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The holidays are here. Time to gather with friends and family to give thanks for the many blessings in our lives. But shouldn't every day be thanksgiving? Science says yes, because gratitude is the secret to good health and happiness.

Some of you are smiling as you read this, because you have known this for years and practice gratitude daily. Others may be skeptical about the simplicity of this statement which is apropos, because living your life with gratitude is no simple task. It takes practice, but once you've accomplished the mindset, you will reap the many physical, mental and social benefits that are indeed scientifically proven.

Numerous studies show that grateful people have stronger immune systems, are less bothered by aches and pains, sleep better, have lower blood pressure and generally take better care of their health. They are found to be more alert, alive, and awake, and have higher levels of positive emotions. They are more forgiving, generous, and compassionate, and feel less lonely and isolated. Research also suggests these benefits are available to most anyone who practices gratitude, even in the midst of adversity and when coping with chronic disease.

So what does being a truly grateful person mean? Robert A. Emmons, Ph.D., considered by many to be the world's leading experts on gratitude, says there are two components to gratitude. First, it's an affirmation

of goodness. We affirm that there are good things in the world, gifts and benefits we've received. "This doesn't mean life is perfect; it doesn't ignore the burdens and hassles. But when we look at life as a whole, gratitude encourages us to identify some amount of goodness in our life." The second part of gratitude is recognizing that the sources of this goodness are outside of ourselves, as opposed to being from our individual accomplishments. "We can appreciate positive traits in ourselves, but I think true gratitude involves a humble dependence on others, an acknowledgement that other people—or even higher powers, if you're of a spiritual mindset—have given us many gifts, big and small, to help us achieve the goodness in our lives."

In his book *Thanks! How the New Science of Gratitude Can Make You Happier*, Emmons emphasizes the social dimension of gratitude. He sees it as a relationship-strengthening emotion because it requires us to see how we've been supported and affirmed by others, and to not only appreciate their gifts, but to repay them or pay it forward.

For the past decade, Emmons and his team have studied over a thousand individuals from ages 8 – 80, helping them to systematically cultivate gratitude and documenting the transformative effects on their lives. He summarizes key results as such:

Gratitude allows us to celebrate the present. It magnifies positive emotions. Our emotional systems

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As young women, we grow up hearing horror stories about "going through the change" when hormone fluctuations create often unbearable symptoms like hot flashes, crazy brain, and mood swings. And we know that when this time comes, we will have to make choices for ourselves.

In my early thirties, I learned about hormone replacement therapy (HRT) and that the primary drug used is Premarin. I also learned that Premarin stands for PREgnant MARE uRIne when I met Bella, a beautiful Friesian mare who was rescued from a Premarin manufacturing plant. As a lifetime equestrian, I came to dread and fear my choices as I knew them: deal with being a crazed, middle-aged woman or support this practice.

At 40, I sensed an early shift and began searching for natural options like diet and exercise. It was upon my move to the Desert that I discovered two life-changing revelations: perimenopause (the 'early' change) and bio-identical hormone replacement therapy (BHRT), a plant-based option.

For those scratching their heads at these new terms, and those interested in truly understanding the hormonal changes your body goes through as it ages, I strongly recommend Suzanne Somers' new book, *I'm Too Young For This!*

Targeting women 35-50, the book describes in great detail why we may experience unexplained symptoms like weight gain, irritability, insomnia, and



Continued on page 3



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And it appears that more and more people are calling the Desert home. It was a busy summer and many businesses had record months. This is wonderful for our growing community and one more thing for which to be grateful.

Isn't it interesting that something as simple as gratitude can improve your health? There are certainly many other remedies which can do the same and each page of *Desert Health*® offers ideas. If you find just one that improves your life, we have done our job.

Changing your mindset to appreciate more of what you have, who you are, and those who helped you get there, can be transforming. If you already live a life of gratitude, you know what I mean, and if you'd like to start, we offer a few simple steps to send you in the right direction.

This season is sure to bring you many gifts - from seeing old friends, to running that race you've been training for, to dancing the night away. Our Desert offers many opportunities to do them all this season.

Be mindful of your health, greet each day with a smile, and don't forget to send thank-you notes.

Happy Holidays ~

Lauren
Lauren Del Sarto
Publisher

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Nov. 2 • American Heart Association's Heart & Stroke Walk

Walk for the cause, stay for the health fair! The Coachella Valley Heart and Stroke Walk is part of the MyHeart.MyLife. platform which is presented nationally by Subway and Jenny Craig. Civic Center Park, Palm Desert. For more information call (775) 772.4443 or visit www.cvheartwalk.org.

Nov. 9 • Fall Family Festival in Old Town La Quinta

This festive occasion brings together entertainment, games, crafts, and community resources for Coachella Valley families. Old Town La Quinta will feature over 50 exhibitors with a focus on family and children's activities. Admission is free. Presented by About Families Inc., For Moms and Babies, and Old Town La Quinta. 10 am – 4 pm. For more information: (760) 342.7400 or visit www.LQFallFamilyFestival.org.

Nov. 17 & 18 • Desert Women's Show & Business Conference

This year's event features one FUN DAY and one BIZ DAY. Sunday enjoy fashion shows, shopping displays, educational seminars, and special guests, as well as food & wine tasting at the Taste of the Valley. Sunday evening join Loving All Animals for a benefit concert featuring Desperado, The Eagles tribute band. Monday kicks off with breakfast and a full day of informative speakers, over 16 breakout sessions, and special guest Suzanne Somers as the luncheon keynote speaker. Sunday 10a-5p; Monday 8a-5p. For more information visit www.DesertWomansShow.com

Nov. 22 • Dancing with the Desert Stars

Renaissance Hotel Palm Springs will shine on Friday, November 22 when local "Desert Stars" pair up with professional dancers to show the Coachella Valley their moves, all to benefit client services at Desert AIDS Project. The fun begins with cocktails at 6:00pm, followed by the show at 7:30pm. For more information visit www.DesertAIDSProject.org or call (760) 323.2118.

Dec. 11 • SPARKLE! All-Star Holiday Concert

This 4th annual All-Star holiday benefit concert is THE musical holiday event of the season! Hosted by Scott Nevins, this year's event features a cavalcade of talent including Florence Henderson, Max von Essen, Emerson Collins, Ginifer King, Shoshana Bean, Matt Zarley, Julie Garnyé, Erin Quill, Blake McIver, Lexi Lawson, Constantine Rousouli, Haviland Stillwell and Kelly King. Ticket prices for this one-night only extravaganza begin at just \$35. Visit www.annenbergtheater.org or call (760) 323.2118.

SAVE THE DATE!

Jan 11 • Mayor's Race & Wellness Festival, Palm Springs

Jan 11 • Humana Well-Being Walk & Healthy Fun Fair, La Quinta



Health is a Choice

Continued from page 1

decreased sex drive at this age, and provides natural options for hormonal balance through diet, supplementation, healthy practices like getting adequate sleep and exercise, and BHRT.

Somers jocosely refers to the most common symptoms as the “Seven Dwarfs of Menopause”: Itchy, Bitchy, Sweaty, Sleepy, Bloating, Forgetful, and All-Dried-Up. But the news for many is that these symptoms may begin as early as the thirties and is referred to as perimenopause.

She explains that perimenopause is the most dangerous phase for women because of the significant fluctuation of their hormones. “You go through puberty and the blissful days of your 20s, and then things start to change. The mood in the house starts to change, and one day you wake up and you and your husband don’t recognize the person you’ve become.” She adds that the symptoms you experience are your body screaming, “All is not well!”

Somers struggled through three years with very bad symptoms including uncontrollable weeping, flying off the handle for no reason, bloating, and weight gain. “One day my husband came to me and said, ‘Suzanne, a marriage can only take so much’ and I just died inside. I hadn’t realized how bad it was and that I was taking it out on him.” She went from doctor to doctor and was offered a variety of drugs aimed at treating her symptoms including anti-depressants, anti-anxieties, diuretics, and sleep medication, to name a few. “And then I heard about this endocrinologist who introduced me to bio-identical hormones and I never looked back.”

In an effort to help other women through this phase, Somers dedicated herself to thousands of hours of research, interviews and case studies to compile information for her many books. “When I starting writing about menopause for women my age, I realized that women under 50 weren’t interested. They would tell me, ‘I’m having trouble sleeping’ and I would say, ‘It may be your hormones’ and they would say, ‘No. I’m too young for this.’”

And thus, the idea for her latest book, *I’m Too Young For This!* which helps us understand what is happening with our bodies, so we can make informed choices. Somers delivers a significant amount of medical information in easily understood terms. Most importantly, she explains which hormone declines are related to which symptoms and what you can do about it.

Suzanne and Alan hiking Desert trails

she considers to be the biggest choice women have when it comes to this phase in life. “If women are over 35 and have not embraced bio-identical hormones, then they are not living their lives to the fullest. BHRT is the juice of youth.” Her husband of 36 years, Alan Hamel, and she have been taking BHRT for 16 years. “I am 67 and he is 77 and neither of us takes even one pharmaceutical drug. I am not against pharmaceuticals, but if you can do it naturally, why mess with drugs?”

The subject tends to be controversial and not all doctors agree that BHRT is the best option. “All doctors usually agree that women in perimenopause and menopause need hormones,” she tells us. “The disagreement is that doctors who practice a conventional standard of care standardly prescribe synthetic hormones made from a pregnant horse’s urine, whereas integrative doctors standardly prescribe BHRT, hormones “biologically identical” to the human hormones our bodies make.” She adds that when she started writing about BHRT “many books ago,” few had any idea what bio-identicals were. “Today, hundreds of thousands of informed women and men are practitioners of age management medicine, and are reaping the rewards of aging rather than suffering unnecessarily.”

What exactly is involved with BHRT? Upon visiting a qualified practitioner, a patient’s hormones are measured via a saliva test, and deficiencies are identified. The doctor prescribes a mix of hormones to correct any deficiencies and bring the hormones into balance. The prescription is filled at a compounding pharmacy using hormones derived from “natural” sources, usually soy or Mexican yams. The prescription(s) may include a variety of hormones such as estrogen, progesterone, testosterone and dehydroepiandrosterone (DHEA). The patient’s hormone levels are retested periodically and prescriptions are adjusted as necessary.

If you wish to pursue BHRT, Somers emphasizes doing your homework and finding a qualified doctor who is educated on and thoroughly understands BHRT. “With all due respect, they standardly only teach four hours of hormone replacement therapy in medical school, so finding a doctor who specializes in natural hormone therapy is important.”

Somers and Hamel are both successful models for age management through healthy lifestyle and hormone balancing with BHRT. “Our biological ages (have been tested to be) somewhere in the 40s, and we feel it! We work eight to ten hours a day most days and love our work. We have three married kids with six grandkids and spend loads of time with them,” she says enthusiastically. “What I am saying is that we have an endless supply of energy and you will never hear that expression ‘senior moment’ coming from either of us.”

With 24 books, numerous health products, and her many years in entertainment, we asked Somers what she considers to be her greatest contribution to this world. “I have had a 40-year career of hit TV shows and as a Vegas headliner, and have created a wonderful business that features only organics...skin care, hair care, color makeup, and beauty tools. But my greatest contribution is bringing up our three children to be contributors to the world rather than a drain; and they in turn have brought up their six children the same way. Great parenting is the most important thing we can do to make this a better world for all. I consider my wonderful family to be my greatest contribution.”

Suzanne Somers will be appearing at this year’s Desert Woman’s Show & Business Conference November 17 & 18 at Agua Caliente Resort & Spa where she will be sharing additional secrets for living life to the fullest as a healthy, energetic, and passionate person. For tickets, visit www.DesertWomansShow.com.

For a list of Coachella Valley medical doctors and naturopathic doctors who prescribe bio-identical hormone replacement therapy, see page 18, and for more information on BHRT from Suzanne Somers visit www.ForeverHealth.com. *I’m Too Young For This!* is available in stores now or at www.SuzanneSomers.com.



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What You Don't Know About Heartburn CAN Hurt You!

By the time the paramedics got to me I thought I was dying of a heart attack, so imagine my relief when I found out it was only heartburn. When the doctor sent me home with a prescription I had not a care in the world; I was confident that the prescribed medicine would cure me.

And I thought it did because I felt fine and could eat just about anything I wanted for a long time. It was like a miracle until eventually after years of taking the daily PPIs, my symptoms came back with a vengeance and no amount of medicine stopped the pain.

Desperate for help, I sought the care of a specialist and was shocked to be diagnosed with Esophageal Cancer. After several weeks of chemotherapy, surgeons removed my esophagus and gave me the devastating news that the cancer had spread to my lymph nodes.

While I am determined to keep fighting, the anger and frustration I feel is overwhelming. Why was I not warned that my heartburn symptoms were only being masked by the medication I was taking? Why was I not told about the possibility that my disease could be progressing like a silent killer to a deadly stage? I am 52 years old, a wife and a mother of three and I just want to live.

Unfortunately, the heartbreaking story of this mother is becoming an increasingly common and familiar one for doctors like me. Today it is estimated that one in three adults suffer from heartburn or other symptoms associated with gastroesophageal reflux disease, or GERD. Over the last decade the incidence of GERD has increased over 30%. With statistics like those, I am surprised that acid reflux disease is not categorized as an epidemic.

Many people with GERD are unaware of the dangers associated with their "harmless" heartburn symptoms. Heartburn is a burning sensation in the upper belly or abdomen and it is the most common symptom of GERD. However, everyone is affected differently and many experience a variety of other symptoms including several "atypical" symptoms such as constant throat clearing, hoarseness, chronic coughing and difficulty swallowing.

Here in the Coachella Valley we have a large group of 50+ adults. Many have chosen this as the ideal location for retirement after years of hard work. Unfortunately, I see far too many patients today who are struggling with the symptoms of GERD. Just when they are looking forward to enjoying time with friends and family, their quality of life is rapidly declining. Like the 52-year-old mother noted above, most are shocked to find that their escalating problems stem from a simple, often ignored, symptom like heartburn. Worse yet, they are saddened when they realize that their current problems could have been avoided.

GERD is commonly treated today by taking PPI medications daily, which decreases acid production in the stomach and makes the stomach contents less acidic. When these non-acidic stomach contents come into contact with the esophagus there is little or no heartburn pain. For most patients,

these medications produce a general feeling of well-being even while the patient's disease continues and could be progressing.

The FDA recommends that PPI treatment not exceed 14 days, but many consumers purchase these medications over-the-counter and take them daily, often for the rest of their life. Doctors also prescribe them as lifetime "maintenance medications" making this today's status quo treatment model.

Most patients, believing that they are taking care of their health by following their doctor's orders, are rarely advised of the potential adverse affects of these drugs and are not informed of alternative treatment options. Unfortunately, some are stunned to find out that their "heartburn" has turned into a pre-cancerous condition called Barrett's Esophagus or reflux-induced esophageal cancer known as adenocarcinoma.

In the United States, the incidence of esophageal cancer is rising faster than any other cancer, and the rate of increase in reflux disease is alarming. I think it's time to change these trends. This can only be accomplished if those experiencing heartburn educate themselves on their symptoms, the underlying causes, and all available treatment options.

For those in the early stages of reflux disease, there are many options including diet adjustments and lifestyle changes. Unfortunately, as this disease progresses, these viable alternatives become less effective tools to manage symptoms.

