

TO YOUR



HEALTH



FRIDAY, MARCH 26, 2021

SUPPLEMENT TO The Conway Daily Sun

Memorial Hospital launches interventional pain service

CONWAY — For many patients suffering with chronic pain, narcotics are a common choice to manage their pain.

Helping patients better manage pain without turning to narcotics is the goal of the interventional pain clinic at Memorial Hospital.

Specially trained nurse anesthetists provide treatment using a variety of spinal injections and other procedures all administered in a hospital setting.

Zachary Chase, director of anesthesia and interventional pain services at Memorial, is part of a team of four certified registered nurse anesthetists (CRNAs) who oversee the service. Interventional pain procedures at Memorial maximize patient safety by taking place

in a full operating room, not in an exam room in an outpatient practice.

"We do injections in a full operating room with all of the resources available for us," said Chase.

Among those resources is a C-arm, a mobile X-ray imaging device shaped like a giant C with parts of imaging apparatus on each end. C-arms are used for imaging during surgeries including, orthopedic and emergency care procedures and provide increased accuracy for the clinician as they pinpoint treatment. This is especially important for spinal procedures.

The hospital also has the ability to use

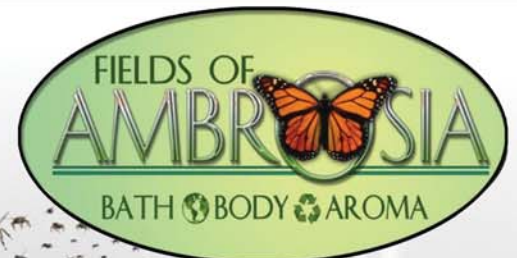


Pain intervention services at Memorial Hospital are delivered in a surgical setting for increased patient safety. (COURTESY PHOTO)

see **PAIN CLINIC** page 21

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Bert Weiss

Medicare Part B and Medicare Advantage deadlines approaching

There are two deadlines coming right up for Medicare-related insurance plans — both are on March 31.

First, if you don't have Medicare Part B and you want to start it, you must apply by March 31 for a July 1 start. Call Social Security (800) 772-1213 to do this.

Second, if you are already on a Medicare Advantage Plan and want to change plans (including changing companies and plans) you are allowed to make one change. Call an agent or your company for more information.



Bert Weiss

There are a few plans where eligibility to start is open year-round or most of the year.

If you are on Medicare and Medicaid, both, there are very rich plans available, that may include a generous dental benefit and rides to the doctor or dentist — benefits not offered by Medicaid. You lose no Medicaid benefits by opting in to these plans and the plans do not cost you extra money; you just gain benefits. There are several of these you might qualify for, ask an agent which is the best fit for you. The benefits will start on the first day of the month after you sign up.

Another type of plan available year-round is a Medicare Advantage plan that has a five-star rating. There are two such plans in Carroll County and three in Oxford County in Maine. One has prescription benefits attached. Another, designed for veterans who get VA prescription benefits and are on Medicare, has no prescription benefits. It, too, is a very rich plan. Ask an agent about what you might qualify for.

Most of us have seen the prolific advertisements on TV. What they do is list the most generous benefits available then urge you to call to see if you qualify.

Two of the plans described above are in the category of most generous benefits.

The catch is that you have to either be on both Medicare and Medicaid, or be eligible for prescription benefits from the VA.

If you are turning 65, or leaving work and going on your own, you must sign up for Medicare Part B and choose a strategy for covering the last 20 percent. I suggest anybody in these situations consult a licensed, appointed and certified agent for advice. Sorting through all the alternatives can be quite difficult to get the real answers to the cost of prescriptions, and everybody has a unique set of needs.

Bert Weiss is a life and health insurance agent licensed in New Hampshire and Maine, focusing on Medicare Advantage. He writes about the basic components to help the public understand how to manage Medicare insurance choices. Contact him at (603) 694-3058.



Lisa Whitney, RN, is one of the seven employees receiving recognition for length of service. (JAMIE GEMMITI PHOTO)

Longtime employees recognized by Visiting Nurse Home Care & Hospice

BY KATHY BENNETT
SPECIAL TO THE CONWAY DAILY SUN

CONWAY — Visiting Nurse Home Care & Hospice of Carroll County recently recognized long-term employees for milestone years of service, with tenure ranging from five to 35 years.

While their roles and responsibilities may vary, they share a common dedication to the community and a mission to provide compassionate care to those in need. These home-care heroes recently shared their perspectives on what makes this agency their employer of choice.

35 Years of Service Gail Boucher, financial manager

In times where workers are more likely to cycle through jobs than stay in one place for decades, Boucher's dedication to VNHCH is a rarity.

Boucher shared: "I think we come from a generation of people who are loyal to the places where we work. But the people you work with every day make a big difference. It makes you want to do your best and come back and be as helpful to everyone, in the field, and in the office."

