



Desert Health[®]

The Valley's Leading Resource for Health and Wellness

July/August 2022

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Use this season for a bit of nothing. It can be in the absence of thought and in the space of time, we make our best personal progress, decisions and inspirations.

—Shannon Sinsheimer, ND
Naturopathic Doctor

Food as Medicine

International Conference Comes to the Desert

Your doctor diagnoses high blood pressure or cholesterol, and you await a call from your pharmacy to pick up the prescription you may be on for life. What if instead, you anticipate an email with your newly prescribed 10-day meal plan? You swap reading a long list of side effects for recipes that can address the root cause of your condition and improve your overall quality of life.

This new concept is called "lifestyle medicine" and the Plantrician Project, a non-profit organization, is working to make it mainstream.

A "plantrician" is defined as a physician or clinician empowered with the knowledge of the benefits of whole food, plant-based nutrition. The group's ambitious goal is transforming human health, health care and the food ecosystem by changing the way doctors practice medicine. They envision "a world in which all physicians,

health care providers and health influencers have embraced the dietary paradigm shift to a whole food, plant-based diet; in turn, effectively promoting patient and client adoption of this health-protecting, disease-fighting way of living."

The Plantrician Project has been educating practitioners for a decade. Their first International Plant-based Nutrition Conference was held in Naples, Florida in 2013, attracting 180 people from 12 countries. Their 10th annual event will be held this year at the JW Marriott Desert Springs Resort in Palm Desert and is expected to attract over 1,000 attendees from around the globe both in-person and virtually.

"With its dry heat, hot springs and mountain views, the Coachella Valley is long known as a draw for those interested in health and wellness," says the Plantrician Project's Alexis Corrigan, director of marketing and communications.

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BEYOND allopathic care

By Lauren Del Sarto

When it comes to your health, do you rely solely on the advice of your primary care physician, or do you also seek input from a natural health provider? If faced with a serious health concern, you'd probably get a second opinion to understand all your options, so why wouldn't you do the same to maximize your everyday well-being?

When I started *Desert Health* 12 years ago, a primary goal was to place natural health practitioners on the same platform as medical doctors. Their theories and practices have been around for much longer, and I personally find their prescriptions to be more effective for long-term health. Naturopathic doctors strive to identify the root cause of symptoms recommending nutrition and lifestyle alterations to help us heal; doctors of traditional Chinese medicine effectively use acupuncture and herbs which have been balancing homeostasis for thousands of years, while bodyworkers use movement and alignment to help flex and straighten our structure.

The original concept was an educational publication to generate greater awareness of their work. I didn't realize so many practitioners from all disciplines would be eager to educate consumers, and we are grateful for their contributions; we would not be here without them.

At that time, I also saw the medical community starting to open the door to the theories and practices of natural medicine as seasoned professionals became frustrated with applying Band-Aids to chronically ill patients, and large institutions sought to capitalize on the growing wellness trend. Functional (also called integrative or lifestyle) medicine sprung to the forefront as leaders like the Cleveland Clinic and Mayo Clinic added it to their portfolios.

Today, the progress in medicine continues. In a compelling move forward in March of 2018, the American Academy of Family Physicians (AAFP), which has cited functional medicine as non-evidence-based, lifted their moratorium on educational credits for functional medicine when a resounding amount of science was submitted upon request. However, it limits credits only to "those that provide clinicians with an overview or scope of functional medicine and the techniques that functional medicine practitioners use, so family physicians can educate interested patients on the topic." Activities that "teach clinicians how to perform techniques, modalities or applications of functional medicine in their clinical practices" are

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A Time to Reflect

Our warm summer days offer the perfect opportunity to slow down and do “a bit of nothing,” as Dr. Shannon prescribes in our front-page quote. It’s a good time to rest our busy brains, and make space for personal reflection. We need it to recharge, renew and rebalance.

Reading through this new edition, I am reflecting on just how far we have come. When starting *Desert Health* 12 years ago, I never would have imagined an international conference on food as medicine coming to the desert. A naturopathic physician’s conference, yes, but not one attended primarily by MDs, DOs and RNs. I am excited to be a part of the September event and hope many from our local health care community will attend.

We also revisit Eisenhower Health’s residency program. We covered the first in-coming class in 2013 and are impressed with how much the program has grown and continues to support the ongoing need for family physicians locally.

I also reflect on the growth of our natural health community which was the original inspiration for *Desert Health*. Their services are in high demand as people gain a better understanding of their work. The medical community is also embracing their knowledge and value as part of the international movement towards addressing root causes of disease through lifestyle medicine.

Whether you find summer joy in faraway places or local staycations, check in and check out. As we reflect, we are full of gratitude, and thank you for taking this journey with us. It certainly appears that the best is yet to come!

Lauren

Lauren Del Sarto
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An Independent Publication

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Change Your Thoughts, Change the World

By Amy Austin, PsyD, LMFT

Earlier this week, I woke to my cat Mazel's "amewsing" morning antics. Instead of instantly switching on the news (my usual MO), I sat down to embrace his entertainment and breathe in the quiet of the morning. The recent desert winds were thankfully at bay, giving a welcome stillness to our desert paradise. I decided to just sit with my thoughts. There were no distractions, no place to be, nothing to do other than to be a human *being* instead of a human *doing*. I made the conscious choice to be fully present in that moment.

I found myself focusing on my breath, nothing forced, experiencing the natural restorative inhalations and exhalations. In my mind's eye, I asked myself to breathe in relaxation and exhale tension. I found myself wondering why I don't do this more often. The "feel good" was either from my brain getting oxygenated or the permission slip I gave myself to just be. It didn't matter so I decided to forego the need to analyze.

I heard the whir of the air conditioning and then the birds outside; their sweet songs part of my everyday world, but so often taken for granted. In this moment they gave me a sense of peace and calm, and I thanked them for sharing the universe with me. Then, out of nowhere, my mind recalled a nightmare from the night before, and I began to feel it physically; my pulse increased, and fear overcame me with a flush feeling. In that moment, I knew I had a choice. I could give in to those uncomfortable feelings or move on with curiosity and acceptance. The dream momentarily felt real, but the crucial realization was, I am not my mind. I am not my thoughts. That power packed thought, if only momentary, gave me a sense of mastery and empowerment. I made the choice to remain in the moment of peace and calm I was experiencing just moments before.

Rabbi Simon Jacobson, noted author and Torah scholar states, "One of the most eloquent concepts in mystical thought is the microcosm/macrocosm phenomenon. The human being is a 'miniature universe,' reflecting every aspect of the world at-large, and the universe is a giant organism. The reason for this intrinsic connection between humans and the universe is because the universe was created for the purpose that we humans refine and elevate it."

If a human being is mired down in negativity, this can have a monumental impact on the world. It is then crucial to refine and elevate ourselves from within so we can contribute the best we have to give in our relationships and to society. Refine ourselves, refine the world.

Rabbi Laibl Wolf of Australia, renowned speaker and author of *Practical Kabbalah* was trained in law and psychology. He has addressed a variety of groups including the American Psychological Association, Fortune 500 conventions and Buddhist monks. The following is a recap of one of his recent meditations in which he discusses how our thoughts produce feelings and those feelings can change in a microsecond depending on the new thoughts we bring to mind. Let's take a moment to address this...

Think of a time you were extremely embarrassed. Try to recall what caused the embarrassment, who was there, what was said. Now become acutely aware of the feelings of being extremely embarrassed, as well as the resulting consequences. Or, a time you injured yourself physically. Recognize how you felt, even the complex feelings beyond the physical pain.

Now, switch to a moment of joy that you experienced; perhaps a birthday party given in your honor as a child. Who was at the party? Recall the cake, singing and blowing out the candles. Now consider, where did that image of embarrassment go? Did the feelings of shame vanish in the moment they were replaced with the joyful image of a happy memory? What happened to the hurt and pain you briefly relived just a few moments ago?

The answer? Your mind determines the outcome of your emotions. As Rabbi Wolf posits, "Change your mind, change your feelings."

There's an old saying: You were given a neck to create balance between the intellect and the emotions. When the intellect overrules emotion (or vice versa), dysfunctional consequences can result. One of the greatest gifts I have been given, and want to pay forward, is the awareness that I have the power to change my thoughts. I don't have to be driven by my thoughts or to be defined by them; they're just thoughts.

Eckhart Tolle, author of *The Power of Now* and *Practicing the Power of Now* states that when our minds are racing and we feel like a hamster in a wheel, "all you really need to do is accept this moment fully. You are then at ease in the here and now and at ease with yourself." He also states that, "The beginning of freedom is the realization that you are not 'the thinker.' The moment you start watching the thinker, a higher level of consciousness becomes activated. You then begin to realize there is a vast realm of intelligence beyond thought; that thought is only a tiny aspect of that intelligence. You also realize all the things that truly matter- beauty, love, creativity, joy, inner peace- arise from beyond the mind." He adds that these realizations are when you begin to awaken.

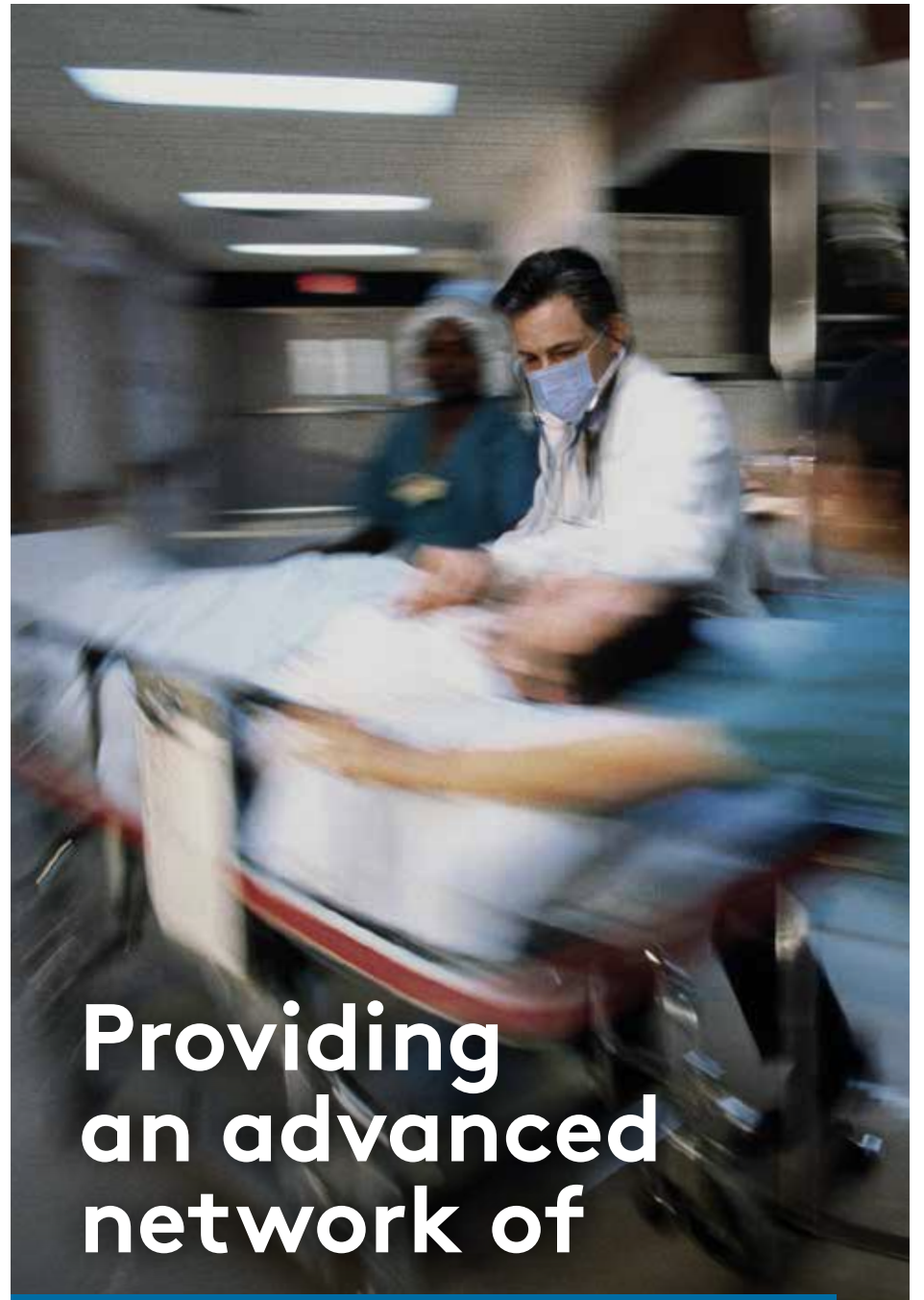
In my mind and heart, I believe negativity is an opportunity to change my thoughts and to do better. I learned I don't have to be held emotionally hostage by my thoughts. As the Lubavitcher Rebbe states, "Think good, and it will be good."