As a doctor, I would like to see less of these cases. The enormity of this disease, its growth rate, and the pain it inflicts on its victims are frightening. However, there is hope. In most cases, this disease - at any stage - can be arrested. Although physicians have some tools to change the course of reflux disease, many tools are in the hands of those suffering. It is important that everyone with heartburn, regurgitation, a chronic cough, ongoing hoarseness, or constant throat clearing, stop ignoring their symptoms. There are countless articles and information available on the Internet today, allowing anyone to begin their research on these symptoms and determine a plan of attack.

In our practice, we encourage patients with GERD to learn more about their disease, discuss how it has affected their lives, and develop a plan of action for relief of symptoms to slow the progression of their disease, if not cure it. In addition to our consultation, we recommend patients visit www.RefluxMD.com, a website solely dedicated to reflux disease, with resources, testimonials and a complete GERD stage assessment to determine how far their disease has progressed.

It is my hope that through patient education and empowerment we can reverse the course of reflux disease and improve the quality of life for those suffering from GERD.

Dr. Johnson is a board-certified general surgeon with Premier Surgical Associates in Palm Springs and can be reached at (760) 424.8224.



CHECK, CHANGE, CONTROL

American Heart Association program launches in east valley

By Cindy Stillman

It has been an exciting time to be part of the American Heart Association Coachella Valley team as we continue to ramp up our community health efforts.

In October, we launched a free heart-healthy monitoring program for seniors in east Coachella Valley called CHECK, CHANGE, CONTROL. It is a four-month bi-lingual (English and Spanish) blood pressure program, which includes a self-monitoring system that seniors can utilize to track and monitor their blood pressure, and then send the information to their doctors. The program, which runs through February, also has education/awareness and nutrition components delivered via hands-on workshops.

According to recently published data from HARC, the Health Assessment Resource Center, high blood pressure (or hypertension) rates among east Riverside County seniors are as high as 41.5% for individuals of "normal weight" and 57.3% for individuals considered to be overweight/obese.

Our Valley is one of the first to offer the AHA model program which launched simultaneously at both the Indio and Coachella Senior Centers. These centers were chosen because of their mission to enhance the quality of life for the region's culturally diverse aging population.

CHECK, CHANGE, CONTROL goals are simple: 1. increase awareness of the connection between hypertension and other chronic and debilitating health concerns; 2. increase the number of individuals identified as hypertensive/pre-hypertensive; and 3. increase regular monitoring of blood pressure to ensure adequate prevention and control.

High blood pressure is one of the most common causes of stroke, the 4th leading killer in the US, because it puts unnecessary stress on blood vessel walls, causing them to thicken and deteriorate. In the US, someone suffers a stroke every 40 seconds.

Fortunately, many strokes are preventable. The American Heart Association and the American Stroke Association want you to invest in your heart health in order to reduce your stroke risk. These six actions are key to reducing your risk of stroke:

- Know your blood pressure, blood sugar and blood cholesterol numbers and work to keep them in a healthy range.
- Be physically active and exercise regularly.
- Adopt a healthy diet.
- Limit alcohol consumption.
- Avoid cigarette smoke. If you smoke, seek help to stop now.
- Learn to recognize the warning signs of a stroke and how to take action.

While some risk factors can't be changed, stroke is not inevitable just because you have an uncontrollable risk factor. It simply means you need to pay special attention to risk factors that can be eliminated or controlled.

CHECK, CHANGE, CONTROL is brought to the Coachella Valley by the Auen Foundation.

Cindy Stillman is the Executive Director of the American Heart Association's Coachella Valley team and can be reached at (760) 346.8109. For more information on heart health and the signs of stroke, visit www.heart.org

Hypertension rates among east Riverside County seniors are as high as 41.5% for individuals of normal weight and 57.3% of those overweight.
- HARC Data 2010

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Are My Silver Fillings Safe?

By Lauren Del Sarto

In the field of dentistry, there is a movement towards holistic or biological dentistry. The practice is fairly new and many contest its principles; however, the environmental stance is the primary driver: silver amalgam fillings contain mercury, and mercury in our water and food sources can be harmful to our health.

So, are the amalgam fillings in your mouth bad for your health?

"We are not replacing restorations just for the sake of doing so," states Dr. Nick Baumann of Palm Desert Smiles. "There is an average lifespan on most types of dental restorations, so you will probably need a replacement one day, or you may choose to have your amalgam fillings replaced before they begin to break down. It is good to know your options."

According to Dr. Nick, the reason many doctors have moved away from these practices is the concern over these fillings, and the fact that there are now several restoration alternatives that have superior esthetics and are more biocompatible. He notes that the American Dental Association still claims that mercury amalgam fillings are a safe, acceptable option, but not everyone supports this statement.

Nick joined his father, Dr. Bruce Baumann, in his 30-year Desert practice after graduating from NYU, the first school of dentistry to discontinue the routine use of amalgam fillings. "The statistics showed that an estimated 40% of the mercury in the New York harbor is due to dental practices. As NYU sees an average of 1,300 patients a day, you can imagine the environmental footprint it would have." Norway, Denmark, and Sweden have banned the use of mercury in dental amalgams because of environmental concerns, and in Sweden's case also from concerns over its effect on human health.¹

Dr. Bruce started incorporating holistic practices 10 years ago, including established protocols for amalgam removal, the use of chemical-free products, and natural lines of toothpastes and rinses.

Dr. Nick explains that the greatest exposure to mercury vapors are when the fillings are placed and removed, thus there are specific protocols established to minimize exposure. "During removal, we work to limit how much is going into the patient's lungs, as well as our own. We use a special suction system in the mouth and also put the patient on an outside source of oxygen to minimize exposure through nose inhalation, among other protocols."

Improved biocompatible options available today include composites, a type of plastic (most now BPA-free); porcelains which are sturdier than composites; and precious metals like gold. "Gold and porcelain ceramics are pressed, milled (organically made) or cast as opposed to a chemical reaction," explains Nick.

In addition, Dr. Nick adds, some people have metal sensitivities so the components of implants, partials and fillings need to be considered on a case by case basis. "I had a patient in today who said she has had inflammation in her eyes for 10 years that she thinks is caused by the partial in her mouth, which may indeed be the case." Partial are generally made of metals such as chromium, nickel, and cobalt and up to 2-5% of the population are sensitive to these metals.

Knowing the concerns, options and practices available allows us to make the best individual choices.

Dr. Bruce Baumann and Dr. Nick Baumann can be reached at (760) 568.3602.

Reference: 1) Dental Mercury Use Banned in Norway, Sweden and Denmark Because Composites Are Adequate Replacements (press release) Mercury Policy Project. 3 January 2008.



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Best Vision Ever? At This Age?

Improved lenses now offered for cataract surgery

By Wallace Goldban, MD

There are approximately 2.8 million cataract surgeries performed in the U.S. each year, and it is very likely that one day you will need this surgery to improve your vision. Today a successful surgery is not only improved vision but vision good enough to drive without glasses. This is an exciting time in the evolution of cataract surgery because there are so many choices patients have to rehabilitate their vision after surgery and, in some cases, see better than they ever have.

A cataract is a clouding of the natural lens that causes decreased vision. Aging causes cataracts, but certain medications like steroids, radiation and high blood sugars from diabetes can cause cataracts to grow. The only treatment for cataracts once vision has deteriorated is to have surgery. Usually when vision is worse than 20/40 patients need to consider this option because this vision is required to drive in most states.

The first step in determining whether you need cataract surgery is to have a comprehensive examination by an ophthalmologist. Your eyeglass prescription will be checked and your eyes dilated to ensure that it is the cataract causing your decreased vision and not the wrong glasses or another disease like macular degeneration or glaucoma. If cataract surgery is indicated, this is the time to discuss the kind of lens you want to be implanted.


Cataract surgery is completed through a very small incision, using a technique called phacoemulsification, which breaks the cataract into many pieces and then sucks the cataract out of the eye. Through that small incision a new lens is inserted into the eye, and this lens is customized to your eye through extensive preoperative measurements. The standard monofocal lens is used in most cases, as this lens is covered completely by insurance and will correct your distance vision only. The results of this lens are excellent. If a patient has an astigmatism (a curved cornea) they will still need glasses to see clearly if the standard lens is used.

However, there is an upgraded lens, a Toric lens, that can be chosen to correct distance vision clearly in patients with astigmatism. Patients who choose either the Toric lens or the standard monofocal lens will still need reading glasses as these lenses only correct distance vision. There is another premium lens, called the Restor, Rezoom or Crystalens that will correct both distance and reading vision. In fact, 80 to 90% of patients who receive this lens do not have to wear glasses for driving, reading or using the computer.

While being diagnosed with cataracts might seem like a scary diagnosis, the reality is that cataract surgery is extremely successful, resulting in over 95% of patients having improved vision. In the post op period, it is important to use the eyedrops as prescribed for the healing process which takes a few weeks.

After surgery, you might find yourself seeing better than you ever have, and may not need glasses for reading or driving.

Dr. Wallace Goldban is a board-certified ophthalmologist specializing in Lasik surgery and cataract removal. He has over 20 years of experience and is a graduate of the Albert Einstein College of Medicine. He has office locations in Palm Springs and Palm Desert and can be reached at (760) 320.8497.



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Medicare and Obamacare

By Peter Lipton, MD

Medicare, the government program that guarantees access to health insurance for Americans 65 or older, has been around for 48 years. Despite nearly a half century of existence, and tremendous popularity, Medicare decisions can be a bit perplexing when you confront them for the first time. The implementation of the Affordable Care Act, known informally as Obamacare, is adding to the confusion. I'm a doctor, not an insurance expert, but one of my specialties is gerontology so I have considerable experience with Medicare patients. Will Obamacare affect Medicare? Yes. It already has. But before I try to sort out the realities and myths for you, let's talk about Medicare, in general, first.

If you are 65 or are about to be, you are probably aware that Medicare is broken up into an alphabet soup; Parts A, B, C, and D. There are supplemental plans you can add which can substantially lower your out-of-pocket costs. You might want to cover long-term care, dental, hearing and vision. Meanwhile, Medicare Open Enrollment is going on right now. This is the relatively short window when current Medicare recipients can make changes to their coverage, changes that take effect in the new year. The medical group I belong to, Empire Physicians holds free, informative Medicare seminars during this time. Many groups do this and if I could, I'd write you a prescription to attend one! They really help clarify the choices you have and help you make the best decisions.

Now let's separate fact from fiction, reality from rumor, regarding Medicare and Obamacare.

I'm not sure how this got started but Medicare is not ending. Most experts believe Medicare will become stronger once the Affordable Care Act is fully in effect.

The rumor that seniors receiving Medicare will have to buy more insurance to comply with the new law is not true. One of the controversial, key provisions of the ACA is the individual mandate. It requires people who are uninsured to purchase coverage or pay a penalty. If you have even the most basic Medicare, you have coverage. You don't need to buy anything more.

Have you heard that Medicare patients will pay more for meds under Obamacare? Well, this is true, but not for everyone. Seniors who earn more than \$85,000 per person or \$170,000 per couple will pay slightly more for

prescription drug coverage (that's Part D of Medicare). This will affect about 5% of Medicare beneficiaries. The other 95% should see drug costs go down. You've probably heard of the "donut hole." It's basically a coverage gap which the ACA is expected to fully close by 2020. In the meantime, if you fall into the gap, there are discounts you can take advantage of. There's a 47.5% discount on brand name drugs and a 21% discount on generics. The discount is applied right at the pharmacy -- you don't have to do anything to get it.

Medicare premiums are going up! Yes, that's true, but they always have. As costs go up, premiums follow and that has been the case long before the ACA was implemented. Here again, individuals earning more than \$85,000 and couples earning more than \$170,000 pay more for Medicare Part-B coverage. They've been paying more since 2007 before the ACA.

Rumor has it that Obamacare will prevent Medicare patients from seeing their current physicians. Nothing in the Affordable Care Act changes which doctors Medicare patients can see, but hospitals, physicians, pharmacies and other providers can withdraw from Medicare.

So, if your doctor continues to accept Medicare patients, you can continue to see your doctor.

One of the best ways the ACA has affected Medicare is in preventative services. Medicare now covers many without charge, including mammograms, colonoscopies, colorectal cancer screening, and vaccinations. Simply put, these can save your life. Obamacare is now part of the mix. It has already had an effect on Medicare with more to come. No one can be 100% certain where Medicare is headed because no one knows where medical discovery will lead us. We have to keep in mind that it's only been 85 years since penicillin was discovered. It's only been 61 years since Jonas Salk and the polio vaccine. It's only been 46 years since the first heart transplant. One

hundred years ago, the average lifespan for a man was 50 and for a woman, 55. Modern medicine is changing both the quantity and quality of life.

Dr. Peter Lipton is Board Certified in Internal and Geriatric Medicine and located in Palm Desert. Dr. Lipton is with Empire Physicians Medical Group and has been serving the Coachella Valley for more than 15-years. For more information about Empire Medicare Seminars, call (760) 699.6390.



Dr. Peter Lipton of Palm Desert

"If your doctor continues to accept Medicare patients, you can continue to see your doctor"

- Dr. Lipton



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Advanced Imaging Shows Great Promise for Detection of Alzheimer's

By Christopher R. Hancock, MD

Alzheimer's disease affects one in eight Americans over the age of 65. Approximately 5.4 million Americans suffer from Alzheimer's disease and 82 million are expected worldwide by 2050.

Unfortunately there is still no cure for Alzheimer's but researchers are continually working to understand the hallmarks of the disease so that they can find a cure. One of the most difficult aspects of their studies is that most of their results are determined through pathology after the patient has died. A more effective way to study the cause and effect of different types of therapies is to measure the results "in vivo," while the patient is alive.

In recent years Advanced Imaging has become an essential tool for identifying areas of the brain that are affected when dementia is present. These tools assist physicians in diagnosing Mild Cognitive Impairment (MCI) from Alzheimer's disease and other dementia causing etiologies and are performed while the patient is living. Currently, there are three different types of imaging that are showing great promise in diagnosing Alzheimer's.

Structural Imaging looks at the brain as a whole and looks for changes in shape, position or volume of the brain. Today, there is a diagnostic MRI with 3D volumetric quantitative analysis (NeuroQuant) that can measure the volume of the hippocampus, temporal and parietal lobes and other structures of the brain. Alzheimer's occurs when there is atrophy (shrinkage) of the volume of the brain, and specifically the hippocampus. Structural imaging can also be used to help discern Alzheimer's from other potential entities such as vascular dementia, Huntington's disease, Parkinson's disease and pseudo-dementia related to major depression.

Functional Imaging looks at how well the cells in various brain regions are working by showing how actively they are using sugar or oxygen. PET/CT is used with fluorodeoxyglucose (FDG) to find areas of the brain that have reduced use of sugar which is often associated with memory, learning and problem solving.

Molecular Imaging uses highly targeted radiotracers to detect cellular or chemical changes linked to a specific disease. Most recently, the FDA approved an isotope called Amyvid for PET/CT that specifically identifies amyloid plaques in the brain which are associated with Alzheimer's disease. These plaques are thought to hinder normal brain function and promote degeneration of brain tissue. While the presence of plaque isn't a definitive diagnosis of Alzheimer's as a small amount of plaque is common in older people, the absence of plaque is confirmation that the patient does not have Alzheimer's and that their mental decline is due to another cause.

