her awhile to get there. Throughout her life she tried low-fat, vegan and gluten-free diets which didn't work for her.

"I used to take supplements to try and break down foods, but nothing worked; those last 5 to 10 pounds never came off. Once I read Scherger's *Lean and Fit* and Davis' *Wheat Belly: 10-day Grain Detox*, I realized how wrong I was eating," she says. "Going grain-free, I was able to get to, and easily maintain, my ideal weight while still enjoying all the foods and flavors I crave - without taking any supplements."

Many wish to improve their health, but don't know where to start, says Scherger. "Barbara did her research reading a number of recommended books on healthy nutrition and combined that with her love of cooking to create a beautiful and unique cookbook for the rest of us."

It's a No Grainer helps readers understand the spectrum of grains (yes, tortilla chips are grain) and provides delicious, nutrient-dense alternatives that deliver similar flavor and consistency. An important thing she notes is that gluten-free doesn't mean grain-free, but if it's grain-free, it's automatically gluten-free.

There are many quick and easy offerings for breakfast, lunch and dinner along with snacks, sauces, baked goods and desserts. She has also included her favorite recipes for main dishes like lobster, prime rib, roasted chicken, crab and more.



Chocolate chip cookie dough bites

has also been grain-free for years, I was over-the-moon to discover her beautiful masterpiece. My friends and family have enjoyed all that I've made, and I've even learned a few things (who knew romaine lettuce was so nutritious?).

"Life is amazing when you savor how you live, how you work and how you eat," Rogers writes in her preface. "It is my hope that the information and recipes I've provided in *It's a No Grainer* will start you on a journey to a long, healthy and active life."

It's A No Grainer is available wherever books are sold. A portion of proceeds benefit *Loving All Animals*, a Coachella Valley animal welfare and adoption agency. See our *Fresh Cuisine* section (p.22) for a few of Rogers' recipes and visit www.ItsANoGrainerLife.com for more information.

"This book provides recipes that can fulfill your desires for delightfully tasty foods by exchanging grains and gluten [and sugars] for cleaner nutrients that enable your body to function well." Creative substitutes include cassava, coconut and almond flours, stevia, monk fruit and erythritol, a sugar alcohol naturally present in fruits and fermented foods with the consistency of sugar, but a zero glycemic index so it does not affect blood sugars. Look for non-GMO labels and those without additives like aspartame.

The book took Rogers eight years to write with unfortunate tragedy along the way. "I lost my son in the middle of it all and really gave up," she shared in our interview. "I didn't want to do anything as this was to be his legacy. But then I heard him speak to me and knew he would want me to finish." The book is dedicated to Taylor.

At 74, Rogers is the picture of health and an avid pickleball player. She takes no medications and attributes her



BBQ citrus salmon



Fried chicken (flourless and non-fried)



Coachella Valley's Health Care Industry
MENTORING THE FUTURE
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The STEM Impact in Cathedral City

By Priscila Marquez, CCHS HEAL Academy Student

When it comes to education, STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) is a pivotal aspect. STEM continues to grow at Cathedral City High School (CCHS) and has had a positive impact on the student body.

As a member of CCHS's Health and Environmental Health Academy of Learning (HEAL), I was given the opportunity to create STEM resources for other students which has helped our school branch out in other fields.

During my sophomore year, I created a website that specializes in the importance of providing resources to students who deserve the opportunity to be exposed to STEM. Our school population is heavily Hispanic, and I feel it is important for them to be exposed to different STEM/medical fields. This website educates students on what STEM is, and highlights the opportunities the field offers minorities.

There is a special tab where students can take action and get more exposure in STEM including an email template students can send their counselor, principal, etc. This resource eases the process and gives students the chance to speak their voice without feeling lost.

Another interesting feature of the site is the activities which expose students to different aspects of STEM. The tab has specialized projects through which students can learn the importance of coding, mathematics, etc. There is also a personality quiz in which students can comprehend basic coding principles and see where their strengths lie which they can use for their future.

A research section on the site contains statistics of individuals within STEM fields and sheds light on the fact that minorities make up only one third of STEM professions and majors. It gives students a glimpse of what minorities struggle with when it comes to STEM. However, with these barriers, the knowledge they gain gives them the ability to continue their STEM education.

This website also allows students to find a plethora of pathways to explore STEM fields and explains how to expand their interests and knowledge. The website highlights the variety of STEM education programs offered at CCHS and how they advocate for minority students to have opportunities in the field.

Cathedral City High School allows us students to get to the STEM of things!

Priscila Marquez is a senior at Cathedral City High School. Her STEM website can be found at <https://activist-toolkit-priscila-marquez.priscilamarque2.repl.co/>. For more information on OneFuture Coachella Valley, visit www.OneFutureCV.org.



CCHS Senior Priscila Marquez



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Head Injuries in Children

May require more than a stitch

By Molly Smith

Seasoned parents Jesse and Nicole Rodriguez aren't surprised when their adventurous kids get hurt. When they took their youngest son, 10-year old Samuel, to the doctors to get stitches after an accident, panic set in as the doctors called a medevac to transport him to a highly trained pediatric neurosurgeon, Tanya Minasian, DO, FACS, at Loma Linda University Health (LLUH).

Samuel and his friend were tossing golf balls to one another as the other tried to hit them with a golf club. When Samuel crept closer to provide a better toss, the friend swung his club and hit Samuel on his temple.

"My neighbor called, and I rushed over," Nicole said. "It's never fun to see your kids hurt, but this almost felt routine after raising four kids, so we headed to the emergency room for stitches."

As they waited at the local hospital, Nicole sent Jesse a photo of their son's head. Jesse, who works in fire and aviation, rushed to meet them as he saw the darkening under Samuel's eyes, and that the laceration was across his temple, and recognized his son could have a severe head injury.

After seeing Samuel, the hospital staff immediately recognized a fractured skull and possible internal bleeding and thus, decided to transfer him to LLUH for evaluation and a CT scan. Upon arrival, Samuel presented normal, was awake and had his personality; the Rodriguez family didn't think surgery was on the table.

"Epidural hematomas can be deceiving in pediatric cases," Minasian said. "Most kids present normal during their initial neurologic assessment but can decline over time."

Minasian says epidural hematomas, like Samuel's, are caused by the impact of a skull fracture that leads to a torn vessel in the covering of the brain.

Neurologic decline begins when the blood accumulates within the space between the bone and the covering of the brain, leading to brain compression.

With this concern at the forefront, Minasian and her team admitted him to the pediatric intensive care unit and repeated imaging for four hours. Tests showed the initially tiny bleed had significantly expanded, and he began to decline neurologically. Samuel was then rushed in for emergency surgery.

"They let me walk with him as they pushed him towards the operating room," Jesse said. "I'm a strong guy, but when my son wasn't waking up as I said goodbye, I started to break down."

Minasian successfully stopped and evacuated his bleeding and repaired the skull fracture and facial laceration.

"The whole team caring for Samuel was so amazing," Jesse said. "We will always be so grateful and blessed to have the Dr. Minasians in our world to protect and heal the sick, injured and weak."

Samuel is now two months post-operation. His parents say he was careful during the healing process, but is now entirely back on his feet. This spring, he plans on ditching the golf clubs and will play baseball instead.

Minasian says the Rodriguez's perception of Samuel only needing stitches is not uncommon, and many people only bring their children in if there is an outward injury or noticeable neurologic issue. Some head injuries may not occur with obvious superficial injuries and can still result in a traumatic brain injury (TBI) that may present with loss of consciousness, persistent headache, vomiting, seizures or pupil dilation.

Molly Smith is with Loma Linda University Health, home to Loma Linda University Children's Hospital. For more information, visit www.LLUH.org.



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Hair Loss Options Grow

By Mark V. Sofonio, MD and Patti Owens, MHA, RN, CNOR

Hair loss is one of the most significant concerns for both men and women and affects over 50 million men and 30 million women each year.¹ Male pattern baldness accounts for 95% of hair loss, especially in those over 50 years of age.² It is estimated that men alone spend nearly \$4 billion on hair loss prevention and restoration products annually.

Hair loss can be psychologically distressing and significantly affect one's quality of life. Fortunately, successful treatment options do exist for many.

What causes hair loss?

Hair loss can result from a variety of factors. For women, putting excessive traction on your hair, like a tightly pulled hairstyle, braids, ponytails, dreadlocks and extensions can become the leading culprit. The most common condition attributed to men's hair loss is male-pattern baldness. A receding hairline or frontal baldness can lead to gradual thinning and increased balding for years.