When she started with the agency, she was the only person in the office. Today she is part of a staff of 54 serving 763 patients a year. Over that time, she has seen much change: the type of care they provide and the level of care provided in the home is much more intense than it was in the past.

As a working mother, Boucher found the agency's flexibility with their employer to be a great draw.

"They're a great employer. The flexibility is great. I never felt that if I had to stay home or call out that I was in danger of losing my job. That has been true through the years. They are understanding of people having a home life as well as a job," she said.

She knows retirement is on the horizon but has mixed feelings. After 35 years, says her coworkers have become like family — a common theme among long-time employees of this agency.

26 Years of Service Margaret Robinson, RN, CWCA, OMS, clinical resource leader

Robinson says it's the diversity that keeps the job "fresh" for her after all these years. In times of COVID-19, she has seen the demands on agency staff — and the acuity of the patients they see — increase.

"This past year has been a challenge. People are coming home much sicker. These people couldn't go to rehab or the hospital, so it's been challenging taking care of acutely ill patients in the home setting," she said. "Our whole team rose to this challenge and we've done a great job taking really good care of really sick people."

But it's these challenges that keep the job interesting for her.

"You can have 10 people with the same diagnosis but they live 10 different ways," Robinson said. "You have to approach the education and teaching to meet the patient where they are. You can't take a canned approach. That keeps it fresh and challenging. You'd think after 26 years I'd be bored. But every day I go into a new setting. You have to be able to work independently and think on your feet."

Her teammates at the agency also keep a smile on her face.

"We are supportive of each other. We are a smaller agency, therefore everyone's accomplishments and triumphs are all of ours," she said. "Our management is top-notch. It doesn't get any better!"

William G. Nicoll, Ph.D. and Monica A. Nicoll, Ph.D.

Rethinking mental health: ACEs and their implications

Mark Twain once said, "The problem is never that we know too little, but rather that we know so much that just ain't so!"

This observation is particularly applicable today regarding our understanding of, and approaches to, mental health issues. A tidal wave of research evidence now indicates that many of our diagnostic assumptions and treatment methods are not only mistaken, but often may cause or exacerbate the very problems they are intended to resolve.

For 150 years, two paradigms have been put forward to explain and treat mental health problems, the biomedical and the developmental.

The biomedical model assumes that some as yet undetermined neurological dysfunction, imbalance or disorder causes our emotional and behavioral difficulties (depression, anxiety, behavior problems, attending problems, etc.). Thus treatments are offered to supposedly "correct" this neurological problem. In the 1980s this paradigm exploded and began to dominate the public narrative on mental health. With strong financial backing from the pharmaceutical industry, the American Psychiatric Association rewrote the diagnostic manual (DSM II) and put forward a markedly expanded and medically based alternative in 1980, the DSM III.

Biological explanations provide logical credence to promoting biological treatments (medications). And indeed, psychopharmacological treatments have skyrocketed since the late 1980s and continue today aided by a 1992 federal law change allowing drug manufacturers to market their products directly to the public via advertisements (only the United States and New Zealand allow such advertising). The diagnosis of both ADHD and depression in America, for example, both increased by 400 percent or more from 1990 to the mid-2000s.

As Dr. Amos Wilson has noted, "To understand any problem in America,



Monica Nicoll and William Nicoll own Resilience Counseling & Training Center in North Conway. (COURTESY PHOTO)

you need to focus on who profits from that problem, not who suffers from the problem."

This presents us with a conundrum. If drug-based approaches for improving mental health and people's lives is correct, should not the numbers of people with mental health problems be declining? But, in actuality, just the opposite has occurred.

In 1987, 1.25 million people received SSI (Social Security Income) payments for mental health problems. By 2007, this figure jumped to 3.97 million and to 8 million in 2017. The number of children (under age 18) receiving SSI for mental health problems in 1987 was 16,200 but with pharmacological treatments rapidly increasing, this number grew to 561,000 by 2007.

Further complicating the legitimacy of the biomedical paradigm is the fact that long-term studies have failed to show beneficial effects for medication

treatment, which often is associated with deterioration, not improvement. Moreover, scientific research has also consistently failed to find any chemical or neurological causes for depression, ADHD, anxiety, addiction, and so forth.

As a result, diagnosis and treatment of mental health problems is based solely on subjective opinion and not any objective medical evidence. So, what then is the explanation for mental health problems?

Adverse childhood experiences

Since the 1990s, a growing body of research has begun to emerge on the effects of Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) on mental and physical health.

This research contradicts the biomedical explanations and treatments for mental, emotional and behavioral problems. Thus, the need to now rethink our understanding of,

and treatment strategies for, emotional and behavioral difficulties. In other words, it is the effects of stress, trauma or chronic emotional distress that lie at the base of mental health and well-being, not brain chemistry.