These exams may be used clinically to diagnosis a patient and by researchers to determine the effectiveness of new drugs in hopes of finding a cure.

As our Baby-boomers continue to age, Alzheimer's will become a more common disease. However, just like other diseases, Alzheimer's can be alleviated by managing your physical health. You can reduce the risk of cognitive impairment with physical activity, a healthy diet, keeping your mind active, maintaining healthy blood sugars and good heart health, while reducing salt intake and alcohol consumption.

Dr. Hancock is a Board Certified Neuroradiologist and can be reached at Desert Medical Imaging (760) 694.9559. www.desertmedicalimaging.com

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Gene Therapy May Save Sight New hope for macular degeneration patients

By Greg Evans, OD

Macular degeneration is the number one cause of permanent vision loss in patients over 55. Now genetic analysis is helping to reduce the risk of vision loss by assisting doctors in identifying the risk of progression and the best treatment for that individual based on their individual DNA.

This is one of the first applications of gene-optimized preventative care in eye care available at the office level. If widely adopted, it has significant potential to reduce vision loss.

In standard age-related macular degeneration treatment, eye doctors try to predict who will progress to the advanced stage so treatment may be instituted in a timely manner. While we know factors such as advancing age, smoking, high blood pressure and other vascular diseases are

associated with progression, there have been few solid ways to calculate a particular individual's risk. Of all the risk factors, genetics play the most important role being the underlying cause in 86% of cases.

Now genetic testing can identify a person's individual risk of progressing to advanced macular degeneration, and subsequent analysis can help determine which follow-up timeline and which supplement type will minimize risk for that particular patient.

We learned in the Age-Related Eye Disease Study (AREDS) that certain antioxidant vitamins and zinc will slow the risk of progression by about 25%; however, further genetic testing on study participants determined that in those with certain genetic profiles, the risk could be further reduced and in those with other genetic profiles,

risks were actually increased by following the AREDS protocol. Thus, they concluded that one's genetic makeup affects how he/she will respond to certain treatment.

The treatment protocol recommendations developed from subsequent genetic analysis of the 2002 AREDS patients now include antioxidants plus zinc (AREDS and AREDS2 formulae); antioxidants alone; and zinc alone versus the same AREDS formulae for all macular degeneration patients.

While this new technology offers doctors significant assistance in creating a care plan, multiple factors need to be considered for optimal health and results. Based on genetic assessment, up to 50% of patients should be taking high dose supplements other than those in the AREDS and AREDS2 formulae.

Let's say, for example, your genetic assessment results indicate that you should avoid antioxidants as a treatment protocol. Does that mean you should avoid all supplements with antioxidants? Patients should continue to use a multivitamin as long as they don't have high dose anti-

oxidants (Lutein or Zeaxanthin). If they follow these recommendations they can reduce the average 5-year progression rate to 8% (versus 29% for taking a placebo, 29% for the standard AREDS formulae and 38% for antioxidants only).

Vita Risk (supplement component) is included in the Macular Risk profile (15-gene profile) but can also be ordered as a stand-alone test. If you have already had genetic testing for macular degeneration, ask your doctor if the "Macular Risk" test was done. There are three different genetic companies providing testing. If so those results can be referenced to make treatment recommendations. If you have not had it done, and you are a Medicare or PPO patient with either macular degeneration or macular drusen, then the test is covered. If you have an HMO or are a private pay patient, you may have either of the genetic tests performed for a cash fee.

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



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There Is a Fungus Among Us!

Technology for nail fungus now offers medication-free success

Nail fungus is not only annoying and embarrassing, but can also be hazardous to the health of your nail long-term. Although many topical ointments claim to cure the condition, because of their inability to penetrate the nail, the standardly prescribed treatment is oral medications. However, a new technology, hot laser therapy, is proving to be a successful, medication-free option.

According to Dr. Steven Ginex of Palm Desert Podiatry Center, nail fungus is actually an infection caused by a germ common in the environment. It is the same fungus that causes athlete's foot and the two often appear simultaneously. Most people think they get it at the gym, but you can get it from simply walking around on moist surfaces.

"Nail fungus is quite common and we see a lot of cases in our practice," says Dr. Ginex. As for the cause, he says studies show it can run in families – and not just those who live in the same environment – demonstrating a genetic disposition. And some people are more susceptible than others. "Nail fungus in the foot is more common for people with diabetes and poor circulation because their bodies can't fight off the infection."



Before and after results at 6 months post PinPointe treatment

How does the therapy work? Using heat (versus a cold laser like those used for pain), the laser penetrates the nail and the heat kills the fungus. Ginex recommends 2-3 treatments, 2-3 months apart depending on how much fungus there is. "This therapy still takes time to work and depends on how quickly your nails grow," he adds. Your metabolism determines this factor, and he does not believe there is science to support that nails grow quicker during certain times of the year. "There is no immediate improvement, but as the nail grows out, it grows clear, which is what we want to see."

Nail fungus is contagious and does spread to other areas which is a good reason to treat it sooner than later.

It can also lead to a nail thickening over time which can cause nail deformity. "Once the nail gets too thick, it damages the root and causes it to continue to grow thicker which is difficult to reverse."

Ginex uses the PinPointe FootLaser, one of an estimated four on the market FDA-cleared specifically for nail fungus. According to their website, clinical studies have shown an 80% effective success rate.

"In our practice, we find laser therapy very effective in treating nail fungus," says Dr. Ginex. "It is also safer than medications which must be taken for three months up to a year and don't standardly, but can have side effects." No side effects have been reported from the laser therapy other than a slight irritation for a few days following treatment. The only contra indicator is for those very sensitive to light (as in Albinism).

Dr. Steven Ginex is the Director of Palm Desert Podiatry Center. He has been practicing in the desert for 15 years and can be reached at (760) 340.3232.

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A SECOND ACT

Supported by the Valley's Stroke Recovery Center

By Nicky Vallee

"Aside from losing my wife, it was the most devastating experience of my life." Those who suffer a stroke know the incident is always a life-altering experience. For Robert Stack Pierce, the stroke he experienced in 2012 was a defining moment in a life filled with high expectations and much success.

"Since my stroke, I've had time to think about what happened and I see things differently than I did at first," he says. Today, he relies on the free support and therapy provided at the Stroke Recovery Center in Palm Springs, a place that he says has made a big difference in his life.

Pierce has certainly never lacked talent, or the determination to succeed. At a young age, he was a state boxing champion while also showing great promise in the game of baseball. After high school, Pierce joined the Army, becoming an Airborne Engineer and playing baseball in the Special Services. His remarkable skills on the field were soon recognized by the Cleveland Indians, who promptly signed him to a Major League contract. Shortly after, his contract was sold to the Milwaukee Braves, and Pierce remained with that team for six years until retiring in 1960.

Pierce and his wife then moved to Los Angeles, and in 1968 she encouraged him to audition for his first play, *The Ebonites*. He diligently studied his craft and worked extensively with a repertory company. Over the years, Pierce developed a reputable career as an award-winning thespian, appearing in countless stage, screen, and television productions.

After his wife passed away in 1988, Pierce retired from acting and became a stage director. It was during this time that he was pulled back into the sport he loved: baseball. For six years, he enjoyed a thriving second career as a high school coach: until that stroke unexpectedly sidelined him last year.

"Despite what has happened to me, I continue to see others who are much worse off than I am, and have come to see myself as a very lucky person," he admits.

Stack acknowledges that the stroke has slowed him down a bit and has greatly affected his sense of balance, a painful irony for the once spry and quick athlete. Despite these physical challenges, he remains active, exercising regularly at the Stroke Recovery Center in Palm Springs and making sure to spend quality time with friends and family. He firmly believes that his lifelong passions for baseball and acting have greatly aided him in his recovery.

"I've used my acting and baseball experience to really push myself. Sometimes it's easy, and sometimes it's not," Pierce admits. "When I would stand in the batter's box and hit a baseball, balance was always very important, and I'm working to regain that skill now. As an actor, I relied on memorizing lines and learning a part, and I am using some of that discipline now to help me retain what I'm learning in my therapy at the Stroke Recovery Center."

Founded in 1978 by Dr. Irving Hirshleifer, the Stroke Recovery Center offers long-term rehabilitation to the survivors of stroke and traumatic brain injury, along with support for their families, caregivers, and loved ones. Services are structured to each client's need and may include speech therapy, counseling, education, nutrition, socialization, and just plain fun. All services are free, since insurance coverage does not currently exist for the long-term treatment of stroke or TBI.

"For clients like Robert, being part of the community here provides the additional support needed to aid recovery from the problems that come with a stroke," says Center CEO Bev Greer. "We are anticipating breaking ground on a new exercise facility before the end of the year, which has been made possible through some very generous donations from our clients and our loyal supporters. This facility will greatly enhance the work that we do, and will expand our ability to offer even more exercise options."

Never one to resist a challenge, Pierce is looking to start hitting the links here in the desert, having previously played in several tournaments as a celebrity golfer. It would appear that this man of the stage and the baseball diamond is preparing for his second act.

"You never know what you're going to encounter in life. I know that there's more for me to do," he says.

Stroke Recovery Center currently serves close to 300 patients per year, with 10,200 patient visits annually. All of the Center's patients participate in advantageous recreation/socialization therapy programs, and all therapy is free of charge.

For more information, please call (760) 323.7676 or visit www.strokerecoverycenter.org.



Actor Robert Stack Pierce



Dedication to rehab is preparing Stack for his second act

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Preventing “Baby Bump” Back Pain

By D’Arcy Hlavin, PT, DPT

Low back pain (LBP) is a common complaint among pregnant women. According to the American Pregnancy Association, nearly 50% of all pregnant women will suffer from LBP, either during pregnancy, or during the post-partum period.¹ Many women experience LBP with their first pregnancy, and the majority of sufferers state that it hinders their daily activities. So taking preventative measures to minimize the pain is a good idea.

There are many theories as to what causes LBP during pregnancy including:

- Hormonal changes: Relaxin production increases during pregnancy, causing ligamentous laxity of the back and pelvis.
- Increasing abdominal size: Weight gain during pregnancy can shift the center of gravity anteriorly, which in turn increases the stress on the lower back.
- Compression and decreased height of the spine: Due to the increase in size and weight shift of the abdomen, the spine experiences different compressive loads than usual, and takes longer to recover after activities.
- Stretched abdominal muscles: In order to accommodate the increase in size, the muscles stretch causing them to weaken and fatigue faster during activity.

Chronic LBP prior to pregnancy (or during a previous pregnancy) and/or a history of pelvic trauma are also contributing factors to developing LBP during pregnancy.

Although the various causes and risk factors during pregnancy make LBP seem inevitable, there are numerous ways to prevent it. A 2011 systematic review investigating the diagnosis and treatment of low back pain during pregnancy showed that therapeutic exercise is effective in both the prevention and treatment during pregnancy.² An earlier

study in 2007 determined that a 12-week training program during pregnancy can prevent LBP at 36 weeks.³ Along with the proper exercise routine, learning the use of proper posture, body, and lifting mechanics can help ease the strain of daily activities and help prevent any increased and unnecessary load on the lower back and spine. It is also possible that increased strength and flexibility can lead to an easier labor and potentially, a faster recovery.

Who can help? Physical therapists are experts in the field of body mechanics and are able to teach pregnant women the proper way to lift, hold, sit, stand, and lie down to protect their back and abdomen through the demands of their daily routine. A physical therapist can also prescribe therapeutic exercise programs to increase strength and endurance of the muscles affected by pregnancy. An important part of physical therapy is incorporating the exercises and skills learned into the home environment, and to practice them on an ongoing basis.

Low back pain has a good prognosis, and most women recover within the first few months after childbirth. Physical therapy can be a proactive solution to LBP and may help to make pregnancy a more positive experience.

D’Arcy Hlavin is a Doctor of Physical Therapy with Avid Physical Therapy skilled in treating musculoskeletal issues such as low back pain. She has a special interest in women’s health and pregnancy related musculoskeletal issues and can be reached at darcy.hlavin@avidphysicaltherapy.com. (760) 347.6195.

References: 1) American Pregnancy Association. Pregnancy and Physical Therapy. <http://americanpregnancy.org/pregnancyhealth/physicaltherapy.html> 2) Katonis P, et al. Pregnancy-related low back pain. Hippokratia. 2011; 15(3):205-210; 3) Morkved S, Salvesen KA, Schei B, Lydersen S, Bo K. Does group training during pregnancy prevent lumbopelvic pain? A randomized clinical trial. Acta Obstet Gynecol Scand. 2007;86:276-282.

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My Head Is Spinning

Dizziness with Dr. Kato

Dear Dr. Kato: For the past 3 weeks, I've experienced dizziness nearly every morning when I turn over to get out of bed. I feel like I am spinning inside my head, and it is very frightening! If I lie perfectly still, I'm okay. Can you tell me what is causing this?

Dear Reader: Dizziness is a very common symptom. In fact, according to the National Institutes of Health it is the 3rd most common problem that brings patients into their primary care physician's office. There are many different causes of dizziness, ranging from inner ear disease, to stroke, to heart disease and anxiety. The specific details about what exactly you are experiencing, along with the provoking and alleviating factors, can be very helpful to your doctor to make a diagnosis.

In your case, the dizziness is almost certainly due to Benign Paroxysmal Positional Vertigo, commonly known as "BPPV," which is a sensation of true spinning vertigo, caused by loose calcium particles (or "crystals") in the balance canal of the inner ear. These calcium crystals play an important role in our balance; however, they are normally immobile. When they break loose (which can happen spontaneously, or can be caused by trauma), they are subject to gravitational forces when we move our head. This then causes the fluid of the inner ear to flow in a circular motion, and we perceive this as a sensation of spinning.

Individuals with BPPV have vertigo, which is provoked by movement. Typically, turning over in bed, or looking upward brings on the symptoms. The vertigo is brief, lasts no more than 20 seconds and abates when one takes the head out of the offending position. However, it can be rapid and violent, and hence, rather frightening. As long as the person is not moving, there is no vertigo, although there may be a sensation of being slightly off-kilter.

The diagnosis of BPPV is made in the office, by taking a careful history and performing a physical examination. The Dix-Hallpike and Semont maneuvers are procedures that are done in the office and are used to diagnose BPPV.

In most instances, the condition is self-resolving, taking days or weeks to gradually go away. However, it can occasionally linger for months. The good news for those experiencing persistent vertigo, is that BPPV is curable! A non-invasive procedure, the Epley maneuver, in which the displaced calcium crystals are repositioned and moved out of the balance canal, is curative in >80% of patients. This procedure is performed in the office, by an ENT physician, or balance therapist, and takes a matter of minutes.

It is important to keep in mind that not all dizziness is BPPV. There is a plethora of other inner ear and non-inner ear causes of dizziness. Patients with dizziness should see their primary care doctor or an ENT physician if an inner ear cause is suspected.

Dr. Kato is the founder of The Ear Institute in Palm Desert. Her top priority is improving the quality of life of her patients. Dr. Kato can be reached at: (760) 565.3900.