Other causes can be connected with childbirth, genetics, illnesses, COVID, stress, thyroid disease, pregnancy, surgery and menopause. Scalp psoriasis or bald patches from autoimmune disorders (alopecia areata) can also lead to hair loss.

What treatment options exist?

Oral and topical medications are available depending on the etiology and causative factors. Topical and oral minoxidil products (sold under a variety of brand names) have been shown to reduce hair loss and stimulate new growth. Oral finasteride has been shown to retard hair loss in over 50% of men taking this medication.³

Low-level light or photobiomodulation devices emit laser or LED light that can stimulate new hair growth. These devices are available with the utilization of laser combs, caps and other equipment for home use.

A surgical option involves hair transplants, either by excising a strip of hair in the back of one's head or transplanting individual hair plugs from one section of the head to another. This surgery can assist in increasing the hair's volume and appearance of fullness on one's scalp.

Platelet-rich plasma (PRP) extracted from one's own blood offers another adjunctive therapy. PRP contains growth factors that stimulate hair growth; however, the challenge is getting the growth factors into the hair follicles. PRP combined with microneedling has shown some promising results with repeated treatments. The microneedling creates small, microscopic incisions in the scalp which appear to facilitate the PRP uptake into the hair follicles. However, this treatment is not able to facilitate PRP transfer to every individual hair follicle, so results may vary.

One of the latest technologies which enhances uptake is the Alma TED™. The non-invasive device is an ultrasound-based system with a propriety tip engineered to cause "acoustic cavitation" making the upper skin layer, the stratum corneum, more permeable to topical agents such as growth factors and PRP. The TED system utilizes a hair care formula derived from growth factors and copper tripeptide-1 compounds that stimulate hair growth, regeneration, and rejuvenation while the ultrasonic energy enhances penetration in most of the individual hair follicles on the scalp.

This technology has been clinically validated with over 20 published peer-review articles since 2009. Patients feel a warm sensation from the TED device and a ringing noise throughout the course of the 20-30-minute treatment; there is no pain, needles, discomfort or trauma to the scalp. Three to six treatments are repeated a month apart and can result in thicker, fuller-looking hair with increased shine and strength. Improvements should be noticed after the second treatment and maintenance treatments every 6 to 12 months are helpful in maintaining hair growth.

It is recognized that hair loss is not only a complex medical condition, but can affect every component of an individual's life. With an estimated 50% of the population experiencing hair loss as they age, it is exciting to see the latest pharmaceutical and technological advances now available.

Dr. Sofonio is a board-certified plastic surgeon specializing in aesthetic rejuvenation. He is a member of Desert Doctors and can be reached at (760) 341.5555. For more information visit www.drsofonio.com.

References: 1) American Academy of Dermatology <https://www.aad.org/public/diseases/hair-loss>. 2) American Hair Loss Association https://www.americanhairloss.org/types_of_hair_loss/index.html. 3) American Academy of Dermatology <https://www.aad.org/public/diseases/hair-loss>



(Top): Dr. Sofonio patient before treatment (Bottom): Three weeks after first Alma TED™ treatment



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Clarifying Hospice vs. Palliative Care

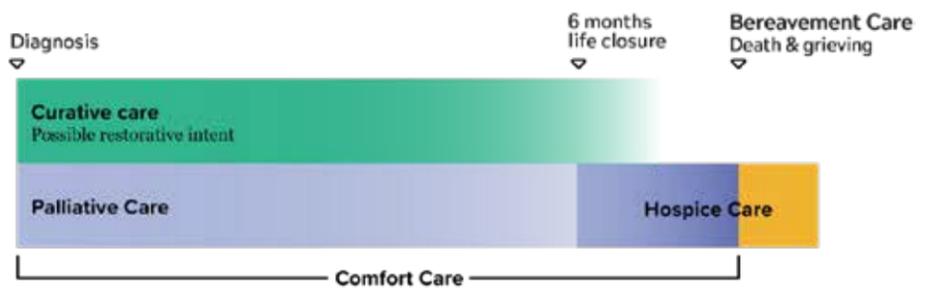
By Tammy Porter, DNP, MLS, RN-BSN, CPHQ, CCM

When you think of hospice care, what comes to mind? For many, it is associated with the end of life - a time when a loved one is close to death and receiving special care in their final days or weeks. However, hospice care can also be received long before the final days of life. Patients and caregivers receive the full benefit from hospice care when it is introduced sooner, rather than later, when someone is not expected to live much longer than six months.

So what is the difference between hospice and palliative care? Let's take a closer look.

With hospice, the goal is to provide comfort and peace in the final stages of life. Palliative care aims to improve day-to-day functioning for anyone with a chronic illness - not just cancer or those at the end of their life. www.Caringinfo.org suggests we think of our health journey on a continuum like this:

After receiving a diagnosis of a chronic health condition such as heart failure, kidney failure, multiple sclerosis, COPD, initial cancer diagnosis and many others, most people choose curative care to continue treating the illness with medications and ongoing procedures. During this time, palliative care is often introduced to provide comfort from the side effects of that treatment or disease...all the while with a cure to restore health in mind. Palliative care is for any stage of a disease and can include a joint replacement, chemo, radiation, dialysis and chronic pain relief. Once it is known that a cure is no longer possible and in the final stage of life, hospice care is usually introduced for the patient and support for the family/caregivers.



In summary, hospice care focuses on making a person comfortable in their final days, while palliative care can be provided at any stage of a serious illness. It is important to understand the difference so you can make an informed decision about which type of care is right for you or your loved ones should the time come.

Dr. Porter is CEO and founder of MyHealth.MyAdvocate in Palm Desert. She is an experienced health care professional with 30 years of nursing practice dedicated to unraveling the mysteries of health care processes and advocating for patients, families and caregivers. Immediate assistance is available by calling (760) 851.4116. www.myhealthmyadvocate.com.

Source: 1) <https://www.caringinfo.org/types-of-care/>

Diabetes and Your Oral Health

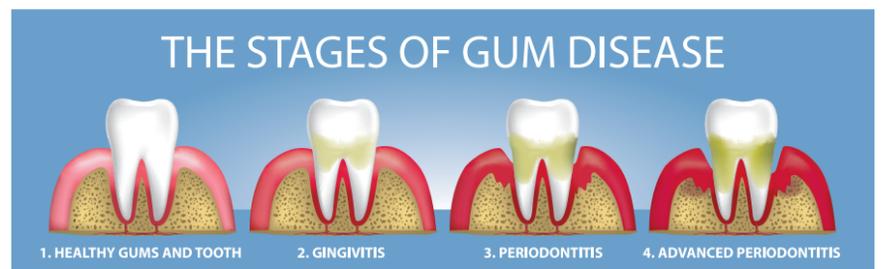
By Sarah Khoshniyati, DDS

Maintaining your oral health is essential to your overall wellbeing and can help prevent pain and infections in the mouth. However, did you know that people with diabetes are at a higher risk for both early-stage gum disease (gingivitis) and advanced gum disease (periodontitis)?

Diabetes affects the body's overall ability to process sugar. In type I diabetes, the body does not make a sufficient amount of insulin, a hormone that transports sugar from your blood to the body's cells as needed for energy. In Type II diabetes, the body produces insulin, but the body stops responding to the insulin, which can cause a high amount of sugar reserve in the body. Both cases of diabetes result in high blood sugar levels which can cause issues throughout the body and with oral health.

Both gingivitis and periodontitis start when plaque, a soft sticky substance which is made up mostly of bacteria, gathers on your teeth. The difference between someone with diabetes, versus someone without, is the nature of the body's inflammatory response to the oral bacteria. White blood cells in the immune system help to fight infections and bacteria in the mouth. High blood sugar can weaken those white blood cells which ultimately affects the body's response to gingivitis and periodontal disease. Therefore, patients with diabetes may have an altered or delayed immune response.

Periodontal disease is the most common dental ailment affecting patients with diabetes. Those with uncontrolled diabetes tend to have more of an inflammatory response when presenting with periodontal disease and gingivitis, which can result in a loss of the supporting tissue and bone that make up the foundation of the teeth.



Some may not know they have diabetes, but may have one or more underlying symptoms including frequent urination, excessive thirst and more seriously, loss of consciousness if blood sugars fall too low. Untreated diabetes can also cause symptoms affecting the mouth such as dry mouth (xerostomia) caused by less salivary production; delayed wound healing, which can make one more susceptible to infections in the mouth; and cavities due to decreased salivary production and possible increase in blood sugar.