Today's news reports of war, divisiveness, intolerance and heartbreaking and senseless violence in our churches, synagogues, public spaces and schools, can trigger an immediate leap to the dark side. Just knowing that you have the ability to choose can be a game changer.

If one good deed leads to another, one positive thought can too. Rabbi Jacobson states, "Knowing that we are a microcosm of the universe also empowers us in dealing with world events taking place around us. Though subtle, harmony in our personal lives helps bring harmony to the world. We may not be able to sense the 'butterfly effect' of our behavior on the universe, and its effect is not always direct and overt. Nevertheless, we're told with absolute certainty that our actions do have a ripple effect of world events."

And with that, we have the power to change the world...One thought at a time.

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



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Have a Student Interested in Medicine?

Medical Health Academies show them the way

La Quinta High School's (LQHS) Medical Health Academy (MHA) offers their students a hands-on approach to exploration and preparation for a career in the health field. The academy is a three-year program that exposes students to a variety of health care professions. Courses include an introduction to medicine, medical terminology and proficiency in basic skills, career exploration, and finally, an internship with the opportunity to receive national certification in a selection of entry-level positions.

Teachers Melissa Moore and Stacy Bolanos share a passion for the field of medicine and the dedication to their students has provided a strong foundation for LQHS's successful academy.

During the program, students participate in numerous opportunities including Health Occupation Students of America (HOSA) programs, blood drives, MHA Leadership and MHA Peer Support Group.

Once accepted into the Medical Health Academy, students take an Introduction to Medical Health course during their sophomore year and begin to study medical terminology, learning the pronunciation and meaning of terms. Students also become certified in CPR/AED and first aid through the American Heart Association.

A large majority of the school year is spent discovering various careers in medicine. Exploration is facilitated through hands-on labs that require students to collaborate with peers using authentic medical equipment and practicing necessary skills. These college and career labs prepare them for occupations in primary care, nursing and health science ranging from biomedical engineering to veterinarian medicine.

During their junior year, MHA students are encouraged to select a personal career path grounded in lab experiences from the previous year. They continue to master their skills while exploring the real world of medicine through job shadowing at Eisenhower Health and attending various field trips to medical facilities such as Loma Linda Embryonic Lab and Hillcrest Hospital.

Senior year in MHA culminates with a yearlong internship at a local medical facility and the opportunity to take a national certification test for medical assisting, phlebotomy or EKG technician. Students prepare a senior portfolio with the help of the counseling department and map out their educational path towards a career of their dreams.

With assistance from the community and the dedication of their teachers, MHA students graduate excited and prepared for their future in the medical field.

For information on valley health academies, visit www.OneFutureCV.org or Kim McNulty at Kim@onefuturecv.org, (760) 413.5990. Additional student experiences can be found at www.deserthealthnews.com (category: health academies)



A LQHS Medical Health Academy student practices suturing.

It's Not Always Alzheimer's

What is NPH and how is it different?

Provided by Loma Linda University Health

Receiving news that you or a loved one has been diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease (AD) can be devastating. Some forms of dementia, like normal pressure hydrocephalus (NPH), can mimic AD, causing the patient to be misdiagnosed and live without proper treatment. While AD does not yet have a cure, NPH does, thus understanding the differences between the two can save a life and get a loved one the treatment they need.

Ventricles in the brain contain fluid called cerebrospinal fluid. The fluid cushions the brain and spinal cord, but a build-up can cause NPH. The cause of the fluid build-up is not always known but can result from injury, infection or a brain tumor.

The Hydrocephalus Association estimates that 700,000 adults have NPH, but some are misdiagnosed with AD or Parkinson's disease. Similar symptoms may cause many of these misdiagnoses, but the differences lie in the presentation timeline outlined by Loma University Health's Chair of Neurosurgery Warren Boling, MD.

Three symptoms are shared between the two diseases: incontinence, difficulty walking and cognitive decline.

Timeline of NPH:

- First... Incontinence and magnetic gait
- Then... Cognitive decline

Timeline of AD:

- First... Cognitive decline
- Then... Incontinence and unsteady gait

Both AD and NPH patients will have some difficulty walking. Physicians will describe it as either an unsteady or magnetic gait. Imbalance, abnormal and uncoordinated movements characterize an unsteady gait. Typically, the individual can stand, is very unsteady and takes small irregular steps. A magnetic gait is an abnormality marked by an inability to lift the feet off the floor. This results in decreased mobility and an increase in falls. Individuals with NPH exclusively experience a magnetic gait.

Luckily, one surgery can treat NPH. Surgeons insert a shunt into the ventricle of the brain to drain the excess fluid. It is passed under the skin from the head, through the neck and chest and into the abdomen. A magnet on top of the scalp allows trained personnel to adjust drainage pressure as needed to ensure the longevity of the procedure. Studies show treatment by shunt surgery is effective with substantial clinical improvement in up to 80% of patients.

"Not only does this surgery give patients more time to live, but more importantly, provides a dramatic increase in their quality of life," Boling says. "There's nothing more gratifying than seeing families who thought the diagnosis was Alzheimer's then discover there is a cure."

Loma Linda University Health - Neurosurgery Clinic is now open in Rancho Mirage. For more information or to make an appointment, call (760) 346.8058 or visit www.lluh.org/neurosurgery.



DAP Health Expands to East Valley

By Lauren Del Sarto

In its continued mission to make services more accessible, DAP Health is opening a new sexual wellness clinic in Indio offering free confidential testing and treatment to east valley communities.

DAP Health (formerly Desert AIDS Project) is a leading provider of medical and mental health services in the Coachella Valley. Their primary health center in Palm Springs serves over 10,000 and offers a variety of integrative services from primary care and dentistry to yoga and meditation. Their HIV care is provided by the largest team of specialized clinicians in the area.

The new Indio clinic will offer testing for HIV, hepatitis C and sexually transmitted infections. They will also provide pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) and post-exposure prophylaxis (PEP) for HIV clients. Case management and referrals to additional resources will be available as well.

“We started planning to address unmet needs in our community and to respond to where we’re finding new HIV cases,” said CJ Tobe, director of community health and sexual wellness services. “[We] identified that there’s an unmet need for sexual wellness services, specifically surrounding Indio.” Hispanics with lower income and under the age of 39 are most at risk. Tobe adds that in 2019, 25% of all HIV-positive test results at DAP Health were in Hispanic men with many driving from the east valley to Palm Springs for services

Establishing trust and breaking barriers in addressing sexuality is one of their primary goals - and challenges. “There is a lot of stigma and shame attached to sexual wellness, specifically in the Latino community...,” said Tobe.

A welcoming environment has been created and clients will be able to see clinicians and receive treatment with all services under one roof. In the waiting room, a large mural designed by Indio artists Cece Cruz and Evelyn Sofia Rivera, together known as Mujeres Murals, creates familiarity. Their work is displayed in numerous locations throughout the city and Cruz says her hope is that people will see the mural as warm, peaceful and calming.

“We welcome all people, period,” said Tobe. “We are adjusting the system to meet the needs of the community by not asking for insurance while providing free services that don’t take weeks to be seen by a clinician. We will test you, treat you, and connect you to any other medical or social support needs you may have. All of these services... are free from cost and free from judgment and shame.”

To celebrate the opening of the new clinic, DAP Health will host a ribbon cutting ceremony on Saturday, July 16, at 10 a.m. All are welcome to attend and tours of the facility will be offered. The festivities will continue at 11 a.m. with a free taco cart lunch, family-friendly giveaways, and a storewide sale at the new Indio Revivals. Sales from valley-wide Revival stores support all DAP Health programs.

The DAP Sexual Wellness Clinic Indio is located at 81-719 Doctor Carreon Blvd. Suite D and will be open Monday through Friday 8 a.m. - 5 p.m. Revivals Indio is located at 82-150 Highway 111. For more information call (760) 323.2118 or visit www.daphealth.org.



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Abundance, Flow and Letting Go

Has it been challenging for you to maintain a positive outlook this summer? I've been struggling. It seems like the outlook nationally is ominous; it's hot and not as thrilling to be outside and I've allowed the economy to add to feeling constricted and scarce.

These are not the feelings I like to have. They are not my home territory. I'm much happier being generous, optimistic and joyful. What's the problem? Why have these days seemed harder?

I've wondered what makes the difference in my outlook and realized that I just need some time to feel what I'm feeling.

We have been in the process of "downsizing" and adjusting to moving to a home that is more appropriate for my husband and I, now that our children have launched. This means I have needed to "let go" of sentimental possessions and the home where we raised our children. And although I'm 100% aligned with this move as the right thing to do, it is hard. I'm realizing that I'm grieving the end of an era and the changes from what was our home base to the unknown. Although this grief may be much less momentous than other people's challenges, it is my reality.

So, I'm allowing myself to feel all the feelings, and at the same time, cultivate joy. Change is inevitable. And in fact, if we cling to the past or anything that feels like our security blanket, it means our hands and hearts are not open to receiving anything new.

I've decided to live with "open hands" and to be open to flow in my life. I'm choosing to stay open to letting go of the tangible possessions that I have loved in the last chapter of my life. I'm staying open to flow and making room for what's next.

I also am choosing to focus on abundance and gratitude. No matter what the direction of my life, I am saying thank you and reminding myself daily that there is more than enough of everything I need. As this quote reminds me, there is "limitless good" everywhere. I choose to be a part of that!

"You're surrounded by a field of abundance and prosperity. Limitless good is everywhere. Contemplate this so that your perception changes, and, guess what, when your perception changes, your experience changes. When your context for life changes, your perception and experience change. What is your context? Your context is that you are living and moving and having your beingness in a field of limitless good." - Michael B. Beckwith

Dr. Brossfield is the founding physician of XO Health and medical director of Brain Performance Center, both in Rancho Mirage. She can be reached at (760) 573.2761 or www.BrainCareRanchoMirage.com and on Facebook @XOHealth.

Beyond Allopathic Care

Continued from page 1

still ineligible.

It appears medicine still has a long way to go on this topic and are no doubt receiving push back from pharmaceutical companies as healthier people means less pills. Doctor-led organizations like the Institute of Functional Medicine and Plantrician Project are inspiring us to keep moving in the right direction.

In the meantime, more and more physicians are collaborating with licensed naturopathic doctors (NDs) and many prominent health systems, hospitals and cancer treatment centers now have NDs on staff.^{1,2} The demand is growing, and the number of practitioners in the U.S. is now over 6,000 with admission to accredited naturopathic colleges becoming increasingly competitive.³

Why don't more people consult their services? Not knowing what to expect and insurance coverage may be barriers, but as more people understand their value, both factors will continue to change. Many who do seek their services - alone or as an adjunct to allopathic medicine - gain a deeper understanding of what is good, and what is not good, for their individual body. The guidance and tools they provide help us adopt healthier habits that allow for greater self-healing and overall well-being.



Naturopathic doctors provide nutritional IVs to replenish deficiencies and boost immunity.