Children experiencing four or more ACEs are 460 percent more likely to be diagnosed with depression than children with no adverse experiences and those with 6 or more ACEs are 4600 percent more likely to suffer from drug/alcohol addiction.

Research has demonstrated a powerful link between early life stressors and mental health issues in both youth and adults including depression, suicide, anxiety, substance abuse, addiction, academic performance, school drop-outs, domestic violence, teen sexual behavior, impaired worker performance and so forth. As the number, frequency and toxicity of adverse experiences in children's lives increase, so do both mental health and physical health problems.

It should also be noted that while the CDC-sponsored studies are eye opening and quite compelling, they are also somewhat limited in scope. The actual ACEs connection with mental health difficulties is probably much higher. Early studies have focused exclusively on only the 10 most common childhood stressor experiences. If the myriad of additional Adverse Childhood Experiences were included, we'd likely see this rate increase dramatically. The data is clear, as the number and frequency of adverse experiences in children's lives increase, so do both mental health and physical health problems.

The most common psychological responses to ACEs appear to be: self-stigmatization (I'm a flawed, terrible person), loss of trust, self-blame, and lost hope or optimism (life will never get better).

Mental health difficulties are now

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25 Years of Service of Service Anita Nitz, software/OASIS administrator/ICD coder

After working in a variety of health-care settings over the years — hospital, rural health care and home care — Nitz can say with certainty that home care is the place for her.

"In all the areas I've worked I've found this one to be the most rewarding and challenging," she said. "I like home care. I think it's an underrated service. It provides such good care to people. You can see the results of your care."

Over 25 years, Nitz has seen much change. Billing and reimbursement methods have changed. The agency moved from handwritten charts to electronic documentation. She has seen this change as a professional opportunity for her.

The agency supported her being certified in OASIS, a specialized document that affects quality measures and reimbursement, a move that helps VNHCH meet new quality guidelines. The growth and training provided by her employer have kept her on board

see **VISITING NURSES** page 4

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Dr. Howard Mitz

Regular screenings decrease risk of colon cancer

Colon cancer is generally a preventable cancer, if caught early. It is important to have regular screenings and follow ups.

One in 22 men and 1 in 25 women may develop colon cancer in their lifetime according to the American Cancer Society. Colon cancer is the third leading diagnosis cancer and second leading diagnosis leading to cancer death in both men and women in the United States. With a high quality colonoscopy you can decrease your risk by up to 90 percent.

Although the exact causes for polyp formation and colon cancer are not entirely clear, there are several risk factors that have been linked to the formation of polyps. There are genetic risk factors that individuals cannot avoid, such as family history and age. However, there are other risk factors that can be minimized.

According to the American Cancer Society reducing or eliminating the following risk factors can significantly reduce your risk of developing colon cancer: obesity, physical inactivity, diets high in red

meats, smoking and heavy alcohol use.

For most people, screening for colon cancer begins at age 50. Colonoscopies will begin at an earlier age if you have a family history of colon cancer, family history of adenomatous polyps or several other conditions. African-Americans are at higher risk. Recommended screening starts at age 45.

Home testing DNA kits are available but can

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for so many years.

"There's been a lot of growth, a lot of being able to learn. I like that I'm always learning something new. Fortunately, working for this agency, you are encouraged to go out there and take on a new challenge. I've had a lot of opportunities to do different things."

Like Robinson, Nitz cites her coworkers as a big part of what makes working at VNHCH special.

"The staff is wonderful," she said. "Everyone brings something to the agency that benefits everyone else. Having worked in other environments and different dynamics, working here I feel like I'm allowed to do my job the best way I feel it needs to be done. I get to own it. There's trust — they trust me to do that. Not a lot of places let you do that."

20 Years of Service

Rosalie Miles, HR manager

While Miles has been with VNHCH for 20 years, she has been in her current role as HR manager for four years. She worked her way up over the years, starting as a receptionist, then accounts payable, to scheduling, then intake. Her path illustrates the point made by her colleagues: VNHCH is an employer that likes to give people challenges and promote from within.

Like her colleagues, she states that her coworkers are a big reason why she has been with the organization for so long. She shared, "I love the people that I work with. The clinical staff is fantastic and passionate about what they do."

She also cites the support of the agency's executive director Sandy Ruka, and their board of trustees. "Our board supports the agency and has done a wonderful job, especially through the pandemic. They have been very helpful."

Rosalie also cited the agency's flexibility as a benefit of working for VNHCH.

"They are helpful with their staff and they respect the people who work for us," she said. "The clinical staff has the autonomy to rearrange their

schedules, to fit their day to meet their needs and the clients' needs. They go over and above. At our agency, you can feel the warmth."