The combination of self and professional care from your dentist and physician can help keep your diabetes under control, as well as keep your smile healthy. Self-care includes avoiding smoking, controlling your blood sugar levels, properly taking prescribed diabetes medications as monitored by your physician, adopting a healthier diet and lowering sugar intake, exercising regularly, practicing proper oral hygiene and seeing your dentist for regular check-ups and cleanings. Oral treatment plans can also help decrease disease advancement.

By practicing proper oral hygiene and seeing your dentist on a regular basis, those with diabetes can maintain their optimal oral health.

Sarah Khoshniyati ("Dr. Sarah") is a dentist with Palm Desert Smiles and can be reached at (760) 568.3602.

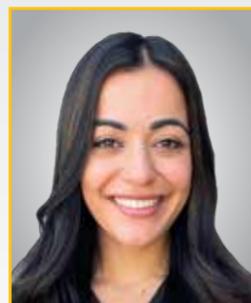


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FUN(d)raising Coachella Valley Style

Continued from page 1

In 2022, they donated \$1 million to 37 local non-profits through the foundation.

"We are so very grateful for The AmEx," says Coachella Valley Volunteers in Medicine (VIM) Executive Director Doug Morin. "Grants such as this allow us to look to the future and plan for additional services and programs." Like many, VIM is solely dependent on donations, contributions and event fundraising which enabled them to open a second free medical clinic last year to serve a broader popular.



Charitable contributions from The American Express in 2022 totaled \$1 million and were distributed via the tournament's Impact Through Golf foundation. (Photo by The American Express)

Alzheimers Coachella Valley Co-founder and Board President Dominick Calvano says the AmEx grant allows them to continue their free community programs such as "Tunes for the Memory," giving those struggling with cognitive issues locally "something to truly sing about."

"It's an honor to partner with this amazing event," says Eevet Edens, executive director of Desert Cancer Foundation. "These funds will provide financial assistance for valley residents who otherwise could not afford or access vital cancer care treatment."

Other national events making an impact include, but are certainly not limited to, the BNP Paribas Open whose Champions Volunteer Foundation has contributed over \$2 million to 50 different local organizations since 2002 and the Tour de Palm Springs which has donated \$4 million since 1999.

Two of the newest properties in town are following suit. The Galleri Classic, March 22-26 at Mission Hills Country Club, brings the PGA TOUR Champions back for the first time in 30 years and will benefit local non-profits assisting those affected by cancer in the different stages of their journey. Galleri is a multi-cancer, early detection blood test which can identify more than 50 types of cancer and where they are located in the body from a simple blood draw. *Desert Health* wrote about this groundbreaking technology in 2021, and we are thrilled that parent-company GRAIL has selected the Coachella Valley for their first sport sponsorship.



"We see The Galleri Classic as much more than just a golf tournament," GRAIL CEO Bob Ragusa tells us. "At age 50 and older, PGA TOUR Champions players likely have personal experiences with cancer and can use this platform to inspire both their peers and fans to be more proactive about their health."

The company chose golf as one of the few sports you can play well over 50 (when people are at higher risk for cancer) and our community for its excellence in golf - and health care.

Continued on page 18

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Nature AND Nurture: Epigenetics

By Shari Jainuddin, NMD, BCB

We are all familiar with the old-time debate of nature versus nurture. Well times have changed. When it comes to your genetics, we now know health outcomes are not set in stone but are a combination of the genes you have from inception (nature) AND environmental influences on you since that moment (nurture). Environmental exposures start as early as in the womb and continue throughout life. Some influences are very tangible, such as a direct chemical exposure, while others are more elusive, such as observing domestic violence. However, all may act as a form of stress on the body. The good news is that if you are reading this, you still have the opportunity to positively modify environmental impacts on your genetics going forward.

Here is one example of environmental impact on our genes: Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs). Everyone has an ACE number which correlates to a set of environmental influences (experiences) that are potentially traumatic events and may increase risk factors for adverse health outcomes. A quick search online can provide a form you can use to easily determine your ACE score. The higher number of ACEs you have correlates with a higher risk for many negative health outcomes later in life. Despite the name, ACEs are not restricted to childhood; they can also be events that we experience as adults such as divorce, lack of health insurance and unemployment. Some of the health impacts associated with ACEs are chronic diseases including obesity, coronary heart disease, autoimmune diseases and health challenges including depression and substance abuse. ACEs are just one example demonstrating the data that exists regarding epigenetics: how your environment (adverse events) can affect your gene expression (health risks).

So how does that happen anyway? How does an event (elusive or tangible) materialize into a physical health outcome? Those details are beyond the scope of this article. To grossly summarize, experiences (nurture), beneficial or unfavorable, can cause a chain of events in our bodies that can subsequently turn on or turn off the expression of some of our genes. This can be illustrated by the phenomenon that certain (hereditary) autoimmune diseases commonly present following a huge life event (a stressful experience).

Environmental influences are not all negative. As adults, we typically have more control over our experiences and environment than we did as children. We can certainly make choices that *nurture* our health positively. Focusing on optimizing what are known in the naturopathic medicine community as the "Foundations of Health" is a great place to start. Foundations of health include nutritious food, clean water, clean air and being in nature, regular physical activity, adequate sleep, family/social/community life and spiritual beliefs.

This is the good news! Despite the cards we were dealt at conception or during childhood, we can still positively impact our health by providing positive experiences for our bodies.

With the new year upon us, prioritize each of these foundations of health and positively impact your epigenetics and health trajectory. For more insight on making changes, see my January/February 2022 article "Making Changes: What's Your Narrative" at DesertHealthNews.com.

Dr. Jainuddin is a naturopathic primary care doctor at One Life Naturopathic and also offers biofeedback training and craniosacral therapy. For more information, call (442) 256.5963 or visit www.onelifenaturopathic.org.



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Dr. Shari Jainuddin, NMD, BCB is a licensed Naturopathic Medical Doctor, clinically trained in both conventional and natural medicine, who strives to help each patient reach sustainable health goals.



The Restorative Theory of Sleep

By Candice Nicole

We can all agree that we feel much better and refreshed after a good night's sleep. The restorative theory of sleep provides a scientific explanation of that special feeling.

Scientific evidence from both animal and human studies has proven our body literally heals and renews itself as we slumber. The majority of restorative functions in the body occur during this time: muscle growth, tissue repair, growth hormone release and synthesis of molecules that are essential for proper cell functioning.

More recent neuroscience suggests that while sleeping, our brain changes itself. Some connections (synapses) between our brain cells (neurons) become stronger, while others become weaker. This process is called neuroplasticity and is essential for our memory and learning. After a good sleep, neurons in our brain replenish their energy, improving our mental performance, mood, health and more.

Our metabolic health also improves. More specifically, people who sleep eight hours per night are much less likely to develop diabetes compared to people who get six hours. Those with poor (short and inconsistent) sleep hygiene have elevated levels of stress hormones and are more likely to suffer from chronic stress. Moreover, immune cells, which are regularly produced in our body, are more successful in dealing with bacteria and viruses when we get enough sleep.

In contrast, when we are sleep deprived, our immune cells are compromised, and we are more likely to suffer from infections and viruses. Even our skin, the body's largest organ, constantly benefits from a good schedule. It takes approximately 27 days for the skin to renew its cells. This process is more efficient with proper sleep, as the skin heals faster, shows less signs of aging and is more resilient to ultraviolet rays. You can also enhance this process of regeneration with antioxidants and hydrating electrolytes.

Even more striking are the consequences of this deprivation: Our mental performance significantly decreases; attention span shortens; alertness, memory, and concentration are all reduced; reaction time is slower; and we have poorer judgment in day-to-day situations. Reduced sleep can also make you moody and quick-tempered, while chronic deprivation may even lead to anxiety and depression.

Here are some tips to wake up feeling fresh and ready to seize the day:

- Be consistent with both the time you go to bed and get up, even on weekends.
- Block out any distracting noise and eliminate as much light as possible.
- Find a comfortable sleeping temperature; your room should be cool but not too cold.
- Avoid heavy meals before sleep.
- Stay hydrated with essential nutrients, like minerals and water to assist your cells in proper functioning and signaling.

Hydration is extremely important for brain cells which dictate our circadian rhythm and direct us when to sleep and when to wake. If those cells do not work properly, our sleep patterns simply get worse.

Wishing you sweet dreams and solid sleep in 2023!