While insurance companies don't currently cover all ND services, labs are standardly covered by PPO plans and the cash price for additional tests can be as low as \$6 each. Some will also partially reimburse for office visits when detailed "super" bills are submitted by patients. More and more plans are covering acupuncture, chiropractic and medical massage, so it's worth speaking with your insurance provider.



The ancient practice of cupping helps to remove toxins and promote healing.

Some of the tools naturopathic doctors use for identifying root causes include standard physical exams, a deeper review of primary blood work along with extended testing, hormone panels, food allergy and nutritional testing and circulating tumor cell tests for cancer. Therapies may include, but are not limited to, nutritional IVs, diet and nutrient recommendations and joint injection therapy. Acupuncturists and chiropractors often incorporate cupping, electroacupuncture, herbs, far infrared and laser therapy, to name a few.

In the past 15 years of working with natural health practitioners, I've learned more about myself than in the other 42 years combined. In conjunction with allopathic medicine, they have helped me manage Epstein-Barr symptoms, overcome candida and cancer and to thrive when I practice what I've learned. They have also provided the knowledge and tools to help me age healthfully.

I encourage you to explore "whole person care" with one of the many functional medicine or natural health providers our valley has to offer. We invite you to join us this fall as *Desert Health* presents an overview of practices through CSUSB's OLLI program which is open to all (see page 15 for more information).

Lauren Del Sarto is founder and publisher of *Desert Health* and can be reached at Lauren@DesertHealthNews.com. More information and resources can be found in our *Natural Options* and *Integrative Medicine* sections.

References: 1) <https://naturemed.org/faq/faq-why-are-a-growing-number-of-medical-doctors-collaborating-with-naturopathic-doctors>; 2) <https://blog.nuhs.edu/the-future-of-integrative-health/why-we-need-more-naturopathic-medicine-doctors-in-america>; 3) <https://www.uc.edu/preproadvising/pre-health/pre-naturopathic.html>



Not One to Floss?

Water flossers offer an effective alternative

By Nick Baumann, DDS

A good home care routine is one of the most important steps in dental hygiene. There are now many tools on the market that make it easier and more efficient to do our daily cleaning.

Today, I'd like to focus on water flossers, one of the best tools to help improve oral care at home. Most Americans don't floss daily for one reason or another. I often hear clients complain that it is too difficult and time consuming. If you are one of those people, water flossing can be a great alternative. It's easier to do, especially for those with limited dexterity, and is quick and refreshing.

The pulsing action of water flossers can do a beneficial job removing debris from underneath the gums. Furthermore, the water oxygenates the pocket around the tooth, killing many bacteria. While water flossing is not a perfect replacement for manual flossing, I often find people are more willing to do it, so the benefits are substantial.



The variety of water flossers today provide a healthy option to traditional flossing.

There are many exceptional water flossers on the market. Waterpik, Hydrofloss and Sonicare are good, reliable brands. The Sonic Fusion from Waterpik is unique in that it combines a water flosser and an electric toothbrush into one. Some other flossers are cordless, making them more versatile, so they may be easily used, for example, in the shower.

They generally come with multiple tips customized for different indications. There are standard tips and others specialized for implants or bridges, which easily get into the hard-to-reach places most people have trouble reaching with floss. Having multiple, easy-to-switch tips also makes it convenient to share one water flosser between multiple people while still maintaining hygiene.

Water flossers have become increasingly popular due to how much more likely people are to use them compared to floss. If you don't floss often, consider integrating a water flosser into your home routine, particularly if you have a lot of dental work, implants or bridges.

Because of the variety available, everyone should be able to find one that fits their budget and routine. If you do, the next time you go to the dentist, don't be surprised if your hygienist is impressed with the health of your gums.

Dr. Baumann is with Palm Desert Smiles, a family-owned dental group in Palm Desert, and can be reached at (760) 568.3602 or www.palmdesertsmiles.com.



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Eisenhower Residency Program Turns 10

Program exceeds goals and supports community

By Lauren Del Sarto

It has been 10 years since the first class of 22 newly graduated doctors entered Eisenhower Health to begin their residency in internal and family medicine. Today, 222 have successfully graduated from the four-year program with an additional 110 currently enrolled.

The program has grown significantly and now includes emergency medicine, pharmacy, advanced nursing, fellowships and even clerkships for active medical school students. Fellowships are offered in pulmonary disease, infectious disease and sports, addiction and geriatric medicine.

But has the program met the ambitious goals that inspired the teaching hospital's certification a decade ago? According to Chief Medical Officer and Designated Institutional Official Alan Williamson, MD, the answer is "a resounding yes on all fronts."

Aiding the valley's primary care physician shortage

When *Desert Health* first reported on the program in 2013, the ratio of primary care physicians (PCP) to local residents in the Coachella Valley was an astounding 1,476 to 1 versus the national average of 631 to 1, according to County Health Rankings. At the time, Eisenhower identified a deficit of 102 PCPs based on an independent Reuter's survey. As the national shortage continues to grow, that statistic is now closer to 1,683 to 1 and their target number of PCPs is 200.

Being recognized as a teaching hospital significantly helps in recruiting those doctors. "We tried to recruit PCPs to the valley, but were challenged by the large number of Medicare patients in our community which means lower income for doctors than other communities around the country," says Dr. Williamson. "Studies show that residents tend to gravitate to the areas where they train, so we made the decision to train our own."

Out of 222 graduates in internal, family and emergency medicine, 25% (55) have stayed at Eisenhower while more have taken positions at other facilities in the valley. He adds that there is also an increasing number who finish the program and go onto specialty training and fellowships at other institutions before returning to the Coachella Valley. "I am very happy and proud to be in that 25 to 30% retention range which is higher than the national average."

Attracting high caliber doctors

Offering a residency program not only expands the pool of recruits for teaching hospitals, says Williamson, it also enables them to attract a different type of doctor who values the opportunity to educate others as part of their work environment. "I am very confident that many of our more recently recruited physicians would not have come here had we not had a teaching program."

Residents and hospitals find each other through the National Residency Match Program (NRMP) which invites both hospitals and residents to rank their choices for confidential submission. Sophisticated algorithms then create the best matches. There are two rounds of this process (similar to a sports draft), before hospitals are able to reach out to "free agents" to fill positions still available.

Newer programs often struggle to fill spots through the NRMP's first match round; however, Eisenhower has done so since their very first class in 2013.

"Every year, we have been able to fill our available positions with the top 10 to 15% on our rank list," says Williamson. "We are picking people that we think are the best of the best and only have to go 15% down our list to fill available positions." That speaks loudly to the hospital's reputation and the lure of Greater Palm Springs for resident doctors.

Eisenhower now has an established track record of program graduates and where they end up as well. Fellowship programs are very competitive with the vast majority only offering one to five positions each year.

"We have a number of residents who have gone into very prestigious fellowship programs at Stanford, Harvard, UC San Francisco and others, often in competitive areas like cardiology, pulmonary critical care and infectious disease," he adds.

Raising the bar for all medical staff

"Working with smart, inquisitive and eager young minds raises the bar for everyone as they ask a lot of questions and demand a lot of answers," says Williamson. "In today's world, 'because we told you so' doesn't go very far. They want to see the evidence-based science behind all our decisions and methods and definitely hold us all accountable for practicing very high-caliber, evidence-based medicine. The enrichment is reflected in the caliber of care we are providing our patients."

Supporting the underserved

When the program launched, resident rotations included work with Coachella Valley Volunteers in Medicine, a free medicine clinic in Indio for the underserved which is 100% staffed by volunteer doctors and nurses. This area of education has now expanded to include Borrego Health in Coachella and Clinicas de Salud del Pueblo in Mecca, both Federally Qualified Health Centers.

"It is important to continue providing our residents experience in the unique challenges of taking care of the underserved patient population," says Williamson. "It's one thing to learn the building blocks of how we practice medicine, but in reality, there is a lot more to understanding how health care systems work and where they don't work. There are a lot of layers of complexity in dealing with different populations, and it is very important that doctors understand that."

Williamson, who retired from clinical practice earlier this year, adds that 30% of his time was spent working on socioeconomic issues rather than medical issues. "It is the reality of medicine today and very important that we keep that piece of their education in place; not only to do our part in serving our community and to help provide health care where it is needed, but also to give a really important piece of education to our residents."

For more information on Eisenhower Health's residency programs, visit www.gme.eisenhowerhealth.org. Lauren Del Sarto is founder/publisher of *Desert Health* and can be reached at Lauren@DesertHealthNews.com.



Eisenhower Health's most recent class of graduates in its emergency, family and internal medicine residency programs



Fellowships are now offered in sports medicine, pulmonary disease, infectious disease, geriatric medicine and addiction medicine.



Hospice 101: Navigating Through a Life-Limiting Illness

Compliments of Serenity Hospice

Talking about end-of-life care can be difficult and sometimes overwhelming, especially when someone has been recently diagnosed with a terminal illness. From the start of a diagnosis, there is so much information, from doctors to personal family opinions; it's a lot to process. Knowing the facts and understanding the basics of hospice can help you and your loved ones find the right plan of care as you navigate through a life-limiting illness.



Understanding hospice adds a bit of comfort should the need arise.

What is hospice? Hospice is a special concept of care designed to support patients and their families when faced with a terminal illness. When cure-oriented treatments are no longer an option, hospice may be another mode of therapy. Hospice promotes improving the quality of a patient's life by offering comfort and dignity. Hospice professionals can do many things to control pain, reduce anxiety, offer emotional and spiritual support and improve overall quality of life.

Who qualifies for hospice? When a patient is suffering from a disease that is terminal, having six months or less left to live, he or she is eligible to receive hospice care. Both a doctor and a hospice provider conduct an assessment and determine who qualifies for hospice care.

What services are provided? Each hospice patient has an interdisciplinary team which include physicians, registered nurses, social workers, spiritual and bereavement counselors, licensed therapists, dietary counselors, volunteers, hospice aides and homemaker services. Some hospice services include physician visits, nursing care, medical equipment/supplies and medications related to the patient's illness. Hospice offers 24/7 comfort care and support to the patient and their families.

Where is hospice provided? People who choose hospice do not "go into" hospice, but receive services where they live. This includes residences, assisted living facilities or nursing and retirement homes. The intention of hospice is to provide services to the patient wherever they call home.

Who pays for Hospice? Hospice is usually less expensive than conventional care during the last six months of life. Medicare and Medi-Cal offer 100% coverage, and there are no out-of-pocket expenses to patients and/or their families for services related to their hospice terminal diagnosis. Some private insurance eligibility might differ.

This information can help you make an informed decision as to whether you or a loved one should start the process of entering hospice care.

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Choosing a Medical Rehab Facility

Knowledge and preparation are key

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

After an injury, medical procedure or extended hospital stay, an important step in the recovery process may be a period of rehabilitation. Choosing the right rehab facility can be daunting, especially if this is your first time needing services or you are new to the community. Following are some important tips to help choose a rehab that is right for you or a loved one:

Preplan, if possible. If a knee or hip replacement is in your future, talk with your surgeon about the need for a rehab facility. Choose two top facilities in your area based on their quality scores and your insurance coverage, and verify this information before surgery. Know that acceptance to your selected facility is based upon bed availability which can be challenging in the Coachella Valley.

Tip: Quality scores can be found at (www.Medicare.gov/care-compare), which provides, for example, the percentage of residents acquiring new pressure ulcers (bedsores), staffing, and their most recent health inspection report.

Take an unannounced tour. Show up and request a tour of the rehab portion of the facility to aid in your decision-making.

Verify programs for your specific needs. Confirm the physician at the facility can prescribe the specific therapy you require. For example, if you had an amputation, stroke, or need cardiac rehab, you will require specialized treatment. Ask how often therapy will be provided and verify with your surgeon if this is adequate.

Tip: Your surgeon or primary care doctor may not prescribe medications or therapy when you are in rehab, as the facility's doctor is typically in charge during that time. So, make sure they have the proper staff, equipment and abilities to provide what you need.