5 Years of Service

Lisa Whitney, nurse case manager Angela Nelson, physical therapy assistant

Penny Thomas, licensed/certified nursing assistant

These three professionals have all reached the five-year mark in 2021. While they each play different roles, they all agree that the mission of the agency is what fuels their dedication.

Thomas loves the satisfaction that comes from helping those in need.

"(The patients) are so thankful and appreciative," she said. "They tell me, 'you always make me feel better after you come here' or 'I don't know what I'd do without you.' If not for us, many would have to go to a facility. They wouldn't have the independence of living in their homes."

Nelson enjoys working with patients to make them more mobile and independent in their homes.

Her coworkers are also a resource to her. She said, "I get to work with and learn from a variety of people, whether it's physical therapy, nursing or occupational therapy. So many different experiences to draw from make it one of the really neat factors about working here."

Whitney provides both skilled nursing and hospice care but says hospice is her favorite work.

"What I love doing is bringing people comfort and dignity and respect, and the ability to help caregivers give their loved ones their last dying wish. It's very fulfilling," she said. "We are all community-driven. It's a good company to work for. They're all wonderful caring people, in it for the same mission I am, keeping our community safe and at home."

Visiting Nurse Home Care and Hospice is currently recruiting for per diem and permanent LNAs, home-makers and RNs. To apply, go to vnhch.org.



Glaucoma typically has no early warning signs or symptoms. An annual comprehensive eye exam is key to identifying and diagnosing the disease early in order to promptly treat and slow the progression of vision loss. (COURTESY PHOTO)

Dr. Angelique Sawyer

Early detection, treatment key to protecting vision from glaucoma

Glaucoma affects 2.7 million people in the United States and is the second leading cause of blindness, yet understanding and awareness of the disease is low. In fact, public health surveys show as many as 72 percent of Americans don't know that glaucoma typically has no early warning signs or symptoms.

Often referred to as the "sneak thief of sight," glaucoma is a group of eye disorders that can damage the optic nerve and impair peripheral vision.

If left untreated, glaucoma can lead to complete loss of sight.

While the disease does not have a cure and is not preventable, it is treatable and can be detected in a comprehensive eye exam provided by your eye doctor. It is key to identify and diagnose the disease early in order to promptly treat and slow the progression of vision loss.

Americans are also largely unaware of the factors that put them at greater risk for developing glaucoma — only 13 percent of Americans know that a person's

race increased their chances for developing the disease.

According to the Glaucoma Research Foundation, glaucoma is six to eight times more common in African Americans than Caucasians. Additional factors that put someone at greater risk for glaucoma include diabetes, hypothyroidism, age over 60, a family history of glaucoma or history of severe eye trauma.



Angelique Sawyer

Treatment for glaucoma includes prescription eye drops and medication to lower pressure in the eyes. In some cases, laser treatment or surgery may be effective in reducing pressure.

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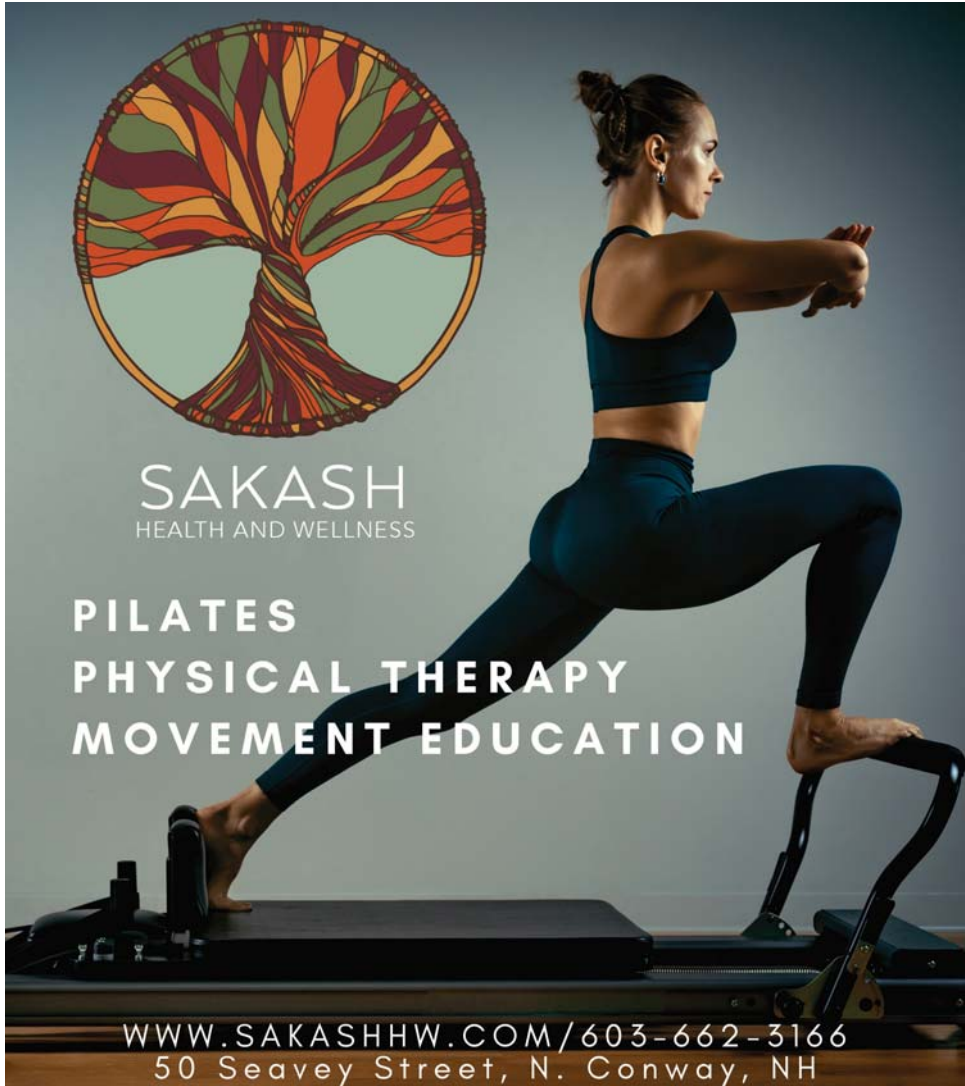
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Jessica Williams