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Gratitude: Nature's Happy Pill

Continued from page 1

like newness and change and positive emotions wear off quickly. We adapt to positive life circumstances so that before too long, the new car, the new spouse, the new house don't feel so new and exciting anymore. But gratitude makes us appreciate the value of something, and when we appreciate the value of something, we extract more benefits from it and are less likely to take it for granted.

Gratitude blocks toxic, negative emotions. Envy, resentment, and regret are emotions that can destroy our happiness. There's even recent evidence, including a 2008 study by psychologist Alex Wood in the *Journal of Research in Personality*, showing that gratitude can reduce the frequency and duration of episodes of depression. This makes sense: You cannot feel envious and grateful at the same time. They're incompatible feelings. If you're grateful, you can't resent someone for having something that you don't. Those are very different ways of relating to the world.

Grateful people are more stress resistant. There are a number of studies showing that in the face of serious trauma, adversity, and suffering, people who have a grateful disposition recover more quickly. I believe gratitude gives people a perspective from which they can interpret negative life events and help guard themselves against post-traumatic stress and lasting anxiety.

Grateful people have a higher sense of self-worth. When you're grateful, you have the sense that someone else is looking out for you—someone else has provided for your well-being, or you notice a network of relationships, past and present, of people who are responsible for helping you get to where you are right now.

So how do you get there?

How do you go beyond occasionally feeling grateful to actually becoming a more grateful person? It doesn't happen with the flick of a switch; it takes awareness and practice.

The first step is to recognize the mindset that may be holding you back. "Practicing gratitude can be at odds with some deeply ingrained psychological tendencies," says Emmons. One of these is self-serving bias, the belief that when good things happen to us, it's because of something we did, but when bad things happen, we blame other people or circumstances. "When we're truly grateful, we give credit to other people for our success. We accomplished some of it ourselves, yes, but we widen our range of attribution to also say, 'I had teachers, mentors, siblings, peers—other people who assisted me along the way.' That's very different from a self-serving bias."

Entitlement, the feeling that we deserve the good fortune that comes our way, is also self-defeating. "With gratitude comes the realization that we get more than we deserve. If you deserve everything, if you're entitled to everything, it makes it a lot harder to be grateful for anything."

And then there is the need for control. "Gratitude goes against our need to feel in control of our environment. Sometimes with gratitude you just have to accept life as it is and be grateful for what you have."

Practice makes perfect

Most professionals agree that an easy first step in practicing gratitude is to start a daily gratitude journal. Emmons notes that in their studies, this simple concept has delivered overwhelming results in as little as three weeks.

"This practice works because it consciously, intentionally focuses our attention on developing more grateful thinking and on eliminating ungrateful thoughts." He adds that with a gratitude journal, we start to see the gifts in our life as new and exciting. Other practices Emmons recommends include:

Remember the Bad. To be grateful in your current state, it is helpful to remember the hard times that you once experienced. When you remember how difficult life used to be and how far you have come, you set up an explicit contrast in your mind, and this contrast is fertile ground for gratefulness.

Make a Vow to Practice Gratitude. Research shows that taking an oath to perform a behavior increases the likelihood that the action will be executed. Therefore, write your own gratitude vow, which could be as simple as "I vow to count my blessings each day," and post it somewhere where you will be reminded of it every day.

Engage Your Senses. Through our senses—the ability to touch, see, smell, taste, and hear—we gain an appreciation of what it means to be human and of what an incredible miracle it is to be alive. Seen through the lens of gratitude, the human body is not only a miraculous construction, but also a gift.

Use Visual Reminders. Because the two primary obstacles to gratefulness are forgetfulness and a lack of mindful awareness, visual reminders can serve as cues to trigger thoughts of gratitude. Often times, the best visual reminders are other people.

Watch Your Language. Grateful people have a particular linguistic style that uses the language of gifts, givers, blessings, blessed, fortune, fortunate, and abundance. In gratitude, you should not focus on how inherently good you are, but rather on the inherently good things that others have done on your behalf.

Go Through the Motions. If you go through grateful motions - smiling, saying thank you, and sending written words of thanks - the emotion of gratitude should be triggered.

Think Outside the Box. If you want to make the most out of opportunities to flex your gratitude muscles, you must creatively look for new situations and circumstances in which to feel grateful.

More scientific research on this beneficial attribute is underway. The Greater Good Science Center at the University of California, Berkeley—in collaboration with the University of California, Davis—is launching a \$5.6 million, three-year project, *Expanding the Science and Practice of Gratitude*. The goals of this initiative are to expand the scientific database of gratitude in the areas of human health, personal and relational well-being, and developmental science; and to promote evidence-based practices of gratitude in medical, educational, and organizational settings (schools, workplaces, homes and communities); and in doing so to engage the public in a larger cultural conversation about the role of gratitude in civil society.

But it can start with you...becoming aware, practicing gratitude, paying it forward, and making every day thanks-giving. "I do believe that people who live a life of pervasive thankfulness really do experience it differently than people who cheat themselves out of life by not feeling grateful," says Emmons. "Gratitude allows us to participate more in our life. We notice the positives more, and that magnifies the pleasures you receive from life. Instead of adapting to goodness, we celebrate goodness."

For an inspirational start, please see "A Good Day" By Brother David Steindl-Rast on the next page (14).

Sources: 1) Greater Good, The Science of a Meaningful Life, University of California – Berkeley; 2) Robert A. Emmons, Ph.D. Thanks! How Practicing Gratitude Can Make You Happier. 2nd ed. (New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 2008)

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Where Does Transcendental Meditation Take You?

By Lauren Del Sarto

I had only heard of Transcendental Meditation™ (TM®) in the George Strait song “All My Ex’s Live in Texas.” Because of these circumstances, he lived in Tennessee, and through transcendental meditation he would return to Texas each night. “But I always come back to myself, long before daylight.”

From this country classic, I always thought of TM® as a metaphysical practice of using the mind to transcend the body to a different place. I’ve come to find that this is not the case – at all.

The non-profit Maharishi Foundation recently opened a TM® center in Palm Springs, and I wanted to learn more. In my conversation with director Dennis Rowe, I came to understand that TM® is actually an effortless meditation technique aimed at quieting the mind for enhanced productivity and health. I also learned that the practice is not “out there” at all; it is actually used in our schools as ‘Quiet Time,’ successfully decreasing truancy rates and increasing grade point averages. It is practiced around the globe by millions, and has even been introduced in war-ravaged areas offering hope and peace to those who need it most.

What makes TM® different from other forms of meditation? “The fact that it is effortless,” says Rowe. “With other meditations, you are controlling your mind to concentrate on your breath, a mantra, or even clearing your mind, which most will agree takes a lot of effort. With TM®, the goal is to draw your mind inward where it will find an endless reservoir of peace, creativity and intelligence. It is a very satisfying place and your mind will naturally and effortlessly transcend there if given the opportunity. We call it a state of restful alertness.”

It is this effortless transcending that is responsible for the large range of documented benefits realized from TM® and published in over 350 peer-reviewed scientific journals. “We use only a fraction of our mind’s capacity,” states Rowe, “and research has shown that the TM® practice enlivens total brain functioning, where all the different parts of the brain begin to work together harmoniously, which is a natural basis for clearer thinking and more intelligent reasoning.”

The prefrontal cortex is like the CEO of the brain. It is the higher-order functions such as moral reasoning, logic, planning and decision making. The back of the brain is referred to as the primitive part of the brain and is more emotionally-based. Both parts serve a purpose. Rowe adds, “If someone is going to hit you in the face, you don’t want your logical brain spending time analyzing the situation; you need to react with the primitive brain. But you don’t want this portion running your life.”

Science shows that during TM® practice, blood flow increases to the prefrontal cortex—bringing nourishment and oxygen to that important area and creating calm and clearer thinking—and decreases blood flow to the primitive area of the brain.

This is only one of the many benefits I learned about, and I came to understand that Transcendental Meditation™ takes you inward, and can bring you a lifetime of rewards.

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A Good Day

Written and as Spoken by Brother David Steindl-Rast

You think this is just another day in your life. It’s not just another day; it’s the one day that is given to you today. It’s given to you. It’s a gift. It’s the only gift that you have right now, and the only appropriate response is gratefulness.

If you do nothing else but to cultivate that response to the great gift that this unique day is, if you learn to respond as if it were the first day of your life, and the very last day, then you will have spent this day very well. Begin by opening your eyes and be surprised that you have eyes you can open, that incredible array of colors that is constantly offered to us for pure enjoyment.

Look at the sky. We so rarely look at the sky. We so rarely note how different it is from moment to moment with clouds coming and going. We just think of the weather, and even of the weather we don’t think of all the many nuances of weather. We just think of good weather and bad weather. This day right now has unique weather, maybe a kind that will never exactly in that form come again. The formation of clouds in the sky will never be the same that it is right now. Open your eyes. Look at that.

Look at the faces of people that you meet. Each one has an incredible story behind their face, a story that you could never fully fathom, not only their own story, but the story of their ancestors. We all go back so far. And in this present moment on this day all the people you meet, all that life from generations and from so many places all over the world, flows together and meets you here like a life-giving water, if you only open your heart and drink.

Open your heart to the incredible gifts that civilization gives to us. You flip a switch and there is electric light. You turn a faucet and there is warm water and cold water and drinkable water. It is a gift that millions and millions in the world will never experience.

So these are just a few of an enormous number of gifts to which you can open your heart.

And so I wish for you that you would open your heart to all these blessings and let them flow through you, that everyone whom you will meet on this day will be blessed by you; just by your eyes, by your smile, by your touch, just by your presence. Let the gratefulness overflow into blessing all around you, and then it will really be a good day.

Brother David is a highly-respected Benedictine monk, author and spiritual leader. We encourage you to listen to him speak these words in a beautiful video presented by Gratefulness.org and available on YouTube. <http://youtu.be/3Zl9puhwiw>



Historic Cancer Prevention Study Needs You

CPS-3

Residents of the Coachella Valley are being presented with an opportunity to participate in an historic study with the potential to change the face of cancer for future generations.

Men and women between the ages of 30 and 65 who have never been diagnosed with cancer are needed to participate in the American Cancer Society's Cancer Prevention Study-3 (CPS-3), which will enroll a diverse study group of 300,000 people across the nation. Individuals who enroll will help researchers better understand the lifestyle, environmental, and genetic factors that cause or prevent cancer. "All of us in the desert know someone who has been touched by cancer," says Russ Russell, volunteer chair of the American Cancer Society's (ACS) Desert Palms Leadership Council. "This is our chance to personally take action."

To enroll in the study, individuals complete two steps, one at their home computer, and one in person. At home, participants will log onto www.cps3palmsprings.org and sign up for an appointment day, fill out a survey, and sign an informed consent. As part of the in-person enrollment, individuals have their waist measured and give a small blood sample through Quest Diagnostics staff on site. Over the course of the study – which is anticipated to last 20 to 30 years – participants will be asked to fill out follow-up surveys every few years that will be sent to their home by mail or email.

"Many individuals diagnosed with cancer struggle to answer the question, 'What caused my cancer?' In many cases, we don't know the answer," said Alpha V. Patel, Ph.D., a

CPS-3 principal investigator. "CPS-3 will help us better understand what factors cause cancer, and once we know that, we can be better equipped to prevent it." Dr. Patel added, "Our previous cancer prevention studies have been instrumental in helping us identify some of the major factors that can affect cancer risk, and we can only do this if members of the community are willing to become involved."

Researchers will use the data from CPS-3 to build on evidence from a series of previous ACS studies that began in the 1950s and have collectively involved millions of volunteer participants. The Hammond-Horn Study and previous Cancer Prevention Studies (CPS-I, and CPS-II) have played a major role in understanding cancer prevention and risk, and have contributed significantly to the development of public health guidelines and recommendations. Those studies confirmed the link between cigarette smoking and lung cancer, demonstrated the link between larger waist size and increased death rates from cancer and other causes, and showed the considerable impact of air pollution on heart and lung conditions. The current study, CPS-III, began in 1982 and is still ongoing. But changes in lifestyle and in the understanding of cancer in the more than two decades since its launch make it important to begin a new study.

For more information or to learn how to become involved with CPS-3, visit cancer.org/cps3, email cps3@cancer.org, or call toll-free 1-888-604-5888. To be a part of the enrollment in the desert, make your appointment at www.cps3palmsprings.org.

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Nutritious Options for All

Efforts underway to increase access to healthier foods

By Doris Steadman

The Clinton Health Matters Initiative (CHMI) is making significant progress, thanks to the united efforts of numerous Valley organizations and non-profit groups.

One of the primary groups within the initiative is the Healthy Eating and Food Quality Workgroup whose goal is to enhance nutritional education and access to healthy food for all members of our community.

At their recent progress meeting, several organizations presented action steps they are taking to help achieve the bold steps outlined in the CHMI's Coachella Valley Blueprint for Action.

Lisa Houston of FIND Food Bank addressed the importance of having access to healthy food options within five miles of every Valley home. To provide access for those without, her organization is considering options for a "mobile grocer," a vehicle which could provide farmer's market produce at a regularly scheduled time in a given area.

Christy Porter of Hidden Harvest has been actively engaged in a program called "Just One Row." She is asking farmers to dedicate one row or more for her organization to glean produce after harvest is complete. Statistics show that 27% of produce is left after harvest, and Christy would like to see that produce go to further FIND Food Bank's efforts of distribution.

Hidden Harvest has also partnered with Coachella Valley High School to re-establish their 2 ½ acre farm at the school. A Hidden Harvest consultant will work with students for six months to get the fields established, and the students will then manage its progress. Many local farmers are helping with the effort as they are so pleased to see the farm working again. The plan is to grow produce which has the highest nutritional value for those who need it most, and the students working the farm will get credit for their endeavors. This project is sure to produce a few new farmers in the region as well!

Linea Pollett of the Alliance for a Healthier Generation is working with all three school districts to implement new wellness policies for staff and students. She stated that over 50% of Coachella Valley children are overweight or obese and emphasized the importance of getting parents, teachers and the whole community to support healthy food in the schools. She adds that education is key.

Humana has recently given the Alliance a grant to study all 4th grade students valley-wide. The students will record on a computer what they are eating weekly, their physical activity and their sleeping habits. HARC will work with the data and send out monthly reports to the students and the schools. This information will be used to motivate the masses.

This incredible group of people is working hard to help improve the nutritional health of our community. They are just one of a variety of workgroups taking action to make the Coachella Valley a healthier place to live.

To volunteer or collaborate, please call FIND Food Bank (760) 775.3663 or Hidden Harvest (760) 398.8183. For information on the CHMI, visit www.clintonfoundation.org/healthmatters.

Integrated Health Care for Our Furry Friends

By Lauren Del Sarto

When my little Bandito wouldn't let me pick him up, I was worried. Seven years ago, he had life-saving back surgery and therefore, I feared the worse. The next day he was unable to walk, so I loaded him and his bed in the car and we headed to the vet.

The diagnosis appeared to be a pinched sciatic nerve, but the prognosis was good – with steroids for inflammation, medications for pain, and bed rest, he should be better in a month or so. I asked the vet what he thought about acupuncture; to my surprise, he thought it was a great idea. So I picked up my little man and headed straight to the acupuncturist.