Verify that advocate participation is encouraged. Your rehab requires a team of participants to aid in your successful recovery; this includes family, caregivers or your own choice for an advocate. Find out how your advocate is allowed to participate: can they attend therapy sessions to encourage and support you? Can they participate in team meetings with staff to discuss your progress?

Tip: Identify your advocate in advance and verify it is recorded in your rehab medical record. This will allow your advocate to access the progress of your care and plan for your discharge home.

Have your selected rehab information on hand when a hospital case manager or social worker approaches you after surgery, as they coordinate your transfer.

There is no place like home for recovery, but when rehab is necessary, choose wisely for a positive outcome in your healing journey.

Dr. Porter is a doctorate-prepared nurse of 30 years and health care advocate dedicated to unraveling the mysteries of medical processes aiding patients, families and caregivers. She is CEO and founder of MyHealth.MyAdvocate in Palm Desert and can be reached at (760) 851.4116 or www.myhealthmyadvocate.com.

Top Honors for LifeStream

Blood donor support crucial at this time

By Lauren Del Sarto

California Nonprofits Day celebrated its seventh anniversary on June 8, honoring 109 outstanding organizations selected by legislators from across California for their commendable contributions to their communities.

In the Inland Empire's District 47, LifeStream Blood Bank was named 2022 California Nonprofit of the Year by Assembly Majority Leader Eloise Reyes.

"We are honored to be among the wonderful nonprofits across California working to better our communities," said Rick Axelrod, MD, LifeStream president, CEO and medical director. "It is through the support of legislators like Assemblymember Reyes, who care about the health of their community, that enables nonprofits like LifeStream to bring hope and lifesaving services to people in need."

According to the California Association of Nonprofits (CalNonprofits), which serves as a partner for this program, the awards were created to bring attention and recognition to outstanding nonprofits, to collectively illustrate the remarkable diversity and vibrancy of California's nonprofit community, and to give legislators a way to highlight nonprofits that are often overlooked.

"Nonprofit organizations play such a critical role in our communities, and the last two years of the pandemic have only served to highlight that," noted CalNonprofits CEO Jan Masaoka. "California Nonprofit of the Year gives elected officials the opportunity to shine a light on the important work nonprofits are doing in their districts and for everyone to appreciate the collective impact of [these organizations] in our communities."

LifeStream Blood Bank has been serving our communities since 1951 and now provides blood products and services to more than 80 Southern California hospitals in six counties. To fulfill patient needs, they must collect 500 blood donations daily. To make this mission a reality, LifeStream has fixed-site donor centers in San Bernardino, Riverside, Ontario, Victorville, Murrieta, La Quinta, Rancho Mirage, Placentia and Hemet, where volunteer blood donors can give the gift of life. LifeStream also conducts about 1,700 mobile blood drives annually at schools, churches, businesses, government offices, country clubs, hospitals and service clubs.

LifeStream is currently facing declining collections and those who can donate are encouraged to do so. To fulfill patient need, they must collect at least 500 blood donations daily. "The summer months are some of the most difficult for blood collection, and we are battling a growing deficit," said Dr. Axelrod. "If collections continue to decline, it will impact our ability to fulfill our shipments to area hospitals. We are asking healthy individuals to please donate and help our fellow community members who are in desperate need."

LifeStream donation centers are located in La Quinta at 46660 Washington Street (760) 777.8844 and in Rancho Mirage at the 42390 Bob Hope Drive, Suite 1B (760) 797.8496. For information and to schedule an appointment, visit www.lstream.org.



LifeStream Director of Community Development Dan Ballister, Assemblymember Eloise Gomez Reyes and LifeStream President/CEO and Medical Director Rick Axelrod, MD

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Living Wellness

with Jennifer Di Francesco



Finding the Right Fitness Environment

The fitness industry has experienced a strong rebound this year, as many people returned to gyms and studios making organized exercise a priority. Fitness is a community and a home away from home for many who realized how much they missed the social dynamic of going to shared spaces to workout.

Industry professionals certainly learned to pivot during quarantine, and many continue integrating new alternatives for keeping clients in shape. Some now offer online memberships, and many have set up private facilities in garages and homes. These new wellness options have allowed both trainer and client to create a more customized and personal experience while continuing to afford safety through sanitation and lessening of exposure.

This year, I began working with one such trainer and, for me, it was a personal lesson in reframing life and stepping into empowerment.

Kristi Lynn Lake started a gym in her home garage in 2018, prior to COVID, not knowing it would be a trend forced upon many in the coming years. As a trainer, Kristi always appreciated intimate and well-organized spaces; as a psychology major, she also realized the optimal potential private settings can provide. A client's personal choice in

music, for instance, and setting circuits that flow and move without interruptions from others are noteworthy benefits. Before her time, Kristi created an effective model for enhanced convenience and personalized motivation that was a new experience for me.

I was referred to Kristi when looking for a different training approach for greater motivation. Even though I am in the fitness industry, the effort to stay in shape is an active task (you've heard the adage that the shoe cobbler always wears the worst shoes). Upon meeting Kristi, I noticed she was re-racking my weights with a prosthetic left arm requiring me to check any preconceived impressions at the door. She was born with this anomaly which she considers a motivating factor, reminding her and inspiring others, that not all things in life come easy. Work and determination to succeed are what really matter.

The past couple of years have required resiliency for us all as we've had to accommodate in more ways than we could ever imagine. Finding a safe and motivating space to lift weights and learning to embrace movement as a tool for perseverance, were empowering steps for me. Having a cheerleader that embodies positivity also provided the increased motivation I was seeking.

A pivotal approach for daily health involves creating or finding a space for wellness practices and movement that cannot be minimized by life disturbances. Whether your comfort zone is returning to the gym or studio, accessing online classes or exploring the many new options available, we all need to continue shaping the environment around us to support the health we need. Retooling wellness and adding new approaches with intentionality are key. Finding those who inspire and letting them play a significant role in our lives also raises the bar.

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



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Treating Tingling and Numbness

By Agustin Orozco, LAc, LMT

A close family friend has been suffering from a progressive condition that effects more than 22 million Americans each year.¹ It started with a tingling sensation in his toes that was relieved by simply shaking his feet for a minute or so. Over time, the tingling grew more constant becoming an unwanted companion throughout the day and night. The numbing sensation began crawling from his toes into his feet; he also developed secondary symptoms such as burning, leg irritation and muscle weakness. His condition is called peripheral neuropathy.



Acupuncture can aid peripheral neuropathy when coupled with a healthy lifestyle.

Peripheral neuropathy is a complicated disease caused by nerve degeneration in the sensory, motor and/or autonomic peripheral nervous system. It can produce a wide range of symptoms which can vary from person to person. Sensory symptoms may include numbness on the extremities, burning pain, insensitivity to temperature changes and hypersensitivity to touch. Motor complaints include limb weakness, muscle loss and muscle cramps. Autonomic complaints may include excess sweating, heat intolerance and gastrointestinal issues.²

Diabetes is the leading cause of neuropathy in our country effecting 60 to 70% of those with the condition. Other causes include injury and trauma, autoimmune disease, infection, kidney and liver disorders, excessive alcohol consumption, vitamin deficiencies, some medications and some inherited conditions.³

Treatments vary depending on cause with lifestyle alterations, such as maintaining a healthy diet and stable blood sugars, playing a coveted role. Exercise, massage, supplementing with alpha-lipoic acid, meditation, yoga and acupuncture can also help relieve symptoms.³ If patients are experiencing high pain levels, antidepressants or anti-epilepsy drugs may be used to help quiet nerve pain conduction to the brain.

As an acupuncturist, I am seeing more and more patients presenting with peripheral neuropathy. One patient diagnosed by his doctor came to my office as his condition seemed to be progressing, and medical therapies had not helped. He agreed to weekly treatments of electric acupuncture and within six weeks, felt the prick in his nerve conduction test for the first time in years. His numbness improved as did his ability to walk up inclines allowing him to once again enjoy walks with his family. Unfortunately, not every patient has the same success story. A diabetic peripheral neuropathy patient had difficulty controlling his blood sugar levels, and ultimately, only got momentarily relief with acupuncture.

Peripheral neuropathy is a complicated condition with no single solution. Identifying the root cause with your health care practitioner is the best place to start. In numerous studies, acupuncture has demonstrated beneficial results in nerve and motor conduction⁴ and may be considered as a complementing therapy to diet, lifestyle and medical intervention as necessary.

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

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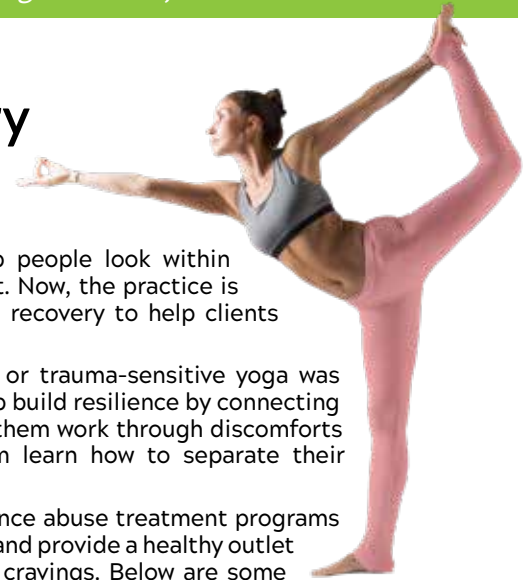
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Yoga for Recovery

By Darby Foster, MSW,
CADC-III, CFRC



Yoga has long been used to help people look within and strengthen mind, body and spirit. Now, the practice is increasingly being used in addiction recovery to help clients reconnect with themselves.

In fact, in 2002, trauma-informed or trauma-sensitive yoga was introduced within the industry to help build resilience by connecting students to inner resources, to help them work through discomforts commonly shared and to help them learn how to separate their feelings from their actions.

The practice is also used in substance abuse treatment programs to help reduce withdrawal symptoms and provide a healthy outlet to cope with life and potential drug cravings. Below are some ways yoga can help in early and later stages of recovery:

Relieves mind-body trauma. Yoga encourages mental and physical relaxation. This helps calm and focus the mind while loosening tense muscles in the body. Traditional yoga can help restore the mind-body balance while trauma-informed yoga helps relieve trauma from the mind and release it from the body.

Calms nervous system. Practicing yoga helps regulate the nervous system. The action of flowing in and out of asanas (poses) with breath control activates the parasympathetic nervous system and has been shown to reduce blood pressure and heart rate. The practices learned in yoga, such as breath work, relaxation and thoughtful movement, can become effective resources called upon when urges, cravings or anxiety arise.

Reduces physical and mental stress. Imbalance creates internal stress on our physical body. A common occurrence with drug or alcohol abuse is metabolic acidosis where too much acid builds up in the body due to a disruption in metabolism. In addition to the already impacted liver, this can cause strain on the kidneys and lungs as they work to rid the excess and return the body back to a state of homeostasis.

While most elements of yoga including focus, breath, mindfulness and maintaining poses help calm the mind, specific positions are also designed to help cleanse internal organs aiding in detoxification. Cleansing internal organs helps the body move out of fight or flight, reducing stress and increasing overall well-being.

Improves sleep patterns. In addition to reducing stress, being mindful during yoga by controlling the breath can increase melatonin levels. Controlled breathing creates awareness and regulation, which in turn helps relaxation in the body. These acts will in time improve sleep patterns and restore overall health and wellness.

Practicing yoga can also help reduce anxiety, depression and chronic pain. It is highly recommended that those in recovery practice mindful activities in early and later stages of sobriety. Getting into a pattern of regular practice can be challenging in the beginning, but the rewards for overall mind, body and soul restoration are endless.

Darby Foster is a certified alcohol and drug counselor (CADC- III), a certified first responder counselor (CFRC) and personally understands the recovery journey. She is executive director of Palo Verde Wellness Center in Palm Springs and can be reached at dfoster@paloverdewellness.com. For more information, visit www.paloverdewellness.com.