ADA recognizes hearing loss-diabetes link

ADA recognizes hearing loss-diabetes link, adds audiology to standards of care

After years of non-inclusion in its table on referrals for diabetes care management, the American Diabetes Association has finally recognized hearing loss as a comorbidity (or associated health risk) of diabetes.

The ADA updated its Standards of Medical Care in Diabetes to reflect the diabetes-hearing loss relationship in the January 2021 issue of its magazine,

Diabetes Care.

Supporting the official referral listing is a detailed section on “Sensory Impairment,” (page S49) with studies that illustrate the pathologies of the connection.

“Hearing impairment, both in high-frequency and low- to mid-frequency ranges, is more common in people with diabetes than in those without, with stronger associations found in studies of younger people. Proposed pathophysiologic mechanisms

include the combined contributions of hyperglycemia and oxidative stress to cochlear microangiopathy and auditory neuropathy,” explains the ADA.

The document continues, “In a National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey (NHANES) analysis, hearing impairment was about twice as prevalent in people with diabetes compared with

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be misleading. These stool tests tend to have a high false-positive reading and the test misses 8 percent of the colon cancers and most polyps according to the American Cancer Society. If the test comes back with a positive reading a colonoscopy is needed to ensure cancer is not present. This would now no longer be considered a screening colonoscopy and would likely bear extra cost.

The method to measure the accuracy and the effectiveness of a physician is called an adenoma detection rate or ADR.

The detection number indicates how effective your doctor is in preventing colon cancer. The higher the number the better the protection. According to the New England Journal of Medicine, there is a 3 percent reduction in colorectal cancer incidences and a 5 percent reduction in cancer mortality for each 1 percent increase in adenoma detection rate. A solid ADR is 25 percent.

Howard Mitz, D.O., is the owner of North Country Gastroenterology in North Conway. Dr. Mitz's overall ADR since 2014 is 50 percent, a much higher than the 25 percent considered a solid rate and therefore more protective from colon cancer. For more information or to set up an appointment, call (603) 444-0272 or go to nccgastronh.com.

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Aimee Moller

Building systems to support healthy habits

I talk to lots of people who want to lose weight, reclaim their fitness and feel better. These are great goals. Eating healthy food, weight training and working out at high intensity will get you there. Having a great coach to encourage you, help you stay motivated and give you a little push each day

will accelerate your progress.

But building good habits doesn't mean you flipped the switch and your motivation changes overnight. And it doesn't mean the bad habits go scurrying away.

Our brains have an internal comfort zone. We are wired to save energy and our brains like to be in that

happy place. We put off going for a run because its cold outside. We hit the drive-through because we are hungry and it's easy.

There is a ton of research around how our brains

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better understood as based in developmental issues not biological. This suggests our diagnostic terms (depression, anxiety, ADHD, substance abuse/addiction, etc.) are in actuality only labels for describing the symptoms of underlying, unresolved issues and not 'the problem' per se. Emotional and behavioral symptoms are adaptive responses to adverse life experiences.

Mental health issues involve a complex interaction process between social, psychological and biological factors. Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) lead to psychologically unhealthy perceptions of self, others and life. These negative perceptions in turn trigger our normal biological responses to stress and danger. In other words, our HPA (hypothalamic pituitary adrenal) system kicks into gear for a fight, flight or freeze response, and levels of the stress hormone cortisol elevate.