Bandit didn't seem to mind the needles at all. He loved the attention he was getting and dosed off into a relaxed state within minutes. He showed improvement after the first treatment and after the third was walking with no apparent pain.

On the fifth day, I took him back to Desert Dunes Veterinary Hospital, and they were amazed at how well he was doing. Although sciatic nerve recovery usually takes a month or so, the vet recommended we stop the meds since he was doing so well. By day ten, it was hard to keep him from jumping off the couch!

"Pain when picking up and the inability to jump on the bed are common

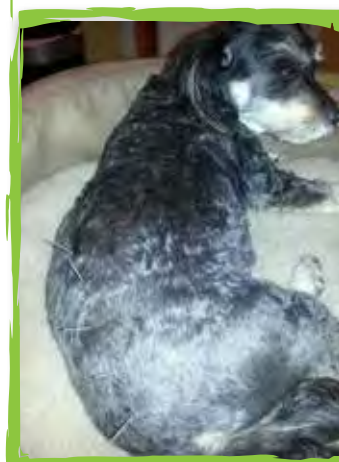
ailments we treat in pets," says Corina Morrison, DC, CCSP, who studied and practiced acupuncture in Sri Lanka. Dr. Morrison treats people at her Spine & Sport Clinic in Palm Desert three days a week, and animals two days a week at vet offices. "Other pet ailments include lameness issues that can't be identified, and geriatric conditions to help improve quality of life and minimize medications." She states that her work focuses on tendons and musculoskeletal issues, but she leaves the systemic care (internal) to the vets.

Morrison has seen great success from both her chiropractic and acupuncture work on pets. She is delighted that many vets now embrace the practices which are even offered in some veterinary schools.

Bandit's treatment was integrated health care at its best – where east meets west for enhanced patient care.

Kudos to the team at Desert Dunes Veterinary Hospital for their exceptional care of my little man, and for supporting integrated health care for our furry friends.

For acupuncture or chiropractic care for your pet, contact Dr. Corina Morrison at (760) 333.3686. People appointments can be made through The Spine & Sport Clinic at (760) 340.1958. For more information, visit www.thespineandsportclinic.com



Bandito's acupuncture accelerated his healing

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BECOME A MASSAGE CONNOISSEUR

The word connoisseur comes from the 18th Century when the word was used for a person who had a great deal of knowledge about gastronomy, art or any other discipline that pleased the senses. Today, the word connoisseur sometimes comes across with an air of pretension, yet when it comes to our own personal health, we should all strive to be connoisseurs.

Becoming a connoisseur requires enough experience and exposure to something to be able to cultivate exceptional taste. We've hopefully all had enough massages to say one was good and another not so good. Simply knowing the subtle nuance of touch through the healing practice of massage will help you to become a connoisseur.

Massage is a healing modality for the body when performed with focused intention and adept knowledge of the anatomy by the practitioner. It is prescribed for a variety of ailments these days and research continues to prove its many therapeutic values.

How do we know when a massage is high caliber? To ensure maximum value, the following qualities must be present:

- **Connectivity:** Massage is a dance of sorts. When a massage therapist approaches the body with the discipline of dance where the body is never broken away from, then the rhythm and continuity of the massage stays intact. If the recipient feels interruption and restarting along with disjointed movement, the flow will not lead to ideal results.
- **Use of Varying Techniques:** A great massage has special techniques to approach and trigger muscle memory. When working muscular discomfort, a skilled massage therapist knows how to penetrate the area where the belly of the muscle resides. Through compressions, deep tissue, dynamic stretching and other techniques, great relief occurs. The use of massage oil is another important tool. Using too much oil is similar to a cook over seasoning in the kitchen as it prohibits the therapist's ability to feel the muscle. There is nothing pleasant in feeling a lot of flowing strokes that graze over the muscle as the therapist's hands slide with lack of control. Use too little and the massage falls short.
- **Intention:** The most important element of an excellent massage is intention. This involves a therapist working from the heart. This starts the moment one is greeted and with every step thereafter. When a massage therapist comes from a place of healing and selflessness it is apparent. The nuances of engaged eye contact, minimal conversation and the integrity of touch elevates the massage from a procedural service to a magical memory.

A massage that delivers all of these elements will help set your bar as a true massage connoisseur.

Seeking to become a connoisseur of wine, food or art are great pursuits, yet an even greater aspiration is to become a connoisseur of the wellness practices that affect our physical, mental and spiritual life day in and day out. By becoming a "wellness connoisseur," you become an advocate for your own well-being and will seek and receive better care.

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The World Has Been Spinning for Years
How Traditional Chinese Medicine treats vertigo
By Diane Sheppard, Ph.D, L.Ac.

Vertigo, from the Latin word for “a whirling or spinning movement,” is a type of dizziness where one experiences a feeling of motion, usually as if they or the room is spinning. While many of us have had the occasional dizzy spell, vertigo is different with its persistent sense of motion, a feeling of tilting, swaying, or spinning, possibly with loss of balance. It is disorienting, disconcerting and uncomfortable, and often accompanied by sweating, vomiting and nausea.

Most cases of vertigo occur when you suddenly change your head position, or stand up quickly. This is often due to a problem based in the inner ear, known as Benign Paroxysmal Positional Vertigo, benign because there are no additional serious conditions, such as a tumor. It can also be caused by vision difficulties, diseases of the central nervous system, inflammation or infections that compromise the inner ear, Meniere’s Disease, which is a buildup of fluid in the inner ear or migraines.

Western medicine treats vertigo in a variety of ways, depending on the diagnosed cause. Therapies may include, but are not limited to, vestibular rehabilitation; medication to relieve symptoms such as nausea or motion sickness; antibiotics or steroids to reduce swelling and cure infection; and even surgery.

As with a western doctor, in Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) the most important step is to determine the cause of the vertigo. In TCM pulse and tongue diagnosis in conjunction with other diagnostic techniques are used to discern the clinical origin, which will determine the proper treatments. Chinese medicine believes that vertigo’s origin is related to the imbalance of certain internal organs, such as the liver, kidneys and spleen. It is the imbalance between these internal organs that leads to poor blood circulation and insufficient blood supply to the brain that result in vertigo.

According to TCM, the causes are either excess or deficient conditions. Excess conditions include phlegm damp retention and insufficient spleen Qi, which is evidenced by a sensation of heaviness, lethargy, fullness of the chest or epigastric region, nausea, vomiting, profuse sputum, and loss of appetite; and what is known as liver fire rising with stagnating Qi, where the patient will have a flushed face, headaches, feel frustrated and agitated, have insomnia, and often a bitter taste in the mouth.

Deficiency conditions include Qi and blood deficiency evidenced by a pale or dull complexion, lassitude, palpitations, and insomnia; and kidney deficiency (deficiency of Kidney jing) commonly encountered in the elderly. The vertigo comes and goes, and does not go away with time. There are other symptoms, such as waist/hip pain, weakened knees, frequent urination at night, tinnitus, deafness, dry mouth and dry skin.

Treatments may include herbs, acupuncture, cupping, and massage. The specifics will be determined by the diagnosis. Patients often experience relief with a few visits, and not uncommonly on the first visit. Sometimes a series of acupuncture sessions and a program of herbal therapy are even more beneficial to remove the underlying causes.

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

Combat Aging, Naturally

By Shannon Sinsheimer, ND

Slowing the aging process is not just about maintaining an esthetically youthful appearance, it's about keeping an active, able, pain-free body with vibrant energy, a keen mind, and zest for life. As our life expectancy continues to increase, Americans want to continue to be actively participating in their lives for as many years as possible.

The tremendous amount of information available on slowing the aging process can be overwhelming. However, there are a few simple ways to approach aging naturally that have enormous benefits for total health and wellness.

Diet and Nutrition. There are really only two ways to eat, one that supports health and one that strains the body. A diet rich in organically-grown plant-based foods such as fruits, vegetables, and lean proteins (fish,

organic free-range meats), provides the body with vital nutrients and antioxidants that can prevent and help reverse disease and aging. These nutrients are the exact entities needed to rebuild collagen in the skin, limit inflammation in the joints, support a healthy cardiovascular system, and feed the brain. A diet consisting of processed food stripped of nutrients puts a strain on the total body system creating inflammation and accelerating aging.

Exercise. Exercise provides more than just the appearance of an ageless figure. It increases blood flow in the body which enhances a more youthful glow to the skin; produces sweat which helps detoxify impurities; increases energy, and when done appropriately, prevents stiff, painful joints. It is also associated with warding off dementia and heavily correlated with retention of cognitive function. Exercise

is key for those wanting to defy their age and remain sharp and energetic.

Antioxidants. Antioxidants prevent damage from free radicals and are by definition, anti-aging compounds. Free radicals are tissue damaging particles which increase inflammation and come from air pollution, chemicals, pesticides, and stress. Antioxidants are found naturally in plant-based foods such as blueberries, broccoli, kale, spinach, and carrots. Supplement forms include resveratrol, n-acetyl-cysteine, and vitamins a, c and e.

Bio-Identical Hormones. Replacing hormones that have naturally declined with aging can revive vitality and virility, improve skin composition, decrease joint pain, improve sleep, and help individuals feel younger. There are side effects and certain contraindications to taking bio-identical hormone pills and creams, but with the right hormone testing and regular monitoring, many individuals benefit significantly.

Telomeres. Telomeres are essentially markers for how fast the body is aging and are part of our DNA. They decrease in length throughout our life and the speed of this decline implicates the rate at which the body is aging. There are many new products available aimed at lengthening or creating healthier telomeres. Most are combinations of high dose antioxidants to prevent free radicals from damaging the telomere strands. Telomere length is also affected by stress, diet, exercise, and sleep habits. Keep an eye out for new research on telomere therapies which hold the true key to our anti-aging potential.

Nourishing the body with a healthy diet and exercise, adding age specific nutritional supplements, and seeking medical advice for additional hormonal therapies when necessary are the simple keys to a long, healthy life.

Dr. Shannon Sinsheimer is a licensed naturopathic doctor at Optimal Health Center in Palm Desert and can be reached at (760) 568-2598.



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MD = Medical Doctor DO = Doctor of Osteopathic Medicine (physician)
ND = Licensed Naturopathic Doctor

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Men Go Through It, Too!

By Neal Rouzier, MD

Menopause in females is a widely discussed, well-studied phenomenon, yet its equivalent in males – **andropause** - is virtually ignored.

They are very similar experiences. Both typically occur from age 40 on and are caused by a reduction in hormone levels. Both can be accompanied by fatigue, depression, irritability, aches and pains, reduced sexual interest, enjoyment and/or performance, general signs of aging and increased risk of chronic degenerative disease.

Yet while women are very savvy about hormone replacement, men are left to suffer silently, even though the obvious therapy, testosterone replacement, has been available for over 50 years.

Typically when hormones in men are discussed it is usually in reference to the abuse among athletes, which has given rise to the perception that all testosterone is dangerous. Add to that the unfounded fear that testosterone causes prostate cancer, and the misunderstanding escalates.

Testosterone replacement in men, done with bio-identical testosterone in physiologic doses, is not only safe, but also protective. This is well supported in the medical literature. Testosterone has been shown to increase muscle strength and lean body mass, improve sexual response, prevent osteoporosis, protect against cardiovascular disease, increase energy, fight impotence, improve mood and promote a sense of well-being. A recently published study showed that men with higher testosterone levels live longer.

Multiple medical studies have proven that testosterone does not cause prostate cancer. Interestingly, men typically get prostate cancer when they are older and testosterone levels are naturally at their lowest. In fact, low levels of testosterone are associated with more aggressive tumors. No study has shown that supplementing with testosterone increases your chances of getting prostate cancer. If one does develop prostate cancer, testosterone supplementation might accelerate the growth levels of the tumor. Therefore, there is a need to monitor the PSA on a regular basis when supplementing with testosterone.

Men who receive testosterone replacement typically report feeling sexier, stronger, and healthier. They state that it makes them feel as they did when they were in their prime. After all, this is what replenishment of hormones is all about. It is about restoring hormones to youthful levels so you can feel as you did when you were at the peak of your physical and mental ability. Testosterone can slow down the physical decline that robs men of their energy, strength, and libido. Testosterone can restore muscle tone and improve stamina. And it can improve mood and overall sense of well-being.

Why would men not want this healthy hormone?

Dr. Neal Rouzier is a physician specializing in bio-identical hormone replacement therapy, and the Medical Director of the Preventive Medicine Clinic of the Desert. He can be reached at (760) 320.4292.

Life After Cancer: Nourishing Your Health

By Sonja Fung, ND

"What do I do to keep cancer from coming back?" "What do I eat/not eat?" "How do I live a cancer free lifestyle?" These are questions I hear from my patients every day.

The answer is simple. The foods you should avoid in preventing cancer are the same ones you should avoid with post-cancer care.

Although cancer creates a feeling that one's life is out of control, there is one factor you can control: your food intake! Don't get bogged down by all the different diets you find online. Variety is the spice of life and there is no one diet for everyone. However, there is a diet that everyone can certainly avoid: the "SAD" or Standard American (Western) Diet.

It is estimated that dietary factors are related to 30% of all cancer development, and the SAD diet captures them all. When eaten over time, foods high in poor quality protein, refined sugars/carbohydrates, and bad fats (breads, processed/fast foods) can lead to the development of cancer by influencing your genetics, increasing your stress levels, depleting your immune system, and adding to your weight.

For cancer prevention and post-cancer care, avoid these top 5 inflammatory foods:

Alcohol. Alcohol is a poison to your body and has a direct and linear correlation with increased risk of multiple types of cancer. A 2011 European study of 350,000 men and women estimated about 10% of all cancer in European men and 3% of those in women to be the result of alcohol consumption. The more alcohol you drink on a daily basis, the higher your chances of getting cancer.

Grains, legumes/beans, and refined carbohydrates. All grains and legumes have molecules called lectins, an inflammatory glycoprotein, that in great enough quantity

can strip away your gut lining. These foods also increase your blood sugar and can spike your insulin levels, leading to increased weight gain and the risk of diabetes, heart disease, and cancer.

Sugar. Sugar is used as fuel in all of your cells, so you do need some sugar in your body. However, too much sugar is inflammatory. Over time, it can increase your chances of diabetes and obesity, two strong risk factors for cancer development.

Processed food. Processed foods are high in sodium, chemical preservatives, and food coloring, and low in nutrient value. Skip the convenience excuse and invest time in your health by eating whole foods as often as possible.

Non-organic meat and dairy products. As these are often contaminated with antibiotics, pesticides, growth hormones, and unhealthy fats, it is better to choose cleaner, leaner options such as bison, grass-fed beef and lamb, and wild caught fish.

Heal Your Gut After Treatment


The key to good health starts in your gut. One of the unfortunate side effects of conventional cancer treatment is the destruction of your digestive system, so one of the first steps in any type of recovery is restoring proper function. The process includes many steps, however, one of the most important is removing foods that cause additional inflammation. The more you reduce inflammation, the more your body can heal and recover, and the more you reduce your future cancer risk.

Dr. Sonja Fung is a naturopathic primary care doctor with a focus on integrative oncology at the Live Well Clinic in La Quinta. Their "Nutrition After Cancer" program starts in December. For more information visit www.livewellclinic.org or call (760) 771.5970.