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Are You Ready to Receive?

By Tracy J. Smith

How comfortable are you with receiving compliments, recognition, gifts, abundance, love? Do you sometimes feel that rejection is more comfortable than being accepted? Marianne Williams states, "Our deepest fear is that we are powerful beyond measure. It is our light, not our darkness, that most frightens us."

For many, the act of receiving is difficult, uncomfortable and unfamiliar. This fear can block one's receptiveness and create negative feelings about being loved, expressing your ideas and feelings or accepting life's many gifts in any form. These negative feelings can emanate from you out into the universe as "negative energy."

We are all energy living in a vast energy field, and there is a positive energy frequency to receiving that is necessary for human evolution. As Michael Singer, author of *The Untethered Soul* puts it, "Energy doesn't get old, it doesn't get tired, and it doesn't need food. What it needs is openness and receptivity."

Here are a few reasons we may have blocked receptivity (and thus, blocked energy):

- A core belief that we are unworthy can be self-limiting. We learn what we live; if we were continually blamed, shamed and criticized while growing up, we begin to believe it is true. Living with these beliefs can make receiving and acceptance more frightening as it is unfamiliar.
- Stuffed emotions such as shame, guilt, anxiety or low self-esteem can create inner restriction and limit our receiving capacity.
- False beliefs about ourselves (we are not funny, intelligent, strong enough, etc.) can make us feel that we are not worthy of receiving from others who we may view as better than us.
- Past hurts and rejections can close down our receptivity. Opening our heart only to have it rejected creates reservation to ever do it again. We feel the past is a precedent for future pain, and the safer choice is to create avoidance or ambivalence.

Receiving positive energy in any form requires an open heart. "You have a wellspring of beautiful energy inside you," Singer reminds us. "When you are open, you feel it; when you are a closed, you don't." Let's first begin by opening our hearts to loving ourselves:

- Set the intention of being open and receptive to an abundance of blessings.
- Give yourself permission to receive.
- Commit to being kinder and gentler to yourself.
- Practice affirmations of self-love: I feel abundance. I feel blessed. I feel in the right place at the right time. I feel worthy. I feel success. I feel at ease. I feel ready. I feel the joy of receiving.

Changing behaviors starts with changing the energy of our thinking. Positive thoughts change our reality along with the energy we exude. Commit to opening your receptiveness and feel good about receiving. You deserve all the accolades and affection you can receive. Open your arms wide, welcoming in love and abundance. Greet it with gratitude and see how much more comes your way.

Tracy Smith is a certified energy life coach, rapid transformation hypnotherapist and energy and sound therapist with Blissful Release Now. She can be reached at (760) 409.9289 or tracy.blissfulrelease@gmail.com. For more information visit www.blissfulreleasenow.com.



Less Pain for Cancer Patients Study shows promising results with cannabis

Provided by Bulldog Cannabis

A study published this year in *Frontiers in Pain Research* demonstrated that cancer patients who use medical marijuana may experience less pain, reduced symptoms and a better quality of life. Study participants were also able to rely less on opioid painkillers with minimal side effects, according to the study's Israeli researchers hailing from both medical and educational institutions.¹

In all, about 60% of participants reported improvement in pain and related symptoms with the use of medical marijuana; after six months, nearly half stopped all other pain medications. Additional symptoms considered included common cancer comorbidities such as anxiety, depression, insomnia, decreased quality of life, increased disability and negative effects on sexuality.

"Traditionally, cancer-related pain is mainly treated by opioid analgesics, but most oncologists perceive opioid treatment as hazardous, so alternative therapies are required," said David Meiri, assistant professor at the Technion-Israel Institute of Technology, in a written statement. "Our study is the first to assess the possible benefits of medical cannabis for cancer-related pain [by] gathering information from the start of treatment, and with repeated follow-ups for an extended period of time to get a thorough analysis of its effectiveness."

These findings advance existing studies which continue to demonstrate the benefits of medical marijuana. Along with pain, marijuana has long been accepted to help with nausea and vomiting caused by cancer treatments. In fact, an article from the American Cancer Society states that, "A number of small studies of smoked marijuana found

that it can be helpful in treating nausea and vomiting from cancer chemotherapy," and that, "studies have long shown that people who took marijuana extracts in clinical trials tended to need less pain medicine."²

Interest in the use of cannabis for pain is widespread, as further evidenced by a report put forth by the National Academies Committee on the health effects of marijuana: "The committee found evidence to support that [adult] patients who were treated with cannabis or cannabinoids were more likely to experience a significant reduction in pain symptoms."³ It has been suggested that the cannabinoids in cannabis may reduce pain by altering pain perception pathways in the brain.

Those looking to integrate cannabis into a cancer treatment plan should consult with their physician to understand any possible medication interactions. As medical and recreational marijuana are now legal in California, many practitioners have these resources readily available. Consumers are not required to have a medical card to purchase cannabis products, and those who don't wish to smoke now have numerous options including edibles such as gummies and chocolates, capsules, tablets, powder, transdermal patches, tinctures and topicals like balms, gels, salves and lotions.

It is also important to recognize the difference between CBD and cannabis (marijuana). Simply put, CBD can be derived from marijuana or from hemp, but it must have less than .3% of THC, the substance that causes the "high" in cannabis. Cannabis products will have a ratio of THC to CBD which is best understood by consulting with a dispensary's qualified cannabis professionals.

Bulldog Cannabis is a cultivation facility and dispensary with a focus on product quality and consumer education. They are located at 72242 Watt Court in Thousand Palms and can be reached at (760) 481.3236. For more information, visit www.bulldogcannabis.com.

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There's a Song in Your Heart

By Ronald C. Rawson

Songwriting can be one of our better "stay young" pills because it stimulates wellness, mindfulness, and neuroplasticity through more vibrant mental acuity. The act is simply the ability to hear and create music, to append lyrics, and record, recite or joyfully play them in a pleasing manner for friendly audiences appreciative of our creative effort.

Songs are one of humanity's oldest forms of self-expression. Scientists have located a "music center" in our brain which makes us react to music in much the same way we react to other pleasure-inducing stimuli. Songs make us feel through rhythm and melody, but they stay with us thanks to the familiar patterns that comprise song structure.^{1,2}

Songwriting can stimulate beneficial practices:

Wellness, the act of practicing healthy habits on a daily basis to attain better physical and mental health outcomes; to thrive not just survive.³

Mindfulness, the basic human ability to be fully present, aware of where we are and what we're doing, and not be overly reactive or overwhelmed by what's going on around us.⁴

Neuroplasticity (brain plasticity), a process that involves adaptive structural and functional changes to the brain. It is the ability of the nervous system to change its activity in response to intrinsic or extrinsic stimuli by reorganizing its structure, functions, or connections.⁵

Think you can't do it? You can. There is no one method and finding your own method is the fun part. Just do it. Here are some tips to get started:

Find a comfortable moment, focus on being quiet and using non-critical listening, speaking, writing, humming, strumming of several repeating chords, or tapping to begin bringing lyrics and musical chords onto paper or onto a cell phone recording. Don't be judgmental



You're never too old to write your own music.

or too precise. Just capture it. Editing comes later.

You can also begin by listening to a simple, yet catchy, familiar song. Pick out the rhythms and melody, and then write or sing whatever comes to mind. You're telling a story; your own story, beginning, middle and end. Scribble or hum something simple with easy flowing lyrics, adding to the melody. Most pop songs are written for a fourth grade understanding and are simple and straightforward.

Can you identify the melodies for these classic lyrics? "Here comes the sun...Do do do do." "Baby Love, Ooh Ooh, Baby Love." "Met him on a Monday, my heart stood still, Da doo Ron Ron, Da doo Ron Ron." "I'm singing in the rain, just singin' in the rain. What a glorious feeling, I'm happy again." Easy right?

Consider these: What do I want the listener to feel when they hear my song? What experience do I want to give the listener? Think of your favorite songs and try to experience the feelings of these songs. Remember, a song can be solely instrumental as well, so whether you create a melody or lyrics, you're a songwriter.

Ronald Rawson of Rancho Mirage is a semi-retired executive who started writing songs later in life. He is now a successful songwriter and offers creative songwriting presentations. Ron can be reached at info@rcrawson.com.

References available upon request.



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The Potential Application of Mushrooms in Breast Cancer

By Sonja Fung, ND

For thousands of years, mushrooms have been used worldwide for their medicinal properties, especially in Asia. The earliest known reference for medicinal mushrooms was around 3,000 BCE. The largest known organism in the world is a honey mushroom mat in eastern Oregon which is 890 hectares (almost 2,500 acres!) and more than 2,000 years old. There are an estimated 150,000 mushroom species on earth, but thus far, only about 270 species have been reported to have medicinal properties.

Mushrooms have a multitude of medicinal actions including anti-inflammatory, anti-microbial, anti-diabetic, cardio and liver-protective, immune-modulatory and anti-cancer properties. Mushrooms have been studied for their anti-cancer effects in multiple types of cancer, with the majority of the studies on breast cancer. A 2021 systematic review of 17 observational studies found that higher mushroom consumption was associated with a lower risk of breast cancer. Most of the research so far are cell line studies, animal tumor models and a few clinical/human studies.



Turkey tail is commonly used in complementary cancer care as studies show it may slow tumor growth.

I am going to touch on three commonly studied mushrooms for breast cancer: turkey tail, reishi and maitake. Many of the studies use polysaccharide extracts such as β -Glucan, PSK, and D-Fraction. These extracts exhibit immunomodulatory effects as well as tumoricidal and antiproliferative activities in cancer patients through the stimulation of natural killer cells, neutrophils, monocytes, macrophages and T-cells. Basically, these constituents can help the body activate the immune system to recognize and remove the tumor, in a BALANCED manner.

Trametes versicolor or coriolus versicolor (turkey tail). PSK, an extract of turkey tail, slowed down tumor growth when used alone, and increased cancer cell death in combination with trastuzumab, a HER-2 targeted monoclonal antibody.

Ganoderma lucidum (reishi). β -Glucan isolated from reishi significantly improves survival post radiation in mice. Ganoderic acid A, another isolate, worked with cisplatin to increase breast cancer cell death. Reishi spore powder was found to significantly improve cancer related fatigue and quality of life in breast cancer survivors on endocrine (hormone blocking) therapy.

Grifolia frondosa (maitake). In mouse models, D-Fraction, a constituent of maitake, was able to slow tumor growth and reduce metastasis in triple negative breast cancer. In a 2009 Phase I/II clinic trial of post-menopausal breast cancer survivors, a β -glucan extract showed immune balancing effects, not just immune-stimulatory effects.



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Note that whole plants and fungi have hundreds of constituents working synergistically, so the exact mechanisms of action are not fully understood and are still being studied.

It is difficult to translate dosing from studies to human consumption as most of the studies don't use the whole mushroom. In the small number of human studies, specific mushroom extracts were used in large doses, anywhere from 1-6 grams daily, which could be cost prohibitive. High quality mushroom supplements from trusted brands and distributors can be expensive. As mushrooms have immune modulatory affects, they may have interactions with other supplements and drugs that we do not yet know about.

Even with the increased interest in mushrooms as potential treatments for cancer, there still needs to be more research in this growing field.

Safety and sourcing notes: mushrooms can sequester heavy metals, so know where and how your mushrooms are grown. This should also go without saying, do not pick and eat strange mushrooms; many mushrooms look the same, and some can be lethal. Do not start a new supplement or medication without consulting a knowledgeable, qualified doctor.

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

References available upon request.

Live Happy, Live Well





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Living Beyond Impulsive Thinking

By Dipika Patel, CHHC

There are many factors that contribute to our impulsive thoughts and reactions. It can be as simple as a single intrusive thought to which we give power. When this happens, some can easily overcome and let go, while others may find it impossible to do so.