The HPA system is designed to facilitate self-protective responses to perceived temporary threats. But some children are exposed to chronic threat, stress or trauma. Their HPA system never gets to reset to normal; it becomes overloaded and dysregulation is the result. This leads to adaptive, self-protective behavioral responses, which in turn result in negative responses from the significant adults in their lives (parents, teachers, coaches, neighbors, etc.). Thus, a circular causation process is now complete. Punitive, critical and rejecting responses from the entourage of significant adults in their lives become yet further adverse childhood experi-

ences. Such a social, cognitive, biological and behavioral sequence often continues unabated, leading to mental health difficulties.

The ACEs research suggests the real underlying cause of mental health problems is not chemically malfunctioning or imbalanced brains. Rather, it is adverse life experiences that result in unmet mental health needs for positive social connections, respect, healthy autonomy, a sense of competence and meaningful contribution, feeling safe (physical and emotional) and being a valued and worthwhile person. Studies further indicate emotional abuse or maltreatment to be the most common ACE leading to mental health difficulties.

It follows then that mental health interventions will need to focus more on the healing of the cognitive and emotional effects of adverse life experiences. Medications may, in some cases, provide some degree of temporary symptom relief. But improving one's mental health requires a greater focus on healing from the stress and traumas experienced and developing more fulfilling lives and relationships and not the pharmacological suppressing of disruptive emotions or behaviors.

With children this means family counseling is more in keeping with the ACEs research findings, not medications. Studies consistently indicate that changing adult perceptions of, and behavioral interactions with, a child lead to the quickest and most lasting positive changes in children's behavior and emotions.

Want to learn more? Some suggested readings:

"Lost Connections: Uncovering the real causes of depression and the unexpected solutions," by Johann Hari (2018).

"The Emperor's New Drugs: Exploring the antidepressant myth," by Irving Kirsch (2010).

"Crazy Like Us: The globalization of the American psyche," by Ethan Watters (2010).

"Manufacturing Depression: The secret history of a modern disease," by Gary Greenberg (2010).

"Anatomy of an Epidemic: magic bullets, psychiatric drugs, and the astonishing rise of mental illness in America," by Robert Whitaker (2010).

"ADHD Nation: Children, Doctors, Big Pharma and the Making of an American Epidemic," by Alan Schwarz (2016).

"Shyness: How normal behavior became a sickness," by Christopher Lane (2007).

"Why Zebras Don't Get Ulcers," by Robert Sapolsky.

"Chasing the Scream," by Johann Hari (addiction).

"In the realm of Hungry Ghosts," by Gabor Mate (addiction).

Monica Nicoll, Ph.D., brings 30 years of experience to her mental health counseling practice. Monica has authored two children's books on resilience and serves as an adjunct professor in counseling. William Nicoll, Ph.D., has 50 years of experience in the mental health and education fields. A retired professor of counseling, he has provided counseling services in schools, agencies, private practice and corrections settings. Together they own Resilience Counseling & Training Center in North Conway.



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Do you wake up bright-eyed and bushy-tailed, ready to take on the challenges of the day ahead or do you long for the day when you will feel well-rested? These days, fatigue is a common complaint from many of our patients, especially during times of high stress.

Some people fall asleep just fine but then wake up sometime around 2-4 a.m., with the wheels in their head spinning and their thoughts running away from them. Others struggle to fall asleep at a decent hour or they sleep fitfully, tossing and turning all night, feeling barely rested when the alarm goes off.

The Sleep Management Institute estimates 30-50 percent of the general population is affected by insomnia with 10 percent having chronic sleep issues.

Insomnia can be brought on by anxiety, worry, stress, chronic pain or illness. It can also be the side effect of a modern lifestyle that leads us to be overstimulated, cutting our sleep short. Exposure to artificial light, including blue light from technology screens, for instance, stimulates the brain. Using these devices at night tells our brain that it is time to be awake and alert, which is hardly conducive to getting a good night's rest.

Sleep is such an important indicator of overall health and well-being. High quality rest is vital throughout our lifespan and a lack of sleep can become a vicious cycle. When we don't sleep enough or we get poor quality sleep, our health suffers. Chronic health conditions can interfere with sleep. Also, the more we struggle with insomnia, the more anxiety provoking sleep becomes, which in turn interferes with getting a good night's sleep. It can be so exhausting.

Most of us know that getting a good night's sleep is important, but too few of us actually make sleep a high priority. Those with high sleep debt may have forgotten what being truly rested feels like.

On average, according to the Natural Sleep Foundation, recommended sleep varies by age:

- Newborns (0-3 months): 14-17 hours each day.
- Infants (4-11 months): 12-15 hours.
- Toddlers (1-2 years): 11-14 hours.
- Preschoolers (3-5): 10-13 hours.
- School age children (6-13): 9-11 hours.
- Teenagers (14-17): 8-10 hours.
- Younger adults (18-25): 7-9 hours.