Candice Nicole is a health advocate and founder of HUmineral food derived mineral nutrients. She can be reached at info@HUmineral.com or (888) 765.0087. For more information visit www.HUmineral.com.

Sources: 1) <https://diabetesjournals.org/diabetes/article/57/10/2555/13406/The-Perfect-Storm-for-Type-1-Diabetes-The-Complex>; 2) <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/21785188/>; 3) *Why We Sleep: Unlocking the Power of Sleep and Dreams*, Matthew Walker (P)2017 Simon & Schuster, Inc.

Experimenting with Cannabis: How to Get Over Getting Too High

By Lewis Lustman

With cannabis now readily available in California, many are experimenting and with that may come the fear - or unpleasant experience - of becoming too high. While there is no getting "unhigh" quickly, several things can help you relax and ride it out.

Know that this will pass. The feeling of discomfort or panic has happened to many. Just remember, it passes. It *always* passes. You're going to have a few minutes of discomfort, but it will go away, and soon you will be back to your old self. Just *trusting* that can immediately bring relief.

Focus on something other than yourself. The mind has a tough time focusing on two things at once, so do something enjoyable. Put on a record, CD or radio, and get lost in the music. Pick up a familiar book or turn on a comedy; it's tough to feel uncomfortable when you're laughing. If your mind is enjoying music or a story, it's not going to be too concerned about your nervousness. And where your mind goes, your body follows. As you mentally relax, your body also will relax. Soon, all of you will be at peace.

Breathe. When you're tense, you take shallow breaths, so try to relax. Breathe in slowly but deeply through your nose for three seconds, hold the breath for three seconds, and slowly release the breath through your mouth for four seconds while quietly saying, "Ahhhhh..."

Take some CBD. CBD helps fight anxiety, and many have found it can counter-act the effects of THC. Orally administered CBD (oils, edibles, capsules) begin working within 30 minutes to two hours; smoking or vaping CBD oil results in more immediate effects.

Drink water and eat. It is common to get dry mouth when stoned, so have water - not a sugar-filled drink, coffee or alcohol - just water. Consider adding lemon which contains the terpene limonene that can offset the feeling of being high. Food also contains terpenes and can have the same effect.

Try peppercorns. Sounds strange, but many have said taking a whiff of peppercorns helps bring them down. Peppercorns contain the terpene beta-caryophyllene which may help clarify your thoughts and lead to a reduction in anxiety. Some have suggested chewing or steeping them in hot water with lemon.

Talk to someone you trust. Telling a trusted friend what you're going through is a great way to get your anxiety out in the open. Maybe your friend has been through this and will reinforce the fact that "this too shall pass." If you feel you need more help, don't be afraid to contact emergency services as they are well versed in helping those who have overdone it.

Many factors can affect the high you receive from cannabis, so each time you experiment - even for medicinal purposes - be sure to start off "low and slow." Be aware of the ratio of THC to CBD and start with low THC, waiting a good hour before taking more. Rest assured, if you do get uncomfortably high, you *will* come down in minutes.

Lustman is the marketing director for Senior-High, a woman-owned educational resource for active adults interested in discovering the medicinal benefits of products derived from cannabis. They can be reached at (760) 459.4593 or visit www.Senior-High.com.

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Skin Care: Making Sense of Scents

Should you always follow your nose?

By Brook Dougherty

Have you ever noticed that the first thing you do when considering a skin care product is to smell it? The second is to spread a bit on the back of your hand and feel it. The skin is tied to human emotions' and those two bits of sensorial information are often enough for many shoppers to decide if that product will make them happy.

Big beauty serves formulators a bevy of neutered choices to achieve their desired scent, look, thickness, texture, immediate feel and feel after twenty minutes - just long enough for you to say, "I'll take it." It's not a big surprise that customers might become annoyed after buying the product based on look, scent and feel, only to find it fails to deliver the promised results.

Here is an insider's secret...for facial products, the maximum percentage of scent is between 0.3% and 1%. If that scent comes from an essential oil, great. But it often takes more essential oil to achieve a desired scent level than it does using a fragrance oil, and having more than 0.3% of any fragrance (essential oil or not) on facial skin can be irritating.

So are all fragrance oils bad? It depends on whether a fragrance oil is considered "natural." A regular fragrance oil is made with a mix of aroma chemicals, resins and extracts. It can have up to 80 materials, and even though it may contain plant-based components, it's not "natural" for labelling purposes.

Enter natural fragrance oil. These beauties come from nature and may appear on the label as "natural fragrance oil." They start with a plant source like lavender, cucumber or raspberry to name a few. Let's take lavender for example. Its many components (linalyl acetate, linalool, b-caryophyllene and terpinen-4-ol) combine to give lavender its scent. To make a natural fragrance oil, one of those aromatic chemical components (isolates) would be blended with other isolates from a variety of plants; they may also be blended with essential oils. These are designated as natural by the International Organization for Standardization.

One of the great advantages of natural perfume oils is that not all plants produce essential oils. A strawberry doesn't, but it has scent components that can be isolated and combined with others to create that delicious strawberry scent, naturally.

In a perfect world, formulators would use naturally beneficial virgin and unrefined ingredients that retain their scent like tamanu oil, babbasu oil, cupuacu butter and ucuuba butter which are captivating and worth seeking out. These sustainably harvested ingredients come from deep in the rainforest, Africa or some lovely flowering field in a country whose name you can't pronounce. But sometimes you just want to be transported to the beach and crave a whiff of pineapple or coconut. When those urges strike, consider exploring products containing natural fragrance oils. Your brain may be convinced you've just landed in Bali, your stress may be reduced and perhaps even the annoying irritation on your face will be quieted, naturally. It could happen!

Brook Dougherty of Indio is the founder of JustUs Skincare and can be reached at brook@justusskincare.com. For more information visit www.justusskincare.com

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Is it the Journey or the Goal?

By Jennifer Yockey

My friend Ashley and I were talking about the new year and something she said really resonated with me. "Winter is not the right energy for renewal." It is so true! Winter is a time to reflect, let go, get cozy and rest. Spring is the perfect time for resolutions, goals, intentions and action.

So, don't fret! You can set an intention now and if it fizzles, begin again in April during the astrological new year, or spring equinox.

Don't get me wrong, I love the start of the new year and dreaming, scheming about all the possibilities. I have set resolutions and had the same experience as most people; they were abandoned, forgotten about or lost their luster midway through February. Did you think you were alone?

For years, I loved to set intentions around The Desire Map by Danielle LaPorte (DHN January/February 2022), as well as making vision boards and intention jars. What I know is that any time you want to reflect on your current situation, switch gears or take a different path, there really isn't a "wrong" way to do it. You do you, take what you need and leave the rest.

In 2009, I embarked on a wellness and spiritual journey that has led me down many roads; all for which I am grateful. But some paths, like the yogic exploration and the books associated with yogic philosophy have really resonated. Within those books, many specific words have stuck with me.

See if this word resonates with you...Tapas. Tapas is one of the words I return to often. And no, I am not talking about small plate foods, although I love those, too!

Tapas is sometimes translated to "burning discipline" and is one of the five *niyamas*—the second of the eight limbs of yogic philosophy as described by Patanjali in the Yoga Sutras. Observation of the five *yamas* (the first limb, translated as restrictions or restraints) and the five *niyamas* (personal observances) are considered moral imperatives in yoga; they are the roadmap for intentional living.

Discipline isn't something we are born with, it's a practice. Just as we roll out our mat, head to the driving range or local gym, the best way to achieve tapas is to show up.

It's not just the amount of time dedicated to a practice, but the consistency of doing so that leads to long-term change or achievement.

As you contemplate your desires for 2023, perhaps first reflect on what, who and where you are willing to commit. Be honest and flexible, and then show up; even when you don't want to - and especially, when there are lots of obstacles in your way.

At the end of 2023, you might find that your resolution or goal wasn't the point or the prize, but rather learning to be resilient, to build the muscle of grit, to understand and embrace the concept of Tapas.

Jennifer Yockey is owner of Gather Yoga & Wellness, author of Gathered Truths and host of The Gathered Truths Podcast. She is an E-RYT yoga/meditation teacher and wellness coach and can be reached at (760) 219.7953, jennifer@gatherlaquinta.com. For more information visit www.gatherlaquinta.com.





Keep Your Nose Clean

Tips and tricks for preventing sinus infections

By Sonja Fung, ND

Winter is back with a bang, along with all the colds and flu the season brings. The CDC has reported the highest levels of influenza in more than a decade, with 13 million cases since early December 2022. Rising cases of respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) along with this year's variation of influenza are in the air and being shared with every holiday gathering and germ-kiss from little ones. Sinus infection sufferers know the difficulty of getting through winter without an antibiotic.