For those who find it impossible, these thoughts can take over your daily life and routine, causing mayhem, chaos and destruction. For those who share these struggles, it's important to know that an imbalance within the brain is likely the cause; it is not necessarily from outside circumstances. This imbalance impacts cognitive ability and the way the body functions. The smallest of tasks can become mammoth and incomprehensible resulting in irrational behaviors and decisions based in the mind of our own beliefs, fears and limitations.

Wherever you are in life, whatever challenges or obstacles you may face, know it is okay if you are struggling to stay positive. I remind you that you are a work in progress and you are safe to let go of perfection.

The truth is, there is no such thing as perfection; it is just an idea within the mind. We get to live an imperfect life on this perfect planet that offers everything we need. Peace is our true state.

Maybe you are reminiscing about the past wishing you had your old life back, missing who you were amid who you have become, and questioning why you are here. You are not alone. If you recognize that you have been falling into some of your old unsupportive habits, and you are doing your best to shift them, don't give up. That is a great start and worth celebrating.

If your mind is stuck on that one painful path, know that you will overcome it. If you rush through life's gifted moments finding yourself later in regret, pause, take a breath and know you can overcome it. You, my friend, have something greater within and around you, always supporting you for your highest good. Most of all, if these thoughts and emotions leave you feeling lost, confused and alone, this too is a short-term experience, even though in that moment it might feel like a lifetime.

I have learned through my own personal and professional experiences that many of us focus on things we don't want versus what we do want. If you are ready to create a life that you want and this message resonates with you, I invite you to live in what you want. Live in integrity for yourself, not for others. If you find yourself spiraling, acknowledge what it is that you are not doing for yourself. Where are you not keeping to your own word? Where are you not setting boundaries? Who are you making more important than yourself? Where can you put action into things that will build realization that you are important, you are valued and you are here for a reason. The answers you seek are all within you.

Dipika is a crossroads specialist and holistic health and lifestyle coach who empowers her clients to activate a balanced lifestyle of mind, body and soul. She can be reached at health@LoveYourLifeHealthy.com or www.loveyourlifehealthy.com.



Impulsive thoughts can lead to mayhem, chaos and destruction.



Food as Medicine

Continued from page 1

"It was a natural choice, particularly when considering that it is easily accessible for travelers regionally and internationally." Their 2023 conference is scheduled to take place here as well.

The CME-accredited medical education conference takes place September 16-19 and is open to all, offering up to 23 continuing education credits for practitioners. Content focuses on "the current and progressive scientific research conveying the efficacy of using whole food, plant-based nutrition in a food-as-medicine first approach to preventing, suspending and even reversing chronic disease." Attendees will learn both science and practical application from foremost experts in nutritional medicine including Dean Ornish, MD; *The China Study's* T. Collin Campbell, PhD; Michael Greger, MD of Nutritionfacts.org; and the Cleveland Clinic's Caldwell Esselstyn, Jr., MD.



Plantrician Project Co-founder and Chairman Scott Stoll, MD

The Plantrician Project's work is driven by statistics and backed by science. According to the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), 60% of Americans live with at least one chronic disease such as heart disease and stroke, cancer or diabetes.¹ Chronic diseases are the leading cause of death and disability in America and also a leading driver of health care costs.¹ Studies show that 70% of these diseases can be prevented or reversed with a whole food, plant-based dietary lifestyle.² Yet despite these numbers, the National Academy of Sciences only recommends 25 hours of nutrition education in undergraduate medical education with many institutions offering less.³ Thus, it is no surprise allopathic doctor's feel unprepared to address diet and nutrition with their patients.



Author and food as medicine movement leader Dean Ornish, MD

A 2019 study published in *The Lancet Planetary Health* states that medical students worldwide report having "insufficient nutrition knowledge and skills to effectively support dietary behavior change in their patients."⁴ The Plantrician Project works to provide that empowerment through education and processes that make prescribing lifestyle changes as easy as prescribing pills.

Beyond the conference, the Plantrician Project's other tools and resources for practitioners include an education series; *The International Journal of Disease Reversal and Prevention*, a free peer reviewed scientific journal supporting the science of plant-based nutrition and healthy lifestyle to prevent and reverse chronic illness; PlantBasedDocs.com, a global directory of plant-based health care providers; PlantPure Rx, a program making it easy to prescribe nutrition; a free Plant-Based Nutrition Quickstart Guide and its pediatric supplement; and Culinary Rx, a prescribable online cooking and nutrition course for both doctors and their patients.

In an effort to reach the next generation of doctors who they feel will have the greatest impact on transforming health care globally, they are also launching Plantrician U, a compilation of their teachings slated to be free to all health care professional students worldwide. It is targeted to be online later this summer.

"Lifestyle medicine is a hope filled message," says Plantrician Project Co-founder and Chairman Scott Stoll, MD. "It's a simple message that all of the choices you need to make to improve your life are in your hands each day." We earn our disease through lifestyle choices, he notes, but when we change our choices, we support our body and its ability to heal and renew. "It's simply what you put on your fork, how many hours of sleep you get, your exercise, and how you relieve stress, and forgive and receive life fully."

This year's International Plant-based Nutrition Healthcare Conference topics address many of today's leading health concerns including (but not limited to):

- Intersection of Food, Pain and Regeneration (Stephan Esser, MD)
- Deep Dive on Lipids and Food (Monica Aggarwal, MD, FACC)
- Cardiovascular Disease and Diet (Koushik R. Reddy, MD)
- Diet and Metabolism (William Li, MD)
- Transitional Research on Diet and Dementia (Drs. Ayesha and Dean Sherzai)
- Plant-Based Nutrition for Optimal Performance in Master Athletes (Richard M. Rosenfeld, MD, MPH)
- The Breast Defense: How to Minimize Cancer Risk (Kristi Funk, MD, FACS)
- Plant-based Nutrition Practice Strategy and Solutions (Melissa Mondala, MD, MHA)
- Unifying Theory of Lifestyle Medicine (Dean Ornish, MD)



Friends, colleagues and plant-based luminaries Caldwell Esselstyn, Jr. MD, Michael Greger, MD, Dean Ornish, MD and Michael Klaper, MD will take part in the September conference.

The conference will begin on Friday with a welcome reception and opening dinner featuring a keynote address from Dr. Stoll. Presentations and panel discussions take place Saturday, Sunday and Monday and include nine plant-based meals. Incremental workshops covering clinical strategies, women's health, men's health and eliminating pain will be offered on Friday to in-person attendees (additional fees apply).

In a quote on the conference website, Stoll says, "It's going to take doctors becoming informed, rising up, banding together, and, in the spirit of the Hippocratic Oath, demanding change of the current system. As physicians begin to change, the system will begin to change, ushering in real health care reform and a sustainable system. This will require a grassroots effort on the part of physicians."

Attendees include medical and osteopathic doctors, nurses, medical assistants, naturopathic doctors and other health influencers. Those eager to become a part of the change are encouraged to attend. Early bird pricing is available through July 18, and discounted pricing is available to fellows, residents and students in an accredited program. Exhibitor opportunities are also available.

For more on the Plantrician Project, visit www.plantricianproject.org. To register for the conference, visit www.pbnhc.com. Editorial by Lauren Del Sarto, founder/publisher Desert Health.

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Hypnotherapy for Weight Loss

Changing your mind can change your weight

By Kevin Richardson, PhD, CHT

Hypnotherapy can play an important role in a weight loss program as it can change your relationship with food. Using therapeutic intervention training, ego strengthening, cognitive reframing/restructuring, hypnotic age progression and age regression, and then reinforcing self-esteem and self-confidence strengthens a person's ability to lose weight.^{1,2}

How does hypnosis work?

A therapeutic hypnotherapist facilitates the use of focused relaxation and concentration to change behavioral aspects. Everyone is unique, so each client receives a thorough evaluation and a jointly developed custom plan as underlying issues determine the specific hypnotic approach and technique used during each session.³

When you enter hypnosis, you remain fully awake, conscious of what is being said and will remember all aspects of the session; you also remain in full control of your actions and behavior.^{3,4,5} Clients cannot be made to do anything that is against their ethics or moral code.^{1,5,6,13}

How does hypnosis work for weight loss?

Hypnotherapy can change unhealthy behavior into healthy behavior. With weight loss, a part of the plan is learning about obesity and how to manage the weight loss process from beginning to end. The end goal is to lose weight and then keep it off. Hypnotherapy is an adjunct treatment that helps clients manage weight loss challenges^{3,5,6,11,12,13} and is also a powerful tool when used on its own, especially when combined with a healthy diet.^{7,6}

Hypnotherapy uses reframing techniques to encourage you to eat healthier foods. "Reframing" changes the unhealthy perceptions into healthy perceptions. For instance, there was a President of the United States who did not like broccoli and didn't want broccoli served at any White House function. Reframing techniques could change that "dislike" into a "like." Hypnotherapy then focuses on ego strengthening to increase one's self-confidence and desire to succeed.^{1,2,3,5} Increasing self-esteem, self-confidence and reframing self-image facilitates positive results.^{1,3,4,5}

A picture is worth a thousand words

Another hypnotherapy technique which enables you to visualize yourself at your target goal weight is age progression. A clear picture of the future helps create success,^{2,3,4} as can returning to an earlier time to gain an understanding of how a behavior started.^{1,5}

What is the process for hypnotherapy sessions?

A hypnotherapist will see you for 8 to 10 one-hour sessions. The first session is an evaluation which is the foundation for building the framework for future sessions. Questions focus on other weight loss attempts, types of diets tried, and how much weight was lost, only to be regained. The hypnotherapist will ask multiple questions about family eating traditions, holiday traditions and questions about medical history, for example Type 2 diabetes.

After each session, you are given a recorded copy of the hypnosis session. The expectation is that you will listen to the recording in between each session. The second session builds upon the first by starting to reframe specific behaviors. For example, it could increase the appetite for healthy foods and extinguish desires for unhealthy foods.^{1,2,4,5,8} Subsequent sessions continue to build on the previous session. Each individualized session includes suggestions for ego strengthening, increasing self-esteem, self-confidence and increasing stamina to stick with the weight loss program until the weight goal is achieved.^{4,5,9,13}

Hypnotherapy facilitates changes within the unconscious that support the biology and psychology of weight loss. By changing your mind, you are able to change your weight.

Dr. Richardson is a certified clinical hypnotherapist and has worked in health care for 44 years. He is a member of Desert Doctors and can be reached at (760) 902.2274. For more information, visit www.kevinrichardsontherapy.com.

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Understanding Lab Work May Be Lifesaving

By Betty McDonald, LAc

Although lab work is not always a definitive indication of your health, it is an important guideline, and knowing what it means can benefit you greatly.

We standardly expect our doctor to review lab work for us, interpret what he or she sees and to make recommendations; we rely on their judgment. But labs are a snapshot of our personal health, so shouldn't we understand what is going on inside us?

Most doctors respect when their patients have interest and input on their own labs, and you are the best resource for what your numbers are year after year. Ask for a copy, take them home, look them over and check the markers. Are they in range or almost out of range? Are there significant changes from previous results or any small notations of interest? Take notes and ask questions.

Your lab work, however, is not the last word on your health. If you still aren't feeling well, and the doctor says you are fine, it's time to find out why. The informed, curious, persistent patient who asks questions and scrutinizes their health history comes out ahead.

For instance, the serum calcium range is 8.5-10.3, and that is fine if you are under 40. Anyone over 40 years with even a 10.0 level is suspicious for parathyroid disease, a condition of high calcium that creates tumors in the parathyroid glands. Because it represents only one percent of the population, it is often overlooked. (1) According to James Norman, MD, one of the world's foremost experts on parathyroid disease, one in 500 women walk out of a doctor's office each month undiagnosed. He adds that it typically takes 2-5 years for these patients to finally get a proper diagnosis. Symptoms of this terrible disease include osteoporosis, joint pain and stroke.¹

You might notice on your labs that the range for vitamin D is 30-100 ng/mL, while your doctor may consider 20-50 to be acceptable. According to the Cleveland Clinic's leading functional medicine doctor Mark Hyman, MD, any vitamin D level that isn't in the optimal range of 40-70 is at risk for numerous health issues including cancer, high blood pressure and osteoporosis.² Check your lab work and question your doctor if yours is outside this range.