- Adults (26-64): 7-9 hours.
- Older adults (65+): 7-8 hours.

How much sleep are you consistently getting?



Trish Chaput

processes are critical for our physical, mental and emotional health.

The Sleep Management Institute lists the following as some side effects to sleep deprivation:

- Poor concentration and focus or brain fog.
- Difficulty with memory (a lack of sleep can be a huge contributor to cognitive decline as we age).
- Impaired motor coordination (being uncoordinated).
- Irritability and impaired social interaction.
- Motor vehicle accidents due to fatigued, sleep-deprived drivers.
- Higher incidence of chronic medical conditions including high blood pressure and diabetes, for example.

Knowing the consequences, you may now be asking: What can be done about insomnia?

Many lifestyle factors within our own control, can help set ourselves up for a good night's sleep. These include:

- A healthy diet, limiting sugar and processed foods, especially close to bedtime (best to stop eating 3 hours before bed).
- Minimizing caffeine intake, especially in the afternoon.
- Regular exercise.

see **SLEEP** page 14

HEARING from page 7

those without, after adjusting for age and other risk factors for hearing impairment."

"In the Diabetes Control and Complications Trial/Epidemiology of Diabetes Interventions and Complications (DCCT/EDIC) cohort, time-weighted mean A1C was associated with increased risk of hearing impairment when tested after long-term (.20 years) follow-up," the ADA concludes in that same passage.

The ADA's inclusion of hearing impairment is a huge victory for people's overall health concerning the hearing system or not. Much of that victory can be credited to the executive director of The Audiology Project (theaudiologyproject.com), Kathy Dowd, Au.D., who has dedicated education and marketing initiatives to audiology-based medical management for chronic diseases.

The statistics have been known for years — rele-

vant studies have been listing hearing loss twice as common in adults with diabetes since at least 2008.

And considering there are over 86 million Americans estimated to be pre-diabetic, there's never a wrong scenario to stay on top of your hearing health with regular checkups, if you currently have diabetes or have a family history of it.

Jessica Williams is national board certified in hearing instrument sciences and has been licensed to practice in the state of New Hampshire since 2004. She currently sits on the N.H. Board of Hearing Care Providers and continues a long family legacy of redefining and bringing quality hearing care to the community. When not in the office, Jessica can be found hiking or skiing in the mountains, riding bikes or traveling with her two kids. For more information, go to lifesoundsamazing.com or call the Hearing Aid Shop in Wolfeboro at (603) 569-2799 or in North Conway at (603) 356-0172.

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Marie L. Veselsky RD, LD, CDE, BC-ADM

Weight-loss programs get to root of health problems

Metabolic syndrome is a health problem that is finally getting more attention. This is due to the COVID-19 pandemic putting the obesity epidemic once again into the spotlight.

Data reveals that obesity or metabolic syndrome (several risk factors in addition to obesity) is no longer a health threat just in the long run, but one that can have devastating effects right now.

This should give us all a wake-up call that being significantly overweight is not a benign condition. Medications for high cholesterol, high blood pressure and high blood sugar cannot do it alone. You need to get to the root of the problem. Do it for the health of it!

Over 40 percent of the United States population is considered obese. Not only does obesity or metabolic syndrome increase your risk of getting infected with COVID-19 but they may also increase your risk of greater complications from the virus.

There are also concerns that obesity may interfere with the vaccine's effectiveness. New studies and information confirm health-care providers' suspicions that the COVID-19 virus takes advantage of a chronic disease that our current U.S. health care system is unable to get under control. Researchers have found that being significantly overweight can also worsen other health conditions such as the flu and other respiratory conditions.

What is metabolic syndrome? Metabolic syndrome is a cluster of risk factors based on several well recognized signs including obesity, elevated triglycerides,

reduced HDL cholesterol, raised blood pressure and elevated blood glucose.

Typically, the root of the problem for metabolic syndrome starts with being significantly overweight. Overweight and obesity are defined as abnormal or excessive fat accumulation that presents a risk to health. A body mass index (BMI) over 25 is considered overweight and over 30 is obese.

The good news is that weight loss does not have to happen overnight to be beneficial.

As a licensed registered dietitian and a certified diabetes educator (CDE), I like to tell my clients "one rock at a time." I reinforce with them that if you are going in the right direction, no matter how slow, you will be successful. Just a 10 percent reduction in body weight can decrease expected lifetime medical costs from hypertension, high cholesterol, and Type 2 diabetes as well as heart disease.

For those that have struggled and not been successful in losing the weight there is good news. Comprehensive medically monitored weight-loss programs are out there.