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When Life Changes, So Should Your Financial Plan

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

If you've ever completed a financial plan, you know how much work it is to prepare. So, after all that work, you're done, right?

Wrong. The world is constantly changing, the markets are constantly fluctuating, and so is your life. If your plan for the future is going to be of any real use, it has to reflect those changes, too. Instead of a static document, your financial plan needs to be like a dramatic series — a script that changes with times.

How often should you revise your plan? The easy answer is this: whenever there's a major change in your life circumstances. Let's take a closer look at what you'll need to pay periodic attention to:

Family changes. These include the births or adoption of children, marriage or divorce, and changes in your health or that of your partner or spouse. It could also involve changing those you name as heirs for any number of reasons, including deaths, births, or simply a change in your preferences.

Career and income changes. For most people, their lifestyle today and the one they plan for retirement is closely related to their current income. If you're promoted and your income bumps up or you change careers or lose your job, your current lifestyle is likely to change and you might need to reset your goal for your retirement as well. In fact, anything that dramatically changes your asset values — like an inheritance, the sale of a business interest, or uncovered medical expenses — could also mean it's time to reset the scope of your retirement lifestyle.

Market returns. Market volatility can wreak havoc with your plans for the future. Over the last 10 years, we've experienced two major bear markets in stocks and one of the most severe losses in average home prices in U.S. history. As a result, millions of people have had to reconsider how long they're going to have to keep working, what kind of lifestyle they should aim for, and/or how much more they need to be putting away.

Even without major gyrations in the markets, it pays to review the investment and asset components of your financial plan at least once a year.

What's important is to check your progress toward your long-term goals, and remember that you're more likely to be in a marathon toward your goals than a sprint. On the other hand, wide divergences from your trend line may mean that you need to save more, devote more of your income to other needs or goals, or change your asset allocation strategy. It can be a mistake to let your financial plan sit too long unattended. Much has changed in just the past few years.

Reesa Manning is Vice President and Senior Financial Advisor at Integrated Wealth Management, specializing in retirement and income planning. For more information, call Reesa at (760) 834-7200, or reesa@IWMgmt.com.

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How Will the New Affordable Care Act Affect You?

By Bill Robinson

Let me begin by defining which individuals the Affordable care Act (ACA) will not affect when it is fully implemented on January 1, 2014:

- Anyone now on Medicare (including Pre-Age 65 Early Disability Individuals).
- Anyone covered by an employer-sponsored Group Health Insurance Plan. (But you will have to upgrade to an ACA-compliant plan when your employer's group plan comes up for renewal during 2014.)
- Anyone with an individual health insurance policy bought prior to March 23, 2010 (the date that the ACA was signed into law) and which is still in force today, and unchanged from its benefits prior to March 23, 2010. These are called "Grandfathered Health Plans."

If you are not among the above three groups, then come January 1, 2014, you will have to buy a new individual health insurance policy. By now, you should have received a notice from your current health plan that advises you that your Non-Grandfathered Health Insurance policy will be canceled on December 31, 2013. This notice will also likely advise you of which "most similar" ACA-compliant health insurance your current health insurer recommends as your new health plan to start January 1, 2014.

You also have full freedom to select any other new ACA-compliant health insurance plan for 2014 - either from your current insurer, or any of the other 3 remaining health insurers offering individual health insurance in California in 2014. While this initial ACA Open Enrollment Period for individuals runs until March 31, 2014, if you wait until after December 15, 2013, your new coverage

will not begin until February 1, March 1 or April 1, 2014, and that would leave you without any health coverage for one to three months.


Initially, it appears that the rates for these new ACA-compliant plans will range from slightly higher premiums to as much as 40% higher, unless you qualify for a subsidized Covered CA Marketplace plan. It all depends on many varying factors that will affect each person's premiums for ACA plans.

The issue with which I am most concerned is that all new ACA-compliant health insurance plans sold to individuals in California (inside and outside the Covered CA Marketplace) will have something new and very restrictive: "Narrow Networks" both for PPO and HMO plans. These Narrow Networks will only include between 50% and 70% of the physicians and hospitals that are available in today's PPO and HMO networks.


The foreseen result is that many individuals who currently have individual health insurance plans (especially PPOs) will face a strong possibility that they must change their doctors or have their new "Narrow Network" PPO pay only about 25% of the medical bills from their soon-to-be Non-PPO Network doctors. Although many doctors are still undecided, ask your doctor which plan they will be joining.

I will continue to keep you posted as new developments occur, and welcome your calls and questions.

Bill Robinson has been a licensed agent for 31 years, and he is owner of Palm Canyon Insurance Agency in Palm Springs. (760) 416.4225



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Is Buying Health Insurance Any Easier Now?

By Randy Foulds

The Affordable Care Act has allowed our state programs to expand and cover more people, especially children, for very low premiums or even at no cost. If you have been without health insurance, or if you have a plan that is just too expensive for your budget, please make the effort to enroll by December 15 and get a new health plan effective January 1, 2014.

What is most important for you in selecting a new health plan? For some it's simply premium. For many, it's the choice of doctors and whether their doctor is within the network. And others feel the cost of medications on the plan can be the deciding factor. You have HMO, HSA, PPO, and EPPO plans from which to choose. Then there is off exchange, in exchange, premium subsidies and the "metal tiers" to consider. So where would you start?

First, will you qualify for a premium subsidy? This is a simple matter, but many incorrectly believe they won't qualify. If you are a couple with less than \$60,000 in annual Adjusted Gross Income (AGI), chances are you will be able to receive a partial subsidy and apply that to your premiums. The lower the income, the more subsidy you may receive. The larger the household, the higher the AGI threshold for qualifying.

But, be certain you use a good estimate of your AGI, based on what you expect to earn next year. You can base it on 2012 or 2013 to date, but try to be as close as you can. If you underestimate, it will be up to you to report your change in income throughout the year in 2014, or the IRS will want a lot of that subsidy back. When you file your 2014 taxes, any overpayment to you will be due back to the IRS, and will come right out of any expected refund.

The number of people in the household also comes right from your tax return, but now we have to also consider, is anyone already on Medicare, or MediCal, or any other health plan, and will they be staying on that plan?

If you qualify for a subsidy, you have to enroll in a health plan through the Covered California Exchange to receive it. Don't worry, that's pretty easy.

Next, what doctors can you choose?

Most people love the simplicity of HMO's, but frankly, in practice, they don't like being stuck to a small network of doctors and waiting for specialist referrals. Besides, if you travel outside our area, like most of us do in summertime, your HMO might only provide the most basic emergency care outside of your home area. For this and other reasons, many still prefer to be in a PPO.

Is your doctor "in-network"? Check the provider directory online very closely. Many times people simply ask if their doctor "takes" their insurance plan. The front office might say "Yes," because they know how to bill the plan, but if they are not "in network," you will be hit with higher co-pays. And, in the exchange, there is at least one plan that has an EPO (Exclusive Provider Organization), which means you only receive benefits when you use an in-network doctor or facility, and nothing at all if you use "out of network doctors."

Next, how much risk will you be willing to carry?

The whole idea of insurance is called risk sharing or risk assignment. In most cases, you will still have a deductible and co-pays, and you will also have a maximum-out-of-pocket allowance. That is the total amount of your risk for the calendar year. The lower the premium, the higher your retained risk. When enrolling in a new plan, you can take more risk with some family members and less for others. Maybe your kids play a lot of sports, or have chronic conditions. In that case, they would need a higher premium plan with less retained risk for you. Maybe Mom has always been in perfect health and only has an annual check-up each year. In her case, a low premium plan with a larger deductible would work just fine.

Once you have selected plans for each family member, I recommend filling out a paper application, not an online one. At least not yet. With its initial launch, the CoveredCA.com system has been unreliable, so a completed paper application (with you retaining one copy and sending the original in by mail) is far more reliable. And, nothing holds up enrollment more than an incomplete or incorrect application. Do as thorough a job as you can, and take your time.

Randy Foulds is a Certified California Exchange Health Insurance Agent (license #0G69218) with Feldmann Insurance Agency which has been writing health insurance policies locally for over 20 years. He can be reached at (760) 346.6565.



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COMMUNITY MATTERS

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

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Preparing Your Body for Menopause

By Dawn Berger, CPT

Every woman experiences menopause differently. For some, it passes quickly and the symptoms are mild, while others experience aggressive changes that include hot flashes and mood swings. Weight gain and muscle loss are also common during this transformation. The good news is that exercise—before, during and after—can help stave off many of these effects.

Strength training, cardio fitness and yoga all offer benefits specific to the changes your body experiences during this time.

Strength training is linked to high bone mineral density in adults of all ages and both sexes. Since osteoporosis, a type of skeletal deterioration characterized by decreasing bone density that weakens the bone structure, is more common in menopausal women, weight training is beneficial for women before and after menopause. In their book *Action Plan for Menopause*, Barbara Bushman and Janice Clark-Young state that osteoporosis is partially preventable with adequate amounts of calcium in the diet, and that the effects are enhanced when combined with progressive high-intensity resistance training. They further explain that dense, healthy bones are created in a constant rebuilding process as osteoclasts (cells that break down bone) and are replaced by osteoblasts (cells that form bone). One way to stimulate the osteoblasts is to repeatedly use greater-than-normal loads on the bones. The amount of bone building is relative to the amount of overload on the bone. So within limits, increases in the overload will cause greater amounts of bone formation, which develops on the bone's outer surface, creating stronger bones that are less likely to fracture.

Incremental bone formation occurs within 8 to 12 weeks of strength training, but four to six months of progressive resistance training is the minimum amount of time needed to increase bone mineral density. They go on to note that the greatest increases in bone density occur in previously inactive postmenopausal women who participate in resistance training. So it's never too late to start!

Strength training also provides the benefits of reduced risk of adult-onset diabetes, lower blood pressure, decreased arthritis pain, and the maintenance of or improvement in lower back health.

Cardio. The American Heart Association reports that as you enter menopause your risk for cardiovascular disease increases. Estrogen levels, which are thought to protect your heart, drop during menopause. Thus, it is important to protect your heart through physical activity. Cardio exercise will also help burn off those extra pounds and boost your metabolism, giving you back the energy you feel you have lost. Pick an exercise you enjoy - walking, biking, hiking or hitting the gym - and practice cardio for 30 minutes 3x a week!

Yoga. The practice of yoga and holding poses can offer relief, calm your nerves, and center your mind. Yoga is a natural complement to strength training and cardio as it increases flexibility, tones the body and focuses the mind.

Check with your doctor before starting any weight training program, particularly if you have any pre-existing conditions. When starting strength training, it is recommended that you schedule a session with a personal trainer to learn proper form as lifting weights incorrectly can lead to serious injury.

Beginning an exercise program before menopause will help prepare your body for the changes you may experience during and after this life transition.

Dawn Berger is an ISSA Certified Personal Trainer with C-Fitness Ladies Workout in Palm Desert and can be reached at (760) 636.4177.

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Who Will Win "Best of the Best"? In the Healthy Lifestyle Challenge II

While everyone who competed in the Healthy Lifestyle Challenge II (HLSC II) valley-side competition has triumphed, only one will be awarded the "Best of the Best."

Teams were formed, individuals signed up and the challenge began in April. By the end of July, millions of steps had been taken and hundreds of Valley residents were on their way to healthier lifestyles.

Developed by the Coachella Valley Health Collaborative, the HLSC is a friendly, web-based competition aimed at getting local residents active. The website records an individual's activity and converts it into steps on interactive maps. At the end of each challenge, nominations are taken for the "Best of the Best" Award. This year's nominees include the Desert Recreation District, Desert Oasis Healthcare, and Desert Sands Unified School District.

The Desert Recreation District's goal was to exceed last year's results, and they have done just that! Participating facilities increased from 2 to 10, and the number of participants was up 200%. They tracked a total of 9,892 miles - an almost 40% increase over last year. "We had a team of 25 women from Mecca and 15 women from North Shore who each created Biggest Loser competitions through their Zumba classes," said Tatiana Hinkle, Community Services Supervisor. "Together they lost a total of 149 pounds over the eight-week competition!"

Desert Oasis Healthcare identified an internal champion to encourage and motivate office staff. This dedicated soul inspired her team of co-workers to achieve an average of two million steps per person! She kept co-workers moving with squats, lunges and walks during their breaks. After work, the employees hit the gym, played on a softball league, and attended dance classes. The employee who accumulated the most steps

shared her success. "Before I started this challenge, I had already lost over 100 pounds, but I slowly started gaining it back. I had a goal to lose an extra 10 pounds and to gain muscle. During the Challenge, I went to the gym 6 to 7 days a week. I also stuck to a no salt, no sugar, high-protein diet." Her body mass index (BMI) decreased from 28.1 to 24.5; she gained 6 pounds of muscle and lost 9 pounds. "Being a part of the Challenge made me stick to my diet and workout routine. Now I'm in the best shape of my life."

Desert Sands Unified School District motivated both staff and students to participate through a variety of successful programs including an Employee Wellness Committee, health fair, after-hours fitness classes on school sites, and a running program for elementary students with guest visits for the high school track and cross country teams.

Their results were impressive! Eleven staff members joined the wellness committee; over 400 employees attended the health fair; over 50 participants logged 725+ hours of physical activities such as Zumba, yoga and hiking; and Hoover Elementary School joined Eisenhower Elementary School with a new student running program.

The "Best of the Best" winner will be awarded at the Healthy Lifestyle Challenge II luncheon on November 9. The Collaborative will also honor Mayor Steve Pougnet with the 2013 Healthy Lifestyle Advocate award for his many accomplishments in enhancing the health and well-being of Coachella Valley residents.

For more information on the Challenge, visit www.mywellsite.com/cvhc. The Coachella Valley Health Collaborative contact is Gary Jeandron, Project Director. (760) 341.2883, ext. 78163. gjeandro@csusb.edu



FITNESS Q&A

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

Ask Mike: I am a female athlete who likes to strength train. I work out 5x a week, and my goals are to put on more muscle, cut down on fat, and have more energy throughout the day. I know I need to take supplements to lead a healthy lifestyle and help my muscles recover after hard workouts, but the market is saturated, so I have no idea where to start. What do you recommend?

I always recommend that if you are eating healthy, and mostly organic, you don't need a shopping cart full of supplements. However, if you are like most of us and can't always find healthy organic foods, then supplements are a must. All athletes need to have plenty of amino acids for muscle recovery, I recommend the branch chain amino acids since they are a daily essential to help repair skeletal muscle and decrease muscle soreness from heavy workouts. I also believe in taking fish oils, magnesium, vitamin B6 and B12, flaxseed oil, and vitamin D.

Ask Mike: I have heard that functional training is better than machine based training. Can you explain why?

Machines isolate those muscles directly involved with that particular movement, so other muscles are not being trained to stabilize the body. Functional training which includes squats, lunges, cable push- and pull- movements, etc., integrates the entire body creating strength and stability. Look at it this way, humans were designed to move and be functional, just like when the caveman used to hunt for food, build shelters and protect their families from dangerous animals. These activities involved the entire body, and you didn't hear about them complaining of back pain!