Liver enzymes (ALT and AST) are markers that may appear normal, even if liver disease exists. Fast food, simple carbs, sugar and sodas have given rise to fatty liver which now precedes alcohol as the leading cause of cirrhosis.³ So, if you have discomfort in this area accompanied by fatigue and loss of appetite, but your liver enzymes are normal, request additional tests. And know that if given a chance, the liver can heal with the proper nutrition.

These are just three examples that demonstrate the importance of knowing your numbers. Ask your doctor to explain anything you don't understand, and if he doesn't have time, find one that does. Know that functional medicine practitioners take more time to help you understand test results and how lifestyle plays an important role in those results. You and your doctor are a team, so get to the bottom of your concerns no matter how many rocks you have to look under, as it can save your life in the long run.

Betty McDonald is a licensed acupuncturist and functional medicine practitioner. She is owner of The Wellness Place and can be reached at (760) 766.6223. For more information visit www.BettyMcDonald.com.

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Chef AJ's Unprocessed: Revitalize Your Health with Whole Foods

A Review by Joseph E. Scherger MD, MPH

Abbie Jaye, aka Chef AJ, is a nationally recognized champion of whole food, plant-based cooking and has been sharing its benefits for nearly four decades. Recently, Chef AJ relocated from Los Angeles to the Coachella Valley and we are lucky to now have her as a local resource.

I have had the pleasure of meeting Chef AJ several times and her enthusiasm and positive spirit are infectious. She has received numerous awards for her work and is recommended by *NY Times* best-selling author and plant-based advocate John McDougall, MD with whom she has collaborated. She has also worked with TrueNorth Health Center in Santa Rosa and is well known to their founders and staff.

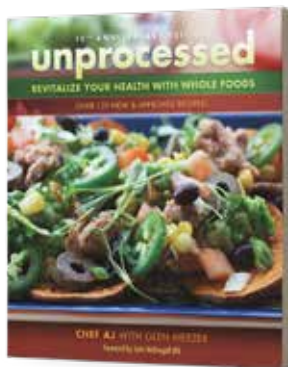
Chef AJ is the author of many books and her latest, *Unprocessed: Revitalize Your Health with Whole Foods* is the 10th anniversary edition of the original, published in 2011; both are co-authored by Glen Merzer. *Unprocessed* is a call to eating the real food of nature instead of the processed foods pervasive in the standard American diet. Our bodies evolved eating nature's bounty and processed foods have many negative health consequences. Real whole foods are abundant, especially here in California, and eating processed foods is unnecessary and should be avoided. Books like *Unprocessed* help show us the way and keep it interesting.

After introductory chapters discussing her reasoning, the book is divided into recipes with a variety of categories including beverages, breakfasts, appetizers (or "AppTeasers" as she calls them), entrees, salads, dressings and sauces, soups, sides and desserts. The new edition has many colorful photos of her delicious dishes and in the final chapter, she throws in truffles.

There are several healthy nutrition options based on a person's beliefs and preferences. In full disclosure, I am not a vegan, but rather follow a healthy Mediterranean diet. My primary role model, Mark Hyman, MD, head of strategy and innovation at the Cleveland Clinic Center for Functional Medicine, coined his diet "pegan," a combination of vegan and paleo, meaning mostly plant-based with some animal products. As functional medicine leader Chris Kresser once said in a blog, "If those following healthy nutrition argue, the food industry wins."

As a physician, I am very supportive of those on a vegan diet and strive to keep them healthy. *Unprocessed* is a book I highly recommend. I commend Chef AJ, who signs all correspondence "Love & Kale," for her focus on avoiding processed foods and incorporating healthy foods from our vast plant kingdom. For vegans - or anyone desiring to incorporate more vegetables - this book is a fun read and great resource for the kitchen.

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





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Old Town's Café California

A Review by Lauren Del Sarto



A small café in a quaint village with modern style, gourmet coffee, fresh greens, tasty fare and European flare... Sounds like a dream on a bright summer day; it's all that and more at Café California in Old Town La Quinta.

Old Town is a special place in the desert. You can spend the day leisurely strolling the streets, browsing boutiques and enjoying a variety of cuisine. In season, you can visit the Certified Organic Farmer's Market on Sundays or enjoy morning yoga on the lawn with Gather Wellness. But until now, the village was missing a casual breakfast place.

Café California opened in February offering healthy options for all-day breakfast and lunch in a relaxed indoor/outdoor space. The concept is a collaboration between Old Town owner Wells Marvin and Chula Artisan Eatery owner Katherine Gonzales who helped create the initial menu and product sourcing. Inside features simple, creative décor with seating for around 18, while the misted patio displays colorful umbrellas and seats 36 more.



Avocado mash toast on gluten-free bread (top) and heirloom tomato salad with burrata (left)



"We wanted to provide a place you could come and relax with friends, or grab a fresh, quality meal-to-go for your picnic or hike," says Marvin, who now oversees operations. Their goals are to source local organic produce as available and offer eco-friendly and sustainable wines, waters and other products from California and our immediate region. Specialty drinks are made with Joshua Tree Coffee and milk alternatives include almond, oat, coconut and soy. They offer fresh-pressed orange and grapefruit juices, plus bottled green drinks and wellness shots from Got Green Drinks? based in Laguna Niguel. An impressive selection of wines and champagne are primarily from California.



Farm salad with salmon (top) and grilled shrimp and citrus salad (right)



We've visited the café several times and love the easy ambiance and health-conscious offerings. While the menu is limited, choices are ample. Breakfast and lunch are available all day and there is something for everyone including vegan, vegetarian and gluten-free options; nothing is fried and cage-free eggs are poached. (Don't worry! You'll also find handmade sweets and decadent delights).

All orders are individually prepared with beautiful presentation, creative combinations, exceptional taste and comfortable portions. Manager Sergio Gonzales says natural herbs and spices add flavor, while little salt is added.



The centrally located patio offers misters and shade on Main Street.

For breakfast, I love the avocado toast which is offered gluten-free. Served with tomato jam, seasoned arugula, fresh cherry tomatoes and a balsamic drizzle, it is bursting with flavor. Other menu options include sun-dried tomato and pepper frittata, huevos rancheros, bagel and lox and eggs hollandaise, to name a few. Those who prefer to indulge may want to try the banana Nutella crepes or strawberries-stuffed French toast.

My favorite lunch is the farm salad with melt-in-your-mouth poached salmon. It is served with organic greens, shaved beets, watermelon radish, carrot medley and avocado, and topped with a sprinkle of soft herbed cheese. The grilled shrimp and citrus salad is a close second with a refreshing combination of jicama, cucumber and mint on fresh greens with a citrus vinaigrette. Other offerings include chilled gazpacho, crab cakes, a vegetable and avocado wrap and an acai and spinach power bowl with goji berries, walnuts, banana and coconut.



The banana Nutella crepes are a tasty treat.

Marvin says items on the menu may change seasonally and a kitchen expansion is planned for the fall to allow for preparation of more grab-and-go options. Wines and beers are offered on-site and to-go.

Café California is a wonderful addition to Old Town. It is the perfect spot for coffee with a friend, a romantic lunch with a loved one or healthy cuisine on the go. Call-in orders are recommended for takeout, and no reservations are required. They are part of the Greater Palm Springs Convention and Visitor Bureau's Summer Eats Pass, so be sure to check in upon arrival for your chance to win weekly prizes.

Café California is located at 78065 Main Street, Suite 100, in La Quinta and open daily from 8 a.m. to 3 p.m. (closed Tuesdays during summer). For more information visit www.cafecalifornialq.com or call (760) 296.1425. For more information on the Summer Eats Pass program visit www.visitgreaterpalmsprings.com/summer-eats-gps.



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Eat, Drink and Be Healthy

Substitutes you'll savor by Lauren Del Sarto

Lolo's Low-carb Lasagna

My husband and I both grew up with warm memories of our Italian roots and most of them revolved around food. Even though we now enjoy a low-carb, gluten-free lifestyle, we have found many satisfying substitutes to keep those traditions alive. Experimenting is half the fun; eating is the other!

When it comes to pasta, one of my favorites is Palmini made from one ingredient: hearts of palm. High in fiber with only four carbs per serving, it is filling and flavorful when paired with your favorite sauce. A package of Palmini lasagna makes a perfect meal for two, and



I am delighted to share my recipe (the grandkids call me Lolo, so she's the cook).

The Palmini sheets are smaller than lasagna pasta, but you build your masterpiece just the same. Add your favorite ingredients or whatever vegetables you have in the fridge. Just be sure to slice and dice as finer ingredients create a better balance and make for easier eating. This recipe is also cow's milk and meat-free.



- Serves:** 2
Total carbs per serving: 6 in pasta (plus your select marinara sauce)
Prep: 20 minutes
Cook: 25 minutes
- Ingredients:**
- 2 cups grated manchego cheese (or your preferred cheese)
 - 2 cups of grated Pecorino Romano cheese (or parmesan)
 - 1 grated zucchini

- 1/2 cup finely diced onion
- 1 cup chopped mushrooms
- 2 cups of fresh spinach
- 1 cup of sliced olives
- 1-1/2 cups of no sugar added marinara pasta sauce (I use Organicville from Ralph's for +13 carbs)
- Finely chopped fresh Italian herbs to taste (i.e. oregano, basil, rosemary)
- Ground pepper to taste (the cheese and sauce provide enough salt)

- Directions:**
- Preheat oven to 400 F
 - Spray a 9" x 5" rectangular bread pan with avocado oil or other natural non-stick spray

Mango Cucumber Summer Slaw Wraps

By Chef Kelli Rose

These cool and crunchy wraps are the perfect "negative calorie" dish for hot summer days. Made with cucumber, mango, cabbage, bell peppers and fresh herbs, they are packed with flavor. Add a touch of jalapeño for spice and a little metabolic kick!

- Servings:** 4
Prep/Total Time: 15 mins
- Ingredients:**
- 1/2 large cucumber, split lengthwise, seeded, and julienne sliced
 - 1 ripe mango, peeled and julienned
 - 2 cups shredded cabbage
 - 6 baby bell peppers or 1 red bell pepper, seeded and julienned
 - 1 jalapeño pepper, seeded and julienned (optional)
 - 1/3 cup roughly chopped mint or cilantro, or both
 - 1 teaspoon Himalayan pink sea salt
 - 1/4 cup sesame oil
 - 1 tablespoon rice vinegar
 - 1 tablespoon lime juice
 - 1/2 tablespoon honey, agave nectar or monk fruit
 - 1 tablespoon sesame seeds (black, white or both)
 - 1 tablespoon coconut aminos or tamari sauce
 - 1/2 teaspoon fish sauce
 - Lettuce or jicama wraps



- Instructions:**
1. To make the sauce, combine sesame oil, seeds, rice vinegar, sweetener, coconut aminos (or tamari sauce), fish sauce, lime and salt in a bowl and whisk until blended.
 2. Add the dressing to a large bowl with vegetables, mango and herbs and toss.
 3. Serve in your choice of lettuce or jicama wraps, or simply serve as a tasty side dish.

Chef Kelli Rose of La Quinta specializes in holistic farm-to-table nutrition and fresh juice cleanses. She offers weekly meal delivery and in-home or vacation rental chef services. She can be reached at rawchefkelli@gmail.com or (760) 851.1091. For more healthy recipes and tips, visit Facebook @Back2TheCuttingBoard.