Here are some helpful tips for keeping your nose clean this season.

Food is medicine or poison. The holidays are over! Start this year with a clean slate and avoid inflammatory mucus producing foods such as dairy products and simple sugars, including sweet drinks like juice or "natural" sugars. Sugar also stunts your immune response. Refined flours, fried and processed foods can also inflame your mucus membranes, which can swell and promote an ideal growing space for viruses and bacteria. Foods with a "kick," like cayenne, garlic, onions and horseradish, can promote sinus drainage and keep your airways flushed out. These are also strong anti-microbial agents and are easy to incorporate into your diet.



Foods with a "kick" like horseradish and garlic are strong anti-microbial agents and easy to incorporate into your diet.

Facial lymphatic drainage massage and sinus irrigation are simple, at-home solutions for sinus infection sufferers. When your sinuses are feeling full and tender, a gentle face massage over a steam inhalation of essential oils can help open up those stuffed passages. Put a few drops of eucalyptus, tea tree or lavender essential oil in a bowl full of steaming water, then lean over and gently rub the areas over and below your eye sockets, then across the tops of your cheeks from the bridge of your nose out to your ears. Then massage your forehead from between your eyebrows to your temples. As your sinuses start to drain, breathe in the essential oils, which are antimicrobial and soothing to your mucus membranes. Sinus irrigation with warm saline can physically flush out and remove mucus membrane irritants like dust and pollen. Add in a splash of colloidal silver for a gentle, but effective, antimicrobial flush.

NAC (N-acetyl-cystine) is a strong antioxidant and precursor to glutathione, your major detoxifier. It also thins mucus secretions so they can drain more effectively and helps disrupt pathogen biofilms that hide bacteria, viruses and mold in the sinuses. NAC can be safely taken orally at fairly high doses. Typical doses can be up to 3000mg daily with acute infections and 1000mg for preventative daily dosing. Utilize reputable sources for high quality supplements, such as FullScript, Wellevate or your local compounding pharmacy or health food store.



Steaming water with essential oils like eucalyptus offers natural sinus irrigation.

For those who suffer from chronic sinus infections, it's time to get to the root cause with your health care provider. Find out what unresolved health issues are still lingering long after they should be gone. Chronic infections from viruses, bacteria, molds, environmental allergies, irritants (tobacco, pollution, pesticide, heavy metal and mold exposure), food allergies, gut dysbiosis, hidden dental infection and sinus pressure activities (swimming, scuba diving, flying in planes) can all be contributors that need to be further explored.

Dr. Sonja Fung is a primary care naturopathic doctor with a focus on integrative cancer care and PRP regenerative joint injections at Live Well Clinic in La Quinta. Her clinic offers B vitamin injections, IV nutrients, detox and weight loss programs and specialty functional lab tests for a personalized health plan. For more information, call (760) 771.5970 or visit www.livewellclinic.org.

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Acupuncture for Mental Wellness

By Agustin Orozco, LAc, LMT

A good friend and I were discussing posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and the role it plays in the health of veterans. During the conversation, we did not mention the possibility of other individuals experiencing the condition. The unfortunate reality is, however, that PTSD is more common in society than what popular media may portray. In fact, 6% to 24% of the population may carry some level of PTSD.

Any individual who has lived through highly stressful events can develop PTSD. Near-death experiences, abuse, dying loved ones and car accidents are just a few everyday events that can create this stressful condition. According to the National Institutes of Health, those experiencing PTSD have physically entered "fight or flight" mode as a protective response to a traumatic experience. Most individuals can recover after the danger has passed, but those who continue to experience the stress response without the danger stimuli can eventually be diagnosed with PTSD.

The most common symptoms of PTSD include:

- Re-experiencing symptoms: flashbacks, bad dreams, stressful thoughts
- Avoidance symptoms: purposely avoiding activities, emotions/thoughts, places or situations that remind one of the trauma
- Arousal/reactivity: quickly started, on edge, trouble sleeping, anger outburst
- Cognitive/mood symptoms: trouble recollecting the event, pessimism, loss of interest in previously enjoyable activities

Children can also experience PTSD but may demonstrate different symptoms such as:

- Bedwetting after mastering toileting
- Inability to speak
- Acting out during play
- Extremely clingy to parents or other adults

Significant research on PTSD therapy takes place annually and a promising avenue is acupuncture. Acupuncture, which uses hair-thin needles inserted into the tissue to cause beneficial effects on the body, has been studied to treat a variety of mental health conditions including anxiety, sleep and stress-related disorders and PTSD. Interestingly, 21% of all acupuncture patients have reported a mental disorder.

A systemic review of multiple clinical trials on PTSD and acupuncture evaluated acupuncture's effectiveness in treating the disorder. One trial, which compared acupuncture to cognitive behavior therapy (CBT) and waitlist control, demonstrated that acupuncture was just as effective in helping relieve PTSD symptoms as CBT therapy and outperformed benefits to patients on a waitlist. Another trial compared acupuncture combined with CBT to CBT alone, and the acupuncture-added group reported more significant symptom relief than CBT alone. While a clinical trial comparing acupuncture to antidepressant (SSRI) medication demonstrated no difference in benefits, acupuncture with moxibustion outperformed PTSD symptom relief compared to oral SSRI medication.

Research on PTSD has a long way to go, but acupuncture can play an effective and safe role in treating those suffering from the condition as it offers many benefits with little to no side effects. If you are experiencing PTSD, reach out to your trusted health care practitioner to see what treatment options may work best for you.

Agustin Orozco is a licensed acupuncturist and certified massage therapist with AcQpoint Wellness Center in Palm Desert. (760) 345.2200 or www.acqpoint.com.

Sources available upon request.



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Experiment with Prioritizing Protein

By Regina Basterrechea, MS, FNLP

Many use this time of year to make lifestyle changes to look leaner and feel healthier. To help, I thought I'd propose a "planned food experiment" to inspire readers to prioritize meals and snacks around protein.



Protein is the most filling macronutrient and, in the right amount, keeps cravings and hunger at bay for hours. Consider this example from Jade Teta, ND. A five-ounce chicken breast and a standard glazed doughnut each have roughly 250 calories. While you could easily eat three doughnuts in one sitting, three chicken breasts would be challenging because the chicken contains four times more protein. So, if your goals are to get lean, feel better, ditch the diets and still have doughnuts from time to time, read on.

A goal of one gram of protein per pound of "ideal" body weight daily is a good start. If your ideal weight is over 120 pounds, or you prefer a plant-based diet and find it challenging to get that much protein, shoot for 120 grams. If you find yourself hungry again within three hours, add more protein if you are not at your daily goal or healthy fats like avocado, olives, nuts, and seeds to your next meal and see if that helps. We are all unique so this is where the experimentation comes in.

Start your day with a superfood shake loaded with protein, fat and fiber. Add at least 20 grams of quality protein powder (Designs for Health, Plant Fusion). I find flavored protein powder to be tastier than unflavored. For increased protein, add collagen, hemp seeds and fortified nut or seed beverages, or add more protein powder to reach your gram goal. Add half to one cup of fiber and anti-oxidant-rich berries, half a green banana, a handful of greens and mix to desired thickness with an unsweetened nut beverage or water. Maybe add cinnamon for flavor and blood sugar-balancing properties, and to save time, make a double batch for the next day.

For a typical meal, lay your food out on a 10-inch plate. Start by filling half your plate with non-starchy, colorful veggies and eat those first. Fill a quarter of the plate with your clean, lean protein: one or two palm-sized portions of chicken, fish, seafood, beef, pork, eggs or legumes and eat that second. Then fill the remaining quarter with a healthy carb like sweet potatoes, wild rice or legumes, and every once in a while, swap it out for your favorite bread, rice or pasta. Don't forget the nutritious fats and seasonings like herbs, salt, pepper, extra virgin olive oil and vinegar.

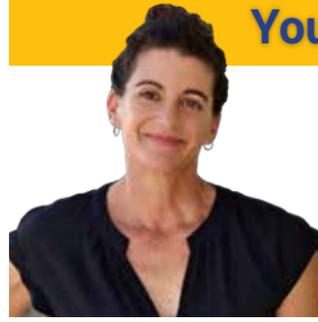
For plant-based eaters having difficulty reaching their protein goals, I suggest mixing unflavored protein powders into dishes made with beans, peas, lentils and other legumes (which usually contain about 12g of protein per half cup) in lieu of increasing portions which can increase calories and weight gain.