A large percentage of us have desk jobs where we sit for a living, drink coffee and snack all day. Oxygen and blood flow is significantly decreased, as is energy level and the will to get up and exercise. So it's imperative for those folks to get up and move and be functional. Also when you are working out on a machine, you typically work one joint at a time, and because the movement is already programmed into the machine, the brain and nervous system are somewhat sedated. Compare this to kneeling on an exercise ball pressing weights above your head, which takes focus and engagement of every muscle in your body, as well as your nervous system. You will also find that functional training is fun and challenging compared to machine-based training which can be repetitive.

Ask Mike: At what age should children start to lift weights? I heard that starting too young can stunt their growth.

That's actually a myth. Bones become stronger when put under stress. You just have to watch form and introduce gradual weight loads to the muscles.

There is no predetermined age when a child can start weight training; it really depends on their maturity and ability to focus. I have had 9-year-olds that could squat under load and became strong athletes, while I have had to send 15-year-olds away because of their immaturity and inability to focus. Again, choosing the appropriate exercises and resistance to match a child's physical ability is the key. When a program is supervised by an experienced strength coach/trainer, success will usually follow.

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Ask Mike: What is the best form of exercise to burn fat and lose weight? Is it aerobic or anaerobic training?

First let's explain the difference. Aerobic means doing exercise that needs oxygen to burn fuel for energy while anaerobic does not. Activities lasting more than 3 minutes are considered aerobic, like swimming, running and cycling to name a few. Sprinting and strength training are activities that are termed anaerobic because they use ATP, glucose, fat or protein as their primary source for fuel.

Strength training (anaerobic work) helps you build lean muscle, reduce fat and increase energy by elevating your resting metabolic rate. When you increase or store body fat, it slows the metabolic rate down and the opposite occurs. Aerobic training has been proven to increase your cortisol levels (as it reacts to the consistent stress being placed throughout the body), which then stores visceral fat and as a result increases inflammation throughout the body.

So, in conclusion, if you want to lose weight, feel strong, look healthy and have better time management anaerobic training is the way to go!

YOU CAN ASK MIKE: Michael@KinetixCenter.com

Michael K Butler is co-owner of Kinetix Health and Performance Center in Palm Desert. He holds a state license as a physical therapist assistant, national certifications of distinction through the NSCA as a strength and conditioning coach, Poliquin International state coach and as a Full Body Active Release Techniques Practitioner. Mike can be reached at (760) 200.1719 or at michael@kinetixcenter.com. His website is kinetixcenter.com

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Make-up Mayhem

By Cristina Cascio

Before make-up became part of my business, I was completely perplexed by the vast array of product lines. From merchandise within the lines, tools for applying, and products for removing make-up, it was tough to tell one product from another. In those days, I found even choosing the wrong color could lead to a make-up malfunction, and it was all very intimidating.

When I had the opportunity for a makeover, I didn't recognize myself in the mirror and it was far from the look I was seeking. From that point in my life, I shied away from the bright lights and colorful faces behind the make-up counters at the malls and walked the lonely aisles of the drug stores on what seemed like a never-ending journey. I was looking for simple products that wouldn't lead to a break out, and that would work to enhance, not overcome or define, my look.

It was not long after I began working in the spa industry that mineral make-ups starting making their appearance. As a matter of fact, some of the skincare lines in the spa started producing their own make-up with skin health in mind. I never thought I would see the day when our "veteran" esthetic team would stop recommending that their clients forgo make-up, but after our clean-skin advocates returned from mineral make-up training, they had an entirely fresh outlook. They summed it up very nicely for the rest of us: pure mineral make-up binds to oils, not water, making it naturally water resistant, and much better for your skin than traditional make-up with fewer chemical dyes, mineral oils, preservatives and other ingredients that often irritate skin and cause breakouts.



It is quite a different premise from the spa products we are used to because it is not about the ingredients that are added to make it effective, it is all about what is left out! In this case, less was more, and it became clear I did not need to continue adding to the mounds of make-up in my collection. I simply needed to find a few essential pieces that worked for me.

That is when I decided to take a leap of faith and ask for help again, this time from my esthetician, and it set me on the right path to "make-up made simpler." I began learning all about the benefits of mineral make-up, and observing individuals with problem skin conditions, such as acne and rosacea, tolerate mineral make-up with great success. Some people even see anti-inflammatory benefits from the zinc and titanium oxide, and the extra SPF it offers is like icing on the cake.

If you are looking for a simpler and healthier alternative for your make-up drawer, give mineral make up a try.

Cristina Casio is the spa director at the Hyatt Regency Indian Wells' Agua Serena Spa. Their skin care professionals offer complimentary mineral make-up color matches with your facial treatment. Don't miss this month's exclusive offer for Desert Health® readers! For more information, visit aguaserenaspa.com or call 760.674.4100.

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Putting Body Shaping to the Test

By Lauren Del Sarto

Non-invasive body sculpting is the latest craze. In our July August issue, we wrote about a variety of therapies now available, including Exilis, Zerona and CoolSculpting, explaining how each treatment worked. But I was skeptical of both their effectiveness and the longevity of their results. So we decided to put them to the test.

Partnering with Executive Wellness of Indian Wells who agreed to take the good with the bad (and appeared much more confident than I), I decided to try the Exilis for facial rejuvenation and Zerona on my ever-stubborn saddlebags (thighs). Their promised results sounded too good to be true: a non-surgical facelift with Exilis and exercise-free fat burning with Zerona.



Exilis results were comparable to these other clients: a smoother, softer complexion and tighter skin

In preparation for Zerona, it was recommended that I take four natural supplements: niacin, milk thistle, ginkgo biloba and green tree extract to help dissolve and expel fat cells (Ah-ha! The secret weight loss ingredient, I thought). Then we created a treatment schedule, and as with any attempt to transform your body, a commitment of time is required. Zerona is three 40-minute treatments per week for 4 weeks and Exilis is one 30-minute treatment weekly for 4 weeks. You can do the treatments on the same day, so I committed myself for the month of July. Starting measurements were taken and we were off!

So as not to influence the results, I didn't change my diet or exercise routine; however, massaging the area post-Zerona is recommended, so I scheduled my treatments prior to yoga class which I believe proved beneficial.

The Zerona treatments are simple. The cold laser therapy never comes in contact with your skin, which adds to the doubt of its effectiveness. Half way through my treatments, I hadn't lost any weight and was convinced it was a waste of time.

Because the therapy continues to burn fat, I was told to wait a week before returning for final measurements. I understood that the average inches lost with Zerona is 6 (2 here, 2 there, etc.) and thus, was

completely shocked to see that I had lost 13!! 3 on my waist, 2 mid-abdomen, 4 on my hips, and the best news, 3 on each thigh! Dr. Olesnick attributed the lack of weight loss to gained muscle (possibly from the post treatment exercise). I truly couldn't believe it. But would it last?

Two months later I re-measured using the same exact areas as distance from the floor is noted in your chart. I had gained 4 inches back, but it was on my

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upper areas and not my thighs which were the direct areas treated. I was now a believer.

The Exilis really wowed me. It uses radiofrequency technology to break down collagen which is then rebuilt presenting smoother, tighter skin. But it all takes place below the surface, so there is no redness or visual effects on the skin at all. The treatment is very hot however, and requires a certain level of tolerance. Worth it? I think so. These results were visual. My jowls elevated, cheekbones enhanced, and crow's feet minimized. But the biggest difference I noticed was the smoothness of my skin. It feels new - and the best part? You continue to see results for up to six months.

I'm a firm believer that proper nutrition, exercise and ample rest are the best prescriptions for a toned body and beautiful skin; however, today's technology is providing us with a few effective boosters which are certainly worth a try.

Two weeks ago I received the best compliment from a friend I hadn't seen in a while. "You look younger every time I see you," she said and I replied with a smile, "I have my secrets."

Exilis and Zerona treatments are offered at Executive Wellness, a part of Executive Urgent Care in Indian Wells under the direction for Bohdan Olesnick, M.D. For pricing and additional information, please contact them at (760) 346-9354.

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The Smiling Eyes of a Child

By Jennifer Hui, MD, FACS

There is something special about the face of a smiling child. You can see happiness shine in their gleaming eyes. But sometimes children are born with eyelid malpositions that minimize that shine and interfere with visual function. When this occurs, even our littlest family members may require medical evaluation and care. The good news is that often a simple procedure can reposition eyelids and allow for the full expression of that child's joy.



Top: Right upper eyelid congenital ptosis. The patient's visual axis is blocked, and he is adopting a partial chin up position to see clearly.

Bottom: Right upper eyelid congenital ptosis 3 months after repair. The patient's visual axis is now clear.

Two conditions that we commonly see in our office are congenital ptosis and epiblepharon. Congenital ptosis ("toe-sis") occurs when a child is born with a drooping upper eyelid. It may affect one or both sides. It is important to recognize Ptosis early. Intervention is warranted when the condition prevents proper visual development. Children's visual systems are very pliable in the early years of life. Any interference with vision may cause lack of proper visual development, and if this persists for long enough, the deficits may be permanent. If the child's upper eyelid droops enough to cover the visual axis, their brain will not receive proper visual stimuli. In these cases, the eyelid must be surgically elevated to restore proper positioning.

Epiblepharon occurs when there is an extra layer of muscle just beneath the lashes in the lower eyelid. This extra tissue pushes up against the lashes, causing them to rub against the eye. One or both sides may be affected. Children will often present with watering of the affected eye. They may also frequently rub the eye, or have redness. Crusting of the lashes often occurs in the morning after awakening. Children will often not complain of irritation of the eye, so careful observation is key. If the condition does not resolve on its own, surgical correction may be undertaken.



Top: Right lower eyelid epiblepharon. The child has a chronic red, watery right eye.

Bottom: Right lower eyelid epiblepharon 2 months after correction. The patient no longer has a red, watery eye.

The key with both conditions is early observation and treatment to offer the child the best opportunity for maximum vision and full facial expression.

Dr. Hui is the founder of The Eyelid Institute in Palm Desert. She is an Oculoplastic surgeon and has a special interest in helping patients with Eyelid, Lacrimal and Orbital conditions. An Oculoplastic surgeon is a physician with combined training in Ophthalmic Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery (Oculoplastics) and Ophthalmology who has unique abilities to perform a variety of delicate procedures around the eyes. Dr. Hui can be reached at (760) 610.2677.

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It's All About Families

And the Fall Family Festival is the place to be

Did you ever wonder how moms learn to become moms, and parents to parent? When young people are first starting out and don't have relatives in the area, who answers all the questions?

In the Coachella Valley, new moms and young families are lucky to now have a place to go, the About Families, Inc., Resource and Education Center in Palm Desert. About Families provides local residents with educational classes on topics such as informed childbirth, breastfeeding basics, newborn care and conscious parenting, as well as information on local resources, and even a "mama support network."

About Families, Inc., is a non-profit organization committed to educating and supporting families by providing resources necessary to take on the emotional, mental and physical challenges they may encounter. Some courses are fee-based, but many are offered free of charge or on a sliding scale.

The non-profit is a dream of founder Joanna Whitlow, who in 2005 launched For Moms and Babies, Inc., with Dr. Carol Batt and Bridgette Becker, all childbirth and parenting professionals. About Families is the realization of this dream and just two months ago, the organization moved into its own location in Palm Desert. It



Kids will frolic at the 7th annual Fall Family Festival in La Quinta. The free event is Nov. 9 from 10am to 4pm.

"took a village" to get them there. "We are so very grateful for the tremendous support we have received from community members and businesses," says Whitlow. "This move is a big step forward, but only a small part of our bigger dream to help young families in our community."

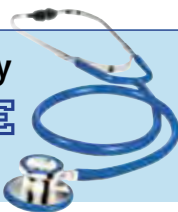
Their largest annual fundraiser is the Fall Family Festival which celebrates its 7th anniversary on Saturday, November 9, in Old Town La Quinta. This festive occasion brings together fun, games, crafts, safety and community resources for Coachella Valley families, in one joyous celebration. Main Street in Old Town will be closed off and lined with over 50 exhibitors, all with a family focus and activities for children. There will be a petting zoo and pony rides, as well as child safety demonstrations and education. The festival takes place from 10 am - 4 pm and admission is free.

Grab your family and friends and come out and support this great cause!

For more information on About Families, Inc. (www.aboutfamiliesinc.com), For Moms and Babies, Inc. (www.formomsandbabies.com) or the Fall Family Festival (www.lqfallfamilyfestival.org) call (760) 342.7400.



Coachella Valley's Health Care Industry
MENTORING THE FUTURE
Brought to you by CVEP's Health Care Council



Thank You for Investing in Me

By Joshue Leyva, pre-med student and Future Physician Leader

One of the utmost things that I love about living in the Coachella Valley is the extensive health initiatives embedded throughout our desert communities. Within these precincts lie the Desert Healthcare District (DHCD), UC Riverside (UCR), and the Coachella Valley Economic Partnership (CVEP), which have similar visions that parallel my own: to ultimately improve the overall health of our residents. Motivated by this noble cause, these organizations continue to foster key programs to decrease the health disparities prevalent in our community today. These programs include an investment in our youth through scholarships, internships, and jobs in their field of interest. It is this particular focus on our leaders of tomorrow that opens the window of career-advancing opportunities and gives our students access to a vast array of resources, such as mentors and career guidance.

Last year DHCD, UCR, and CVEP provided me the opportunity to attend a health conference hosted at Stanford University. Those readers immersed in the world of academia understand me when I write that 'networking is everything.' A health conference is the perfect place to expand your professional network, become exposed to the diverse branches of medicine, and learn about the different options that can advance your career. By attending a series of workshops at the conference, and after hearing an interactive lecture given by a public health professor, my comprehension of and interest in public health grew.

My favorite part of the conference, however, was those opportunities where students and professionals were able to interact. While conversing, I gained valuable knowledge about science and medical programs throughout the nation—not

to mention the advice from important personalities.

Today, the collaborative continues to provide this phenomenal experience to students across the Coachella Valley. This year seven DHCD scholars will participate in the pre-medical/pre-health conference in UC Davis. The importance of creating these opportunities for our students is highlighted by the connections and the knowledge they will acquire to become stronger community leaders.

My aspirations are fueled by the constant support, assistance, and resources that the collaborative and the rest of my community give me. My vocational goal is to become a doctor, and my passion is to serve my community. I dream of one day using my vocation to live my passion. I strive to return to the Coachella Valley and utilize my medical education to reduce the healthcare inequalities. I will ultimately become a physician activist in order to give a voice to those who are silenced due to socioeconomic or political struggles. By working together, we will create community programs to improve the overall health status of our neighborhoods and expand the health initiatives present today. I thank DHCD, UCR, and CVEP for the valuable opportunities and investment in the education of tomorrow's leaders. Investing in our education is investing in our communities. This ideology is summed up by the words of the human rights activist, Cesar Chavez, "The end of all education should surely be service to others."

Joshue Leyva can be reached at jleyva@ucla.edu. For more information on mentoring opportunities, please contact Donna Sturgeon at Coachella Valley Economic Partnership: Donna@cvep.com.

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Smile and Connect

A smile and laughter are the expressions of a positive attitude about life. With the challenges of advancing years it takes strength to meet the tests. That awareness is not a gift; it needs to be earned with quiet gratitude. Wake up each day and smile when you look in the mirror and say that you like yourself. Connect with yourself, and you're off to a good start.