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- Prep ingredients and arrange them for easy access (see photo left)
 - Rinse Palmini noodles in colander, dry and layout for easy access
 - Place 6 noodles on the bottom of the pan horizontally leaving a space in the middle (this is where you will cut it in two for (2) 4.5" x 5" size servings)
 - Cover with a thin layer of marinara sauce, then manchego and herbs
 - Place a layer of each veggie on top of cheese (like building a pizza)
 - Place a second layer of 6 noodles horizontally with space in middle
 - Cover with thin layer of marinara sauce, Pecorino Romano and herbs; add pepper to taste
 - Layer in remaining veggies and top with manchego
 - Place final layer of 6 noodles and top with thin layer of sauce and remaining Pecorino Romano
 - Place in oven and cook for 25 minutes
 - Remove and let sit for 5 minutes
- Using a wide spatula, cut the lasagna vertically down the middle and scoop out each of the two pieces to individually plate. Top with garnish of basil or rosemary and serve immediately. *Manga tutto!*



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YOUR FINANCIAL HEALTH

By Michele T. Sarna, CFP®, AIF®



The ABCs of ESGs

History demonstrates socially responsible investing (SRI) has been present since the 1800's. It began with adversity to companies that manufactured tobacco and alcohol or promoted gambling in an era known as the Age of Reason.

In 1971, the first socially responsible investing fund was launched by Pax World, a sustainable investment firm, and in 1999 the Dow Jones sustainability indices were established.

Today, mindful investing is at the forefront with investors more interest than ever in which companies are supported in their investment portfolios. According to the Global Sustainable Investment Alliance, global sustainable assets grew to \$35.3 trillion in 2020 and are projected to reach \$160 trillion by 2036.

Many names have been given to the movement including socially responsible investing (SRI) and impact investing and environmental social governance (ESG). With the increase in awareness comes increased concern in balancing global value with the need to obtain positive financial results. This has prompted a transition in investment decisions through ESG integration which aids in the assessment of risks and opportunities in businesses and portfolios.

Socially responsible investing considers these elements:

Environmental. What is the impact of a company's product or service on our earth? Climate change, waste management, pollution and resource depletion are taken into consideration.

Social. What effect does the business have on its community - individually or globally? Factors considered include human rights, health and safety, corporate culture, diversity and inclusion.

Governance. What are a company's internal systems and processes? This encompasses executive pay, corporate reporting, risk management, corruption and more.

Where do we start if we want to be a mindful investor? ESG integration analyzes factors in the investment selection process and the potential effect on performance returns. Investment banking firm Federated Hermes recommends reframing the ESG process through four steps: integration, screening, thematic and impact.

First, risk can be mitigated by incorporating ESG factors in the investment process. Next, values are reflected by including or excluding industries based on the investor's specific beliefs. Aligning with and focusing on the major ESG trends and sustainability topics will open the door for change. Finally, by requiring quantifiable environmental and social gains, measurable change is imminent.

The world is constantly changing; consumers preferences evolve, and companies' business models will continue to follow. Investment choices should not be a political agenda, but a merging of one's heart and mind to produce, not only acceptable financial returns, but a sustainable future for the world.

Speak with your financial advisor today to establish an ESG focused strategy for your portfolio.

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

Sources: 1) <https://www.investopedia.com/news/history-impact-investing/>; 2) <https://www.history.com/topics/british-history/enlightenment>; 3) <http://www.gsi-alliance.org/trends-report-2020>

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Prescription Drug Plan Pricing Explained

By Randy Foulds

Medicare Part D Prescription Drug plans can be complicated, but once you understand them, you can make them work in your favor. The two main factors that affect the price of your prescription medications are drug tier and coverage stage.

Drug tiers 1-5 are the levels of pricing for medications on a specified formulary. Each prescription drug plan comes up with its own formulary, which is a list of medications that plan will cover. In general, a generic medication that is widely available is in tier 1. Tier 2 may still be generic, but not widely available. Tier 3 would be a brand name medication, and Tier 4 would be brand name and not yet common. Tier 5 would be specialty medications, usually injectable. The higher the tier, the higher the cost to you.

Pricing for each tier also changes depending on which of the four coverage stages you are in at the time.

Stage 1: Deductible. For 2022, most drug plans have a deductible of up to \$480. Many insurers also waive the deductible for tier 1 and tier 2 medications. In this stage, you normally pay the lowest negotiated regular price for your drug, but the insurer pays nothing.

Stage 2: Initial coverage. After meeting the deductible, you pay a flat co-pay for medications. Most people are in this phase during the entire year of coverage. Many plans offer \$0 co-pays on tier 1 medications in this stage.

Stage 3: Coverage gap. Also referred to as the donut hole, this phase begins once the total cost of your medications is greater than \$4,430. This amount includes both, what you have paid and

what the plan has paid. For a medication like Xarelto, which costs \$550 per month, that equals eight months of coverage. For an injectable medication like Enbrel, that's only one month of coverage. In this stage, you pay 25% of the total cost of the medication. So, our Xarelto example would then be \$137, when it was probably a \$45 copay under Stage 2 coverage.

Stage 4: Catastrophic. If you spend a total of \$7,050 in out-of-pocket costs, you enter the final stage of coverage where you pay 5% or less for all medications. Over \$7,000 seems like a lot, but there is a rule that helps. During Stage 3, the 25% you pay, plus the 60% discount the manufacturer must give, are both counted toward your total out of pocket cost. So Xarelto might cost you \$137, but \$522 is being counted toward your out-of-pocket costs. This works in your favor to help you reach the lower costs of catastrophic stage much sooner.

There is one final factor that can affect the price of your medication. The drug plan will have a preferred pharmacy network that offers best pricing in each coverage stage.

If you have any questions about which tier your medication is on or what coverage stage you are in, call the phone number on the back of your drug plan ID card or check your insurance plan's website. They can often tell you the current pricing and even project the coverage for the rest of the year for your specific medication.

Randy Foulds of Foulds Health Insurance Agency is an independent broker and Medicare specialist (license #0G69218) and can be reached at (760) 346.6565.

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Easy Fixes for Home Safety

Courtesy of Alzheimers Coachella Valley

Contrary to popular belief, most older Americans with advancing dementia remain in their own homes. With that said, home safety is important for everyone, but especially those with Alzheimer's or a related dementia.

Falls are a leading cause of broken hips and other serious injuries in the elderly, and individuals with Alzheimer's are twice as likely to fall. They also experience significantly higher mortality rates from those falls than others in the same age group. Furthermore, problems with vision, perception and balance increase as Alzheimer's advances, making the risk of a fall more likely. Following are several easy fixes that can be made to the home to ensure your loved one's safety, as well as your own:

General safety tips

- **Eliminate excessive clutter.** If your loved one lives in a home with stairs, consider primarily using the downstairs rooms. Make sure the bedroom is on the ground level.
- **Secure showers.** Showering is sometimes difficult for individuals with dementia. Installing handrails and using a shower chair in the bath/shower can make bathing safer. Place nonskid strips or a non-slip mat in the bathtub and shower.
- **Temper tripping.** Remove throw rugs and inconveniently placed furniture as they can often be tripping hazards. Install handrails in high-risk areas such as porch steps.
- **Consider even lighting.** Changes in levels of light can be disorienting. Create an even level by adding extra lights in entries, outside landings and areas between rooms, stairways and bathrooms. Use night lights in hallways, bedrooms and bathrooms.

Special bathroom hazards to consider. Similar to falls, accidents that occur in the bathroom can be catastrophic for the elderly, even more so for someone with Alzheimer's. Here are steps you can take to make the bathroom a safe environment for your loved one with dementia:

- **Provide light in dark areas.** Motion sensors are a great idea all around the house, but in the bathroom, they can be used to turn on lights and exhaust fans, and with a timer, the devices will not be left on indefinitely.
- **Location awareness.** Chimes or a bell can be placed above the bathroom entrance to alert you that it has been entered and that assistance may be required.
- **Grab hold items.** Remove anything that cannot withstand a person's weight or could cause additional injury such as tub/shower soap dishes and towel bars. Rely only upon properly-installed grab bars for fall protection.
- **Easy access.** Move cleaning and hygiene products to a secure location. Use open shelving (rather than cupboards) so that necessary items can be easily accessed.
- **Stay out of hot water.** Lower the temperature setting on your hot water heater so that if your loved one accidentally turns on the hot water, he or she will not be scalded or burned.

Kitchen safety. Kitchens contain a plethora of dangerous items for individuals with dementia. Keep the following tips in mind as you make changes for a safer kitchen:

- **Think childproof.** Install "childproof" door latches on storage cabinets and drawers designated for breakable or dangerous items. Lock away all households cleaning products, matches, knives, scissors, blades, small appliances and anything valuable.
- **Lock up medications and supplements.** If prescription or nonprescription drugs are kept in the kitchen, store them in a locked cabinet.
- **Is it edible?** Remove artificial fruits and vegetables or food-shaped kitchen magnets which might appear to be edible.
- **Down the drain.** Insert a drain trap in the kitchen sink to catch anything that may otherwise become lost or clog the plumbing.
- **Don't get burned.** Install safety knobs and an automatic shut-off switch on the stove.

Nobody wants their home to look like a hospital. Luckily, these easy fixes offer subtle changes that can help to make a huge difference in your loved one's safety.

Editorial by Patricia Riley, MBA, board member of Alzheimers Coachella Valley, a community resource for dementia support and education. For more information, call (760) 776.3100 or visit www.cvalzheimers.org.

Dream Incubation for Helpful Solutions

By Kathleen O'Keefe-Kanavos

Are you facing a challenge? Don't sweat it. Sleep on it. Sleeping allows for dream incubation, a method of guiding dreams with intention to help solve problems. This primordial dream programming ritual to "hatch an idea" was first referenced in the Chester Beatty papyrus found near Thebes in Upper Egypt and presently housed in The British Museum.¹

Incubated dreams in historical texts often involved an epiphany that changed the dreamer's life. These changes were usually brought about by a dream deity, angel, spirit guide, animal or deceased loved one delivering a guided message like a healing treatment. Upon awakening, the person would remember the visitation and benefit from the dream. During the 8th century BC, in *The Iliad*, Homer wrote of Greek King Agamemnon's "solution dream" concerning war with the Trojans.²

Ancient Greeks also practiced dream incubation at the Asclepeion temples where dreamers slept on earthen beds to incubate prophetic answers.³ In many ancient societies worldwide, sleeping within sacred areas became synonymous with dream incubation: Northern Africans slept in tombs to incubate dreams where they met spirit guides and received news of deceased loved ones⁴; the Crow Indians chose mountain and tree-top beds with deadly drop-offs during vision quests⁵; seekers to the Trophonian incubation oracle in Greece slept swaddled and banded in linen upon freshly-slaughtered ram's hides⁶; American Indians still practice dream incubation today as a form of vision quest.

Modern science's first-night-effect, which demonstrates why it is hard to fall asleep in new places, suggests why sleeping in sacred places enables problem-solving dreams. Sleep and dreams are influenced when experimental subjects sleep in the laboratory for the first time; their disrupted REM sleep alters dream content to include references to the laboratory situation.⁷ These findings corroborate the idea that pre-sleep dream incubation may affect dreams.

While guided dream methods have been known to humankind for 5,000 years, incubation techniques have evolved. Modern dream incubation can involve simple and safe pre-sleep rituals like prayer and meditation to shape dream content aimed at solving an issue. So, rather than wrapping ourselves in freshly sacrificed skins or sleeping in the highest neighborhood tree, there are new ways to incubate a dream...

As you prepare for bed, define your challenge and set your dream intention. What specific information would you like to receive? Write it on a piece of paper. Place the paper under your pillow and "sleep on it" for incubation. When you wake, write down your dream, review your intention and search for your answer. And unlike ancient times, this modern incubation technique is vegan-friendly.

Kathleen O'Keefe-Kanavos of Rancho Mirage is a dream expert and has been featured on Dr. Oz and The Doctors. For more information, visit www.KathleenOkeefeKanavos.com.

References available upon request.



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This local Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program is partially supported by federal, State and Riverside County funds to advocate for residents of long-term care facilities.



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