In my experience, having a veggie starter, such as soup or salad, followed by an adequate portion of protein, leaves room for our favorite foods as a side dish or main dish from time to time - allowing for the foods you love while still getting the results you want.

My goal is for my clients to be healthy and happy. Life is too short to be fit and miserable. Here's to your goals in 2023!

Regina Basterrechea is a functional nutrition and lifestyle practitioner and can be reached at (760) 799.6550.

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Siempre Mejor

Since June of 1940, guests looking to enhance wellness arrived on a land originally belonging to the Native Kumeyaay at the base of Mt. Kuchumaa, a sacred peak historically protected by shamans. This earthly temple rises above Rancho La Puerta in Tecate, Mexico. In those early days, guests traveled to listen to Edmond Szekely who was considered a forward-thinking proponent of natural wellness. Szekely spoke on the exploration of human potential and introduced the thought that humans are not simply a brain, a body, an organ or a spirit. He noted that a human is all these things, and each should be their own caretaker.

During a recent visit to the ranch, my meditation instructor recited words from a poignant composition before guiding a group sit. The poem by John Roedel is titled, "My Brain and My Heart Divorced." The writing shares, "Now my head and heart share custody of me; I stay with my brain during the week and my heart gets me on weekends. They never speak to one another." Eventually the author takes a break from the brain and heart to spend time with his gut. A meaningful conversation in the deep cavity of the gut encourages the author to pack a bag and spend time with his lungs. Since the lungs do not lament about yesterday or tomorrow, it is the perfect place to be - a place to just breathe.

There is a palpable energy and conduit to peace on this historic property. It is a place to synergize head and heart. It is a refuge to breathe freely - a haven of organic, fresh food from the earth. Vegetables are picked from a diverse garden on the land. It is a sanctuary to explore human potential and escape from life's pressing expectations.

From the myriad of selections offered, one can explore an abundance of wellness choices. Sometimes the best approach to crafting one's day is to say yes to new adventure. Gyrokinesis was my new choice and opened an experience to breathing and spinal mobility. It is gentle movement performed on a stool, undulating the spine in all directions with emphasis on figure-eight movement. The instructor explained energy pathways, sharing that the first organ to form in the body is the heart. It forms on the spinal column and two nubs appear as initiation points for the arms to grow. It was a beautiful takeaway explaining the heartfelt action of hugging.

The entire time spent at the ranch provides "Aha" moments encouraging "Siempre Mejor," the motto for the ranch meaning "always better." Today, Deborah Szekely is the matriarch of her husband's wellness vision. Turning 100 last year, her message is to find those things that are life enhancing and covet them. The ranch is one way to experience a direct dose of wellness. We can also find these experiences in our communities. When we start to feel vibrancy in every cell of our body, we know we are amid a life enhancing experience. May we strive towards an "always better" approach, as the journey towards wellness is one of never-ending exploration.

Jennifer Di Francesco is a wellness explorer and desert adventurer and can be reached at www.coachellabellaboho.com.

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Dr. Robynne Chutkan's *The Anti-Viral Gut*

A Book Review by Joseph E. Scherger, MD, MPH

In *The Anti-Viral Gut*, integrative gastroenterologist Robynne Chutkan, MD builds upon her previous books, especially *The Microbiome Solution* (2016), to provide an update for maintaining a healthy gut and immune system. This is an important book for our times as 70% of the immune system is in the gut and the health of our gut microbiome is crucial to good health and protection from viral infections such as COVID and others.

This book is well organized and reads like an easily understood course in gut health and immune protection. Dr. Chutkan starts with explaining the gut-immune connection. Besides the microbiome and its 100 trillion organisms, I learned the term "virome" which describes the 300 trillion viruses on and in the body. Most of these organisms are helpful and protect us.

The second part of the book covers what goes wrong and can cause "dysbiosis," or an unhealthy microbiome. It should be no surprise to learn that the health of our microbiome depends on what we eat and that highly processed foods cause dysbiosis and leaky gut. An unhealthy gut is primed for more severe infections and a large number of other chronic diseases such as autoimmune conditions which are on the rise globally.

In her book, Chutkan also presents a comprehensive anti-viral gut plan using the categories "Remove, Replace and Restore." First, you remove medications, unhealthy practices and foods that are damaging the microbiome. She makes a strong case for maintaining stomach acid and how to get off the acid-blocking drugs that make us vulnerable to infections. "Replace" missing or depleted essential bacteria through "exposure to soil microbes, fermented foods, and robust prebiotics and probiotics." Specific recommendations are made for foods with some soil and quality probiotic options. "Restore" includes building up the mucous gut shield layer that protects us and stops the harm of leaky gut.

These are her key recommendations:

- Eat more plants
- Select your carbs carefully (choose low sugar and eat resistant starches such as sweet potatoes, yams, taro, plantains and wild rice)
- Get ample fiber such as foods high in inulin including artichokes, asparagus, garlic, leeks and onions
- Eat fermented foods such as sauerkraut, kimchi and pickles
- Eat "dirty food" such as that from the local farmer's market
- When it comes to food: farm yes, factory no

For the anti-viral gut diet, Chutkan divides foods into green light (eat abundantly), yellow light (eat sparingly) and red light (avoid entirely). A separate section is devoted to beverages.

In addition to covering other elements of an anti-viral lifestyle such as exercise, sleep and stress management, the book provides a variety of recipes.

If everyone followed the anti-viral gut plan, our population would be much healthier. We all have a choice in what we eat and how we live. I personally recommend this book several times daily to patients.

Dr. Scherger is founder of Restore Health in Indian Wells, a clinic dedicated to weight loss and reversing disease. To schedule a consultation or for more information, visit www.restorehealth.me or call (760) 898.9663.

FUN(d)raising Coachella Valley Style

Continued from page 9

"There's such a rich history of golf in the Coachella Valley," adds Ragusa. "There is also a tradition of excellence in health care in this region. It's great to now be a part of those traditions by hosting The Galleri Classic at Mission Hills."

It is important to GRAIL and the PGA TOUR that tournament proceeds stay within the greater Coachella Valley. "As a California-based company, we share in PGA TOUR Champions' commitment to giving back to the communities where we work and live."

Local beneficiaries include Desert Cancer Foundation, Eisenhower Health, Hanson House, Pendleton Foundation, Shay's Warriors Life After Cancer and the American Cancer Society's local affiliate.

"These generous contributions allow us to continue our mission of giving back to our cancer survivorship community that often gets forgotten," states Shay's Warriors Founder/Visionary/Cancer Thriver Shay Moraga. "It helps us pay for educational programs, tools and resources throughout the year so that survivors can continue to heal emotionally, physically and mindfully."

The second property introducing a whole new level of fun and entertainment is Acrisure Arena and our first professional sport team, the Coachella Valley Firebirds.

"The Firebirds are committed to many community events, and we are excited about establishing our own 501c3 foundation which will allow us to do even more," says Gina Rotolo, the Firebirds vice president of marketing and communications. "We are doing a lot to introduce and educate around hockey, as well as good sportsmanship and how to be a good community citizen and leader."

With the team's focus on education and outreach, their current programs provide educational opportunities, fundraising through ticket sale initiatives and promotional nights tied to local charities. Outreach includes street hockey programs and partnerships with YMCA of the Desert, Big Brothers/Big Sisters and the Boys and Girls Clubs of the desert.

"We are excited about teaching the next generation of young people - especially women - about getting into sports and sports management," adds Rotolo. The arena and team have five women in VP-level roles and numerous others in leadership across every aspect of the organization. Rotolo and others have joined Women Leaders Forum in support of their Young Women Leaders program providing inspiration and encouragement to local high school girls.

The Galleri Classic Tournament Director Michelle DeLancy, who moved here from out of state, is in awe of how those in our community come together and support each other.

At the Acrisure Arena ribbon cutting event, founding partner and Rock & Roll Hall of Famer Irving Azoff called the Coachella Valley "the little place that could." What makes it so? It has always been its people.

Editorial by Desert Health Founder/Publisher Lauren Del Sarto. Lauren@DesertHealthNews.com.

References: 1) HARC Data; 2) Coachella Valley Association of Governments (CVAG) and the Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG)



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YOUR FINANCIAL HEALTH

By Michele T. Sarna, CFP®, AIF®



Texas Hold'em: Strategy and Investing

The game of Texas Hold'em is much like the "game" of the markets. It's about long-term strategy and restraining from being impulsive or emotionally tied to the current state of the game.