"Smile is free therapy." – Douglas Horton

"Good morning and how are you?" was the smiling greeting of a silver-haired gentleman as we were pumping gas at Costco. It was 10 a.m. We had a friendly chat about a positive outlook. The smile connected us and set positive feelings in motion.

"We shall never know all the good that a simple smile can do."
– Mother Theresa

From the gas station, I went to pick up a prescription. The check-out clerk is a tiny young woman. The expression in her face is static. She is efficient and serious about her work. With a compliment and a smile from me, her face lights up and her eyes sparkle. It makes her happy that her work is appreciated and that she is obviously respected, so important for many people. This simple gesture can be repeated over and over, as a smile costs nothing but brings happiness to both the receiver and the giver.

"Let us always meet each other with a smile, for the smile is the beginning of love." – Mother Theresa

Living in many countries and even more cities with little native language skills, very little money, no family and friends sharpens the survival instincts beyond the circumstances. People are the turning point when one reaches out with a smile and the desire to connect and to give before receiving. Always the smile is the key and bridge over the language barrier.

"A warm smile is the universal language of kindness." – William Arthur Ward

At the end of each day, one should contemplate the interactions of that day and the effects of a smile on each person with whom a connection was made. And, for a little free therapy, smile in the mirror at yourself as you end the day! As Andy Rooney used to say, "If you smile when no one is around, you really mean it."

Leo Buscaglia expressed it beautifully: "Too often we underestimate the power of a touch, a smile, a kind word, a listening ear, an honest compliment, or the smallest act of caring, all of which have the potential to turn a life around."

Stand Up to Headache Pain!

By Gina Malloy, PT, C/NDT, NCS

Baseball, hot dogs, apple pie, and...headaches? When it comes to being all-American, having at least one episode of head pain occurs in 90% of the American population. Researchers who have studied the prevalence of headache in adults in the United States report a high correlation with complaints of neck pain. When a headache originates from a traumatic injury or problem in the neck, or cervical spine, it is known as a cervicogenic headache. This type of headache is different from a migraine (of vascular origin) or tension headache (of muscular origin).

Cervicogenic pain typically originates on one side of the head or back of the neck and travels towards the top of the head and/or above the ears. Pain symptoms frequently increase with neck movement or with sustained postures of the head and neck, as in sitting for long periods of time at a computer. Hairdressers, truck drivers, or pharmacists often suffer from this pain, as do those who have experienced a stroke, traumatic brain, head or neck injury, or infection.

However, when these factors do not exist, one of the most common underlying causes is poor posture.

Normal postural alignment is dependent upon the maintenance of the three natural curves of the spine and the position of the head relative to the spine. The most common postural abnormality observed in individuals with neck pain and headache is a forward head posture. When the neck slides forward, placing the head in front of, rather than aligned directly over the shoulders, several biomechanical factors may lead to pain:

1. The forward pull of the weight of the head places excessive stress on the vertebrae of the neck. This stress may result in degeneration of the vertebral joints and disc and/or misalignment of one or more of the vertebra.
2. The muscles of the neck and upper back constantly overwork to counterbalance the pull of gravity on the head. These muscles become tight, leading to pain and loss of motion.
3. This position is usually accompanied by forward shoulders and a rounded upper back. This not only further contributes to the neck pain and headache but also can lead to an array of problems in the shoulder and arm.

When an individual is referred to a physical therapist for the treatment of head and neck pain, the therapist must perform a comprehensive assessment to accurately identify the sources of the pain. Evidence indicates that a combination of manual therapy and therapeutic exercise, including muscle stretching and strengthening, is the most effective way to reduce pain and to maintain the positive effects of treatment over time. There must also be an emphasis on patient education so that the individual avoids the postures that tend to precipitate pain.

Minding proper posture and stretching neck and back muscles on a regular basis can avoid the structural changes that can lead to a cervicogenic headache.

Gina Malloy is a physical therapist with New Beginning Physical Therapy, Inc., an in-home therapy company and can be reached at 760-218-9961 or online at NewBeginningPT.com.

Keeping ‘Happy’ in Holidays for Senior Friends

By Carlos Santos

For many, the holiday season is full of cheer and memorable experiences. However, for others, the holiday season can bring stress and anxiety due to financial and social obligations, or the memories from years gone by.

Many seniors are adversely affected by the rituals of the holiday season. It may be something as simple as a holiday song, movie and/or a familiar ornament that triggers a memory of a loved one lost, old friends, or even the loss of independence. All of this can contribute to feelings of sadness, mourning and eventually depression.

It is important that the signs of the “holiday blues” are identified and dealt with before they progress to depression. Changes in personality such as loss of interest in activities and people; decreased energy, fatigue, and irritability; and increased aches and pains (emotional distress is often felt physically in older adults) may be warning signs.

We must remember that in many cases, the holiday season is not the only potential cause for depression. There can be preexisting physical, medical and mental factors which contribute to the apparent holiday blues, and seasonal festivities make things worse. If this is the case and you feel that professional intervention is necessary, a visit to a primary physician is recommended in order to clearly identify a diagnosis and begin treatment.

Regardless of your role in a senior’s life, you have the opportunity to make a difference in keeping “happy” in their holidays with the following suggestions:

- Send holiday cards to senior friends early in the season so they feel valued before all the festivities begin.
- Place your elderly friend or family member on a phone call schedule (say once a week) to engage them and assess for depression or any other issues that may need attention.
- Make an effort to talk about your holiday activities and then follow up with post event stories. Now with Facebook and smart phones, you can share pictures as well, but don’t forget the value of a phone call for this generation.
- Be an effective listener. Sometimes, just having someone to listen provides a great escape from the routine of sitting home alone.
- Include senior friends in suitable activities, but give serious consideration to their energy level. Even small activities, such as baking cookies or wrapping presents will provide a sense of belonging.
- Finally, be sure to remind the senior in your life to take their medication as prescribed and to attend all scheduled doctor’s appointments during the busy holiday season.

If you are a professional caregiver, friend, family member or neighbor of an elderly person, you are in a position to help keep the holiday blues at bay. The most important gift that you can give during this often frantic season is your time and consideration, as at any other time of the year.

Carlos Santos is on the team at ElderCaring home care services. (760) 333.0427

Source: “Beating the holiday blues: Depression and the older adult”. New Jersey Jewish News. Dagger, L. A., (Dec. 2009), <http://njewishnews.com/article/550/beating-the-holiday-blues-depression-and-the-older-adult#.UI2JAIDrzu0>

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THE SHOW MUST GO ON

Rewiring the brain through singing and acting

Rancho Mirage resident and former Desert Regional Medical Center radiologist, Dr. Pam Meoli, had a stroke at age 51. Her prognosis included a walker or cane, little or no mobility of her left arm, and compromised speech. After nine months of speech therapy her ability to speak was much improved, but she was still not willing to talk on the phone or engage in conversation with anyone but family. Searching for something to enhance her progress, she decided to try SongShine, a music-based speech and voice therapy program located in Palm Desert.

Dr. Meoli told Ruthanna Metzgar, the founder and creator of SongShine, that it was humiliating to be there, but she had to try something. "Pam is one of our real success stories," Metzgar states, "In 2012 she played the part of a nun in a SongShine concert version of the *Sound of Music*, and this year, she sang and acted in a small group performing the song Matchmaker from our performance of *Fiddler on the Roof*." Metzgar adds that Pam's speech was clear and flowing and that she was using her left arm for gestures. Her acting was full of energy and engagement. "We went out for coffee a few days later and she talked nonstop. And yes, Pam talks on the phone with no problem now. It was the combination of singing and acting...of becoming a character other than yourself...that began to invigorate Pam's speech and began enabling her to express herself with emotion and vitality."

When asked of her metamorphosis into a singing actress, Dr. Meoli says with a smile, "My first experience was as a nun in *Sound of Music*. I was really nervous about speaking my lines clearly. But when they asked me to be Tzeitel in *Fiddler*, I figured it was a step up from being a nun with two lines. Before the performance Ruthanna told me, 'just go out there and have fun, have a good time.' And that is what I did. It was just like any other ordinary day with 600 people watching you. And I wasn't scared at all. I just had a good time!"

SongShine Foundation has seen first-hand that music has the power to rewire the human brain through neural plasticity, the brain's ability to create new neural pathways. This can help bring back a voice that has been nearly silenced by Parkinson's disease, stroke, other neurological disorders or aging. Brain imaging shows that not only singing, but also acting creates neural pathways. SongShine Foundation's Singers and Players Class may be one of the few places in the country where people with neurological disorders are invited to participate in a costumed, script-adapted concert version of a Broadway musical.



Singing can bring back a voice nearly silenced by neurologic disorders

Institute of Los Angeles. He had a twenty-year acting career in New York, was in the original touring cast of *Les Miserables* and performed in the Shakespeare Festival in Stratford, Connecticut.

Their backgrounds make Metzgar and Harris a uniquely strong teaching team, academically and performance-wise. But they believe their real strength comes from a mutual love of working with neurologically challenged people: Both had fathers with Alzheimer's, an experience that adds commitment and passion to their work.

Two new SongShine classes will begin on November 4, a Basics class which will run through January 20, and a SongShine Singers and Players class running through April 14 for those interested in being part of their upcoming production of *The Music Man*. Classes are held at Palm Desert Community Presbyterian Church on Hwy 74.

For details or to register, call Dr. Ruthanna Metzgar (425) 210.3612 or Peter Harris (760) 327.1460 or visit online at www.SongShineforParkinsons.org, where you can also see an interview with Dr. Meoli and her performance of Matchmaker. SongShine Foundation is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit public charity.



Ruthanna Metzgar and Dr. Pam Meoli as a nun in the *Sound of Music* production

Classes are team taught by Dr. Ruthanna Metzgar and Peter Harris. Metzgar, who has a doctorate in Voice Performance and a forty-year career as a voice teacher, professional singer, choral and orchestral conductor, worked collaboratively with otolaryngologists and speech pathologists in voice rehabilitation. Peter Harris studied classical acting, speech and diction at the Juilliard School, trained at Broadway's famed Circle-In-the-Square Theater School and at the Lee Strasberg Theater and Film Institute, and took course work at the Drama Therapy

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To keep up with all the action, you need to remain judicious about your health. Fortunately our Valley offers many participatory and educational events to do just that. On November 2 you'll find *Desert Health*® at the **American Heart Association's Heart & Stroke Walk** in Palm Desert. The walk is part of the AHA's MyHeart.MyLife. platform and will feature an educational fair in conjunction with the 3-mile stroll.

On November 9 in La Quinta, it's all about families at the **7th annual Fall Family Festival** benefitting the All About Families Resource and Learning Center. Their new Palm Desert center recently opened offering young families and moms free resources to get them started on their new life path (see page 27). The festival is free and a great place to hang with the kids and grandkids.

Then on November 17 & 18th, it's all about women at the 6th annual **Desert Women's Show & Business Conference** at Agua Caliente Resort. We are really excited about this year's event as Sunday is the FUN day with fashion shows, speakers, exhibitors, and an evening concert, then Monday is BIZ day offering an educational conference for the Valley's professional women – with Suzanne Somers as the keynote speaker! It's not to be missed, ladies.

Possibly the Valley's best event organizers are our friends at Desert AIDS Project. They have two extravaganzas on tap for us this holiday season: **Dancing with the Desert Stars** November 22 where local mayors, presidents, doctors and business owners take to the floor to raise funds benefitting women and children affected by HIV or AIDS; and then on December 11, Florence Henderson will join a long list of stars at the fourth annual **SPARKLE! All-Star Holiday Concert** presented by Integrated Wealth Management.

When January rolls around and you are feeling like you need to get back on track, we have just what you need! **The Mayor's Race & Wellness Festival** in Palm Springs features both a 10-mile and a 5k run and is produced in partnership with Desert Regional Medical Center, the Desert Healthcare District and the Clinton Foundation Health Matters Initiative. Last year's event generated just under \$350,000 for local nonprofits dedicated to health and wellness programs in Palm Springs. It's good for you and our community!

In La Quinta, the **Humana Well-Being Walk & Healthy Fun Fair** will kick off the Humana Challenge tournament week (January 13-19). This 5-mile walk also ends with a festival of healthy activities and information. You will find *Desert Health*® at both wellness festivals, so please stop by and say hello.

We look forward to seeing you out and about this season!

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Energy and vitality is crucial to productivity and enjoying your work day. What if those so called "healthy foods" were actually slowing you down, creating fatigue and worst of all accelerating aging and weight gain and making you crave the very foods that are hurting you? JJ will help you connect the dots between what you are eating and how are you feeling.

12:00 pm Luncheon Keynote - SUZANNE SOMERS
Join Suzanne for lunch in **THE SHOW** as she shares her secrets of beauty & vitality and discusses her newly released book: **"I'm Too Young For This!"**
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2:00 pm WOMEN ON TOP - Passion * Determination * Success
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- Low Back Pain
- Neck Pain
- Facet Joint Dysfunction
- Spinal Stenosis
- Vertebral Fractures
- Spondylolisthesis
- Whiplash Pain
- Arthritis
- Scoliosis
- Knee Pain
- Arachnoiditis
- Fibromyalgia
- Facial Pain
- Headaches
- Cancer Pain
- Phantom Limb Pain
- Complex Regional Pain Syndrome
- Peripheral Vascular Disease Pain
- Peripheral Neuropathy
- Lower Extremity Pain
- Peripheral Nerve Injuries
- Myofascial Pain Syndrome
- Central Pain Syndromes
- Chronic Abdominal Pain
- Orthopedic, Sports Injuries
- Post Laminectomy Syndrome



If you are experiencing chronic knee pain, don't let it control your life. **OsteoArthritis Centers of America** has helped thousands of patients relieve their knee pain **WITHOUT SURGERY** because surgery is not always the answer.

8:30 am - 5:00 pm
Monday - Friday

8:30 am - 12:30 pm
Saturday

Rancho Mirage Office
36101 Bob Hope Dr. Suite B-2
Rancho Mirage, CA 92270
760-321-1315

Indio Office
81812 Dr Carreon Suite D
Indio, CA 92201
760-347-7676
(Se Habla Español)

Palm Springs Office
44050 Airport Center Dr. Suite G
Palm Springs, CA 92264
760-320-8005



I'm charting my own future.



Mitch, D.A.P. client

D.A.P. treats and supports the whole person

High-quality, primary and HIV-specialty medical care through our Wells Fargo Health Center is only the beginning of what our clients find at Desert AIDS Project. Our case managers facilitate our holistic approach to care with a broad array of services, including our HIV-specialty dental clinic, food and housing support, home care, Eastern medicine alternatives, in-house lab services and pharmacy, mental health and substance abuse programs, a full-service community center offering a computer lab, wellness programs, health education, and so much more.

All under one roof

Thanks to your generous support, Desert AIDS Project has been saving lives for 30 years.

Please continue to help by donating at desertAIDSproject.org, joining one of our annual giving programs, or by saving the date for one of our upcoming fundraising events.

Dancing with the Desert Stars | November 22, 2013

SPARKLE! All-Star Holiday Concert | December 11, 2013

20th Annual Steve Chase Humanitarian Awards Gala | February 8, 2014

Haute 4 Help Fashion Event | March 7, 2014

Celebrity Doodles | April 5, 2014

Dining Out for Life | April 24, 2014



760.323.2118

desertAIDSproject.org