The Game. Each player is dealt two cards face down known as hole cards. Then, a series of community cards are dealt face up, which the players use to complete their hand. The community cards are revealed in stages: the flop—first three cards; the turn—4th card; and the river—5th card. Bets are made based on the confidence of the players and their combination of any five community cards and hole cards. At times, a player may choose to only play the five community cards if they believe it will beat their opponent's hand.

In investing, certain positions may be acquired or strategies implemented, to achieve a positive rate of return on investments. Depending on your holdings, current negative or positive news could be considered the flop and produce reactions that will deter the initial plan. The turn may be viewed as a pivotal point in one's goals. In poker, one card could change the course of the hand and the game, like the last community card, the river, when revealed. Similarly, in investing, one piece of information or change in emotion could turn the course of the plan.

Betting on the Game. This is where strategy can play a key part. In poker, using your chips to sway an opponents' decision by increasing the bet or holding, may prove to be lucrative, especially in tournament play when large stakes are at risk. If you lose your process or get swept up with emotion, you could be out of the game—not to mention realizing massive losses. Much like when analyzing your investments, current market conditions may pull at your emotions and sway you to change course or get out of the markets completely, potentially realizing huge losses. By evaluating your plan and reviewing your long-term goals, emotional impulses will be mitigated.

The Strategy. While having the best five-card hand is the goal of the game, strategic betting, reading others accurately and knowing the odds also play a big factor. Poker has a name for reading other players, a "tell," which could be verbal or physical - say, a minor sigh or shift in a player's eyes. Expert players may use this to their advantage by not only reading the other players, but deliberately fidgeting or reacting to throw off their opponents. The strategy for investing is simulating the odds of potential outcomes and knowing the success rate of the portfolio based on the scenarios, then adjusting the allocation to provide a success rate comfortable to achieve the goals of the plan for the specified timeline. Reactions or changes in market conditions should be analyzed and categorized accordingly. Will it have a short-term effect? Does the portfolio need to be modified? How will it affect the success of the plan goals in the long run? What are the ramifications if emotions dictate to not wait it out?

In the end, if you play it smart, the winner will go home with the pot of money, and an investor will have a successful financial plan.

Michele Sarna is a certified financial planner™ with Beacon Pointe Advisors and can be reached at (760) 932.0930 or msarna@beaconpointe.com.

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Two Wednesdays per Month at 2:30 pm
- THUR** Caregivers of Loved Ones with Dementia Online via Zoom
Thursdays at 10:30 am
- THUR** Caregivers of Loved Ones with Dementia at Vista Cove
1st and 3rd Thursdays of Each Month at 2:00 pm
- THUR** Caregivers of Loved Ones with Dementia at Atria Hacienda
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SCAN ME



Dispelling Myths About Caregiver Support Groups

Compliments of Alzheimers Coachella Valley

If you are a caregiver for a loved one, it is important to know that you are not alone. The daily toll of personally taking care of - and worrying for - your loved one can induce stress, burnout and have taxing effects on your mental and physical health. To combat these issues, building a local support system is essential. While the journey through the care system is not easy—even with the help of professionals—research shows that participation in a support group can make a positive difference.

With that said, why aren't more caregivers seeking this benefit? In some circles, there is still a stigma associated with support groups. Some people see reaching out to others as a sign of weakness, while others believe confiding in others is a waste of time and effort. A review of these and other commonly held misperceptions shows otherwise.

Myth: Support groups do not provide any answers.

Fact: While it's true that support groups are not a magic bullet for all your problems, you will find answers and a lot of support while working through a tough or sensitive issue. A caregiver support group can be an excellent resource for gaining information and strategies specific to caring for your loved one. Attending a meeting is an effective means to learn and swap, not only tried-and-tested caregiving advice, but coping techniques shared by others on your common journey.

Myth: You will be required to share your story.

Fact: Support groups are made up of individuals at many different stages along the caregiving timeline. In most groups, you can choose to speak (or not) as you feel comfortable. Whether in-person or online, a support group offers a safe place to get information that is practical, constructive, and helpful, and the option to share your story is yours.

Myth: Other support group participants will criticize me.

Fact: It's perfectly normal to feel reticent, anxious, or apprehensive about joining. Support groups bring together people who are dealing with similar difficult circumstances, and a well-run support group sets boundaries that require participants to show empathy and respect for each other. Although the format can vary greatly, all groups share one thing in common—they are places where people can share personal stories, express emotions and be heard in an atmosphere of acceptance, understanding, and encouragement. Sharing ideas on methods of providing care that may not be found in articles or books can prevent you from having to "re-invent the wheel."

Myth: I will feel even more depressed after attending a support group.

Fact: The simple act of sharing your problems can be extremely cathartic. Most people feel uplifted and encouraged after attending a support group which can be a valuable step toward healing. Hearing from others facing similar challenges can also make you feel less alone in your struggles.

The life of a caregiver produces certain pitfalls and frustrations that those outside of this circle might not understand. When you join a support group, you are surrounded by a network of individuals who understand your day-to-day struggles. In the company of like-minded people, you can feel comfortable voicing your frustrations, questions, or accomplishments without having to explain yourself. Support groups also provide a confidential, safe place where you can vent your negative emotions and not feel judged. And, when a network of people can provide validation for your feelings of anger, grief, or defeat, it reminds you that you are not alone.

Alzheimers Coachella Valley is a community resource for dementia support and education. For more information and programs, call (760) 776.3100 or visit www.cvalzheimers.org.

Belly Laugh Dreams

By Kathleen O'Keefe-Kanavos

"Dreams are often the most profound when they seem the most crazy."

– Dr. Sigmund Freud

For the past 15 years, January 24 has been officially proclaimed "Belly Laugh Day." We all know laughter can often be the best medicine, thus if you've ever laughed yourself awake, you may have actually improved your well-being.

Laughter not only lightens your mood and reduces stress, it also induces positive, physical changes in the body. Whether awake or asleep, the endorphins released by your brain when you laugh produce natural painkillers,¹ while the intake of oxygen-rich air can stimulate your heart, lungs and muscles.

Have you ever been around someone laughing and started to do the same without knowing why? Laughter is contagious - even animals laugh. Studies by various groups suggest monkeys, dogs, and even rats love a good tickle and belly laugh. Healing laughter is something we all want to share and catch, so tickle your furry friends often.²

In fact, laughter may have been a precursor to language. People have been laughing since before they could talk, literally. Babies laugh in their sleep³ before they can speak, and some scientists think human ancestors laughed in groups before they developed language.

If you feel that laughing for the sake of health feels forced, try these three tips:

- Find a way to laugh about daily personal situations to reduce stress and increase personal satisfaction because doing so can make it easier to cope with difficulties.
- Try laughing yoga and practice laughter as a group.
- Make it a habit to spend time with friends who make you laugh. Return the favor by sharing your funny personal situations and stories with them.

Our dream world is a microcosm of our waking world, so is it any wonder we can laugh in our dreams? As we celebrate 2023, let's empower our inner-child joy and set the dream intention to belly laugh as we sleep like a baby. Write your intention in your dream journal or on a piece of paper. Then place the paper under your pillow to 'sleep on it.' Laugh and the dream world laughs with you.

Let's also resolve to have a daily belly laugh for a healthier and happier year, and if laughter is indeed a form of medicine, laugh 'til it heals.

Kathleen O'Keefe-Kanavos of Rancho Mirage is a survivor, author, dream expert, speaker, TV/radio host/producer and has been featured on Dr. Oz and The Doctors. Her new book Dreams That Can Save Your Life is available now. For more information, visit www.KathleenOkeefeKanavos.com.

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Desert Woman's Show is the Place to Be Fashion, food, wellness and golf galore

The Desert Woman's Show celebrates its 15th anniversary on Saturday, February 18, with a full day of shopping, fashion shows, health experts, guest speakers and charitable giving.



Presented by Desert Vein & Vascular Institute, this festive event features local fashion boutiques, skin care specialists, fitness and wellness experts and leading health care providers. This year's health panel discussion, "How to Stay Young as You Age," will feature *Desert Health* contributor, Joseph E. Scherger, MD, MPH of Restore Health and *It's a No Grainer Cookbook* author Barbara Hankey-Rogers. To learn more about medicinal marijuana, be sure to attend the "All About Cannabis" presentation by The Lighthouse Dispensary.



Health panel will feature Restore Health's Joseph E. Scherger, MD (top) and *It's a No Grainer* author Barbara Hankey-Rogers (bottom).

Throughout the day, the main stage will offer 'shop local' dynamic fashion shows directed by stylist Kim Richards and featuring Chrissy's on El Paseo, City Lites, CoCo Rose, Gaby L's, Modern Oasis, True Self Care Boutique, Macy's and more.

The Classic Club's beautiful golf course will set the stage for the Desert Woman's Shows second annual charity tournament teeing off on Saturday morning. Open to both women and men, the event will benefit The Unforgettables Foundation, dedicated to helping families after the loss of a child. Golfers will enjoy Clark's

Nutrition snacks, a lunch box sponsored by Jimmy John's and Konnections, while Mercedes-Benz offers the opportunity to win a new car in the hole-in-one contest. The fabulous day in the sun will conclude with a cocktail awards celebration with time for golfers to shop and sip before the day is done.

The event opens for VIP guests at 9:30 a.m. with general admission at 10 a.m. and runs until 4:30 p.m. The first 500 ladies to register online will receive a complimentary general admission ticket courtesy of long-time sponsor Desert Care Network. Combination tickets, that include the ever-popular Greater Palm Springs Food & Wine tasting area taking place from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m., can also be purchased.

This annual celebration is graciously sponsored by Desert Vein & Vascular Institute, Desert Care Network, Hightower Financial, The Lighthouse Dispensary, Clark's Nutrition, Barbara Rogers and we welcome our newest partner, First Bank. Media partners include CBS Local 2, Alpha Media Group, *Desert Golf & Tennis Magazine*, *CV Weekly* and *Desert Health News*. We hope to see you there!

For tickets and more information visit www.DesertWomansShow.com. Contact Event Producer Diana Marlo at Diana@MarloProductions.com.



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Diane Wentworth Julie Spira Terilee Povall Emcee: Andrea Davis

MARCH 2: Health is Wealth

Ready for your financial health check-up? Hear from financial experts and entrepreneurs including artist, designer, author, hotelier, entrepreneur and style icon, **Tracy Turco**, retired professional golfer and 11-time tour winner **Susie Maxwell Berning**, and Trivita Wellness's Sr. Director of Marketing & Communications and host of Feel Better Today, **Bronwyn Ison**.



Tracy Turco Susie Maxwell Berning Bronwyn Ison Emcee: Eleanor Oliver-Edmonds

APRIL 6: Be the Author of Your Own Story

We sometimes write a negative narrative. Hear from local authors **Dr. Susan Murphy** and **Maggie Downs** to learn how to change your unique narrative, and change lives by writing your own book.



Dr. Susan Murphy Maggie Downs Emcee: Nadia Popova

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Ingredients:

- (Makes 10-12 servings)
- Cooking spray
 - ½ cup coconut flour
 - 6 eggs
 - ½ cup maple syrup
 - ½ cup coconut oil
 - ½ cup crushed cashews
 - 2 bananas finely chopped
 - ½ apple finely chopped
 - ½ cup carrot shredded
 - 1 tablespoon cinnamon
 - ½ cup raisins
 - ¼ teaspoon sea salt



Directions:

- Preheat oven to 350 degrees.
- Grease a loaf pan with cooking spray.
- Add all ingredients in a bowl and mix together or beat with a hand mixer on low until well combined. Do not overmix.
- Pour into your loaf pan and place in oven in middle rack.
- Bake 45-60 minutes or until a toothpick comes out clean from the center of the loaf. (Keep an eye on the top to ensure it doesn't turn too dark).
- Place on cooling rack and let cool for 10-15 minutes before extracting from the pan.
- Slice, serve and enjoy!

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Big Game Winner

Grain-free caprese meatballs

Another exceptional serving from *It's a No Grainer*, these unique bite-size apps combine the flavors of Italy - fresh buffalo mozzarella, heirloom tomatoes and fresh basil - with lean ground turkey for a game winning touchdown.

Ingredients:

- (Makes 16 meatballs)
- 1 pound of ground turkey (or substitute with Beyond Meat for a plant-based option)
 - 1 egg
 - ¼ cup almond flour
 - ½ teaspoon sea salt
 - ¼ teaspoon ground black pepper
 - ½ teaspoon garlic powder
 - ½ cup mozzarella shredded
 - 2 tablespoons sun-dried tomatoes chopped
 - 2 tablespoons fresh basil chopped
 - 2 tablespoons olive (or coconut) oil for frying
 - Marinara sauce for dipping



Directions:

- Combine all ingredients, except the olive oil, in a medium bowl and mix thoroughly with your hands.
- Form mixture into 16 meatballs.
- Heat the olive (or coconut) oil in a large sauté pan.
- Add the meatballs to the hot oil, about one inch apart, and cook over low to medium heat for about 3-5 minutes per side or until cooked through.
- Serve with marinara sauce...and watch them fly off the plate!

Tips: May be cooked in two batches if pan doesn't allow for 12. Because the cheese melts out a bit, make sure they don't burn. If they appear to be getting dark quickly, turn down the heat to cook at a lower temperature.

*Both recipes printed with permission from Rogers' *It's a No Grainer Cookbook* with editor's notes added.

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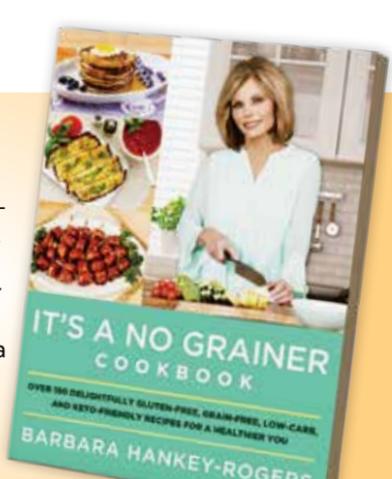
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Barbara Hankey-Rogers' *It's A No Grainer Cookbook* features over 180 delightfully gluten-free, grain-free, low-carb and keto-friendly recipes. The Palm Desert resident spent over eight years compiling this beautiful book which is available wherever books are sold. A portion of proceeds are donated to Loving All Animals, a Coachella Valley animal welfare and adoption agency. For more information visit www.ItsANoGrainerLife.com.



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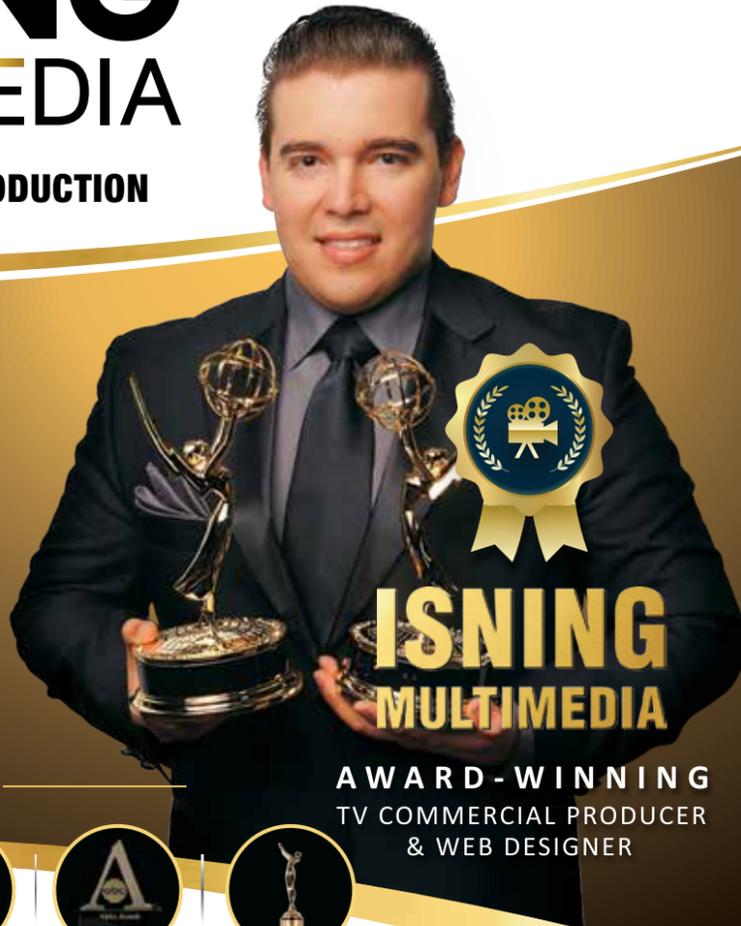
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