Medically supervised weight loss programs can provide a safer, more accountable approach to help people lose the weight and improve weight-related medical conditions. An initial appointment followed by monthly follow-ups with a licensed credentialed health care provider/prescriber that specializes in weight loss, as well as weekly weigh-ins and support groups with a registered dietitian will help you achieve weight loss and stick with the program.

There are "kick-start weight-loss programs" that can help you get the fresh start you need, such as weight-loss medications for the right candidates, meal replacement programs that reduce daily caloric intake and even supervised exercise programs.

Medically supervised weight-loss programs can also assess if you are an appropriate candidate for referral for gastric weight loss surgery. We will help you meet the initial weight loss and diet education requirements needed, all as you are learning new behaviors for the future to help maintain your weight loss.

This includes education on the right weight maintenance meal plan for you such as the Mediterranean Diet or a healthy meal plan that is made up of more "real food," such as fresh fruits and vegetables, less processed breads, carbohydrates, more lean protein, and an individualized total daily carbohydrate number.

Getting to the root of the problem and getting the weight off is the best prevention for any weight-related illness. Do it for the health of it!

Marie L. Veselsky is a licensed registered dietitian, certified diabetes educator and is board-certified in advanced diabetes management. She holds a masters of adult education in nutrition. Veselsky owns Integrated Optimal Health's Choice Center for Diabetes & Weight Loss, an accredited diabetes education center located at 45 Washington St. in Conway. Call (603) 770-4856 for details or go to integratedoptimalhealth.com.



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Charles Platkin

Set goals like a personal trainer

Here are some tips to get you started meeting your fitness goals.

1. Set very specific, targeted, achievable, motivating goals.

Ask yourself the following: What exactly do I want to achieve with my routine? Have a body that looks like a swimsuit model? Look like an old high school photo? Be able to run a marathon in under five hours? Lose weight? Feel better? Walk longer? Run 5 miles?

Once you have that goal in place, you need to figure out if it is achievable. Can you look like a swimsuit model? Possible? Then fine. Will you be able to run 26 miles in less than five hours? Maybe not. Or it might take several years to get to that point. Make sure your goals are "doable" within the time frame you've allotted.

2. Write down your exact workout.

Once you've come up with a specific, realistic target, write it down. That's what a trainer would do. What exercises should you be doing? What shouldn't you be doing? What's best for your intended goals? Write down the exercises you will have to do, how many reps and how many minutes you will have to do each one, how many days per week, etc.

There is no messing around if you have your exact workout written down.

Bring a chart to the gym to check off each and every workout, or use a phone application. Remember to use a stopwatch for exercises that involve time.

3. Assess every week.

Goals should be measurable, so you know if you're on the road to success. For example, weighing yourself once a week tells you at a glance if you're heading in the right direction. WRITE IT DOWN, or use an app to keep track.

4. Take measurements.

It's really important to look at measurements, in addition to the number on the scale. Most good personal trainers will take body measurements during your first session. No reason why you shouldn't do the same. Here's a list of measurements that are usually recorded: neck, abdominal, waist, shoulder, hip, chest, thigh (mid), left arm and right arm, blood pressure and resting heart rate. Make sure to take these measurements every month to track your progress. Keep a log and write it all down.

5. Fill out an initial fitness assessment.

When you're developing

SYSTEMS from page 8

protect us in response to trauma (but that's a talk for another day). The bottom line is our brains are wired to stay comfortable. And we're pretty good at it.

Building new habits does not mean suddenly overcoming bad ones. That kind of approach won't stick and will likely lead to failure.

I'm a huge fan of working smarter to make life easier. That's why building systems to support your new habits will set you up for long-term success. Systems make it easier to accomplish your task, allow you more control and leave less to chance.

If you have young kids in school, I'm willing to bet you have a system in the morning. You have a wake-up time, you know how much wake-up protesting you can allow, you have either made lunch the night before, or you know exactly how the kids are going to get lunch and how they are going to get to school. These things happen each day, in mostly the same way, and the system works most of the time.

We can also build systems around health and fitness habits.

For example, if you know you have an appointment with a personal trainer, you'll get to the gym. If you are meeting a friend for a run every Monday at 5, you'll pack your running shoes in the morning. If you prepared your lunches for the week on Sunday, you'll eat them and skip the drive through.

Here are two simple systems to help get you going.

Workout more

- Reserve your classes for the entire week ahead of time if your gym has a reservation system. This is a time commitment you are making for yourself, so don't schedule anything else during that time (P.S.

You deserve some you time).

- Pack your workout clothes and shoes the night before and leave them by the door. If you wake up late, it won't completely derail the rest of your day. Make this part of your nightly routine. Brush teeth, pack clothes.

- Go to the gym either right before work, or right after. Let's face it, if our brains are seeking comfort, once you get home, your brain is going to start pushing you toward the couch, or something will come up at home that needs your attention. If going to the gym on your way home is part of your system, you are much more likely to get there.

Eat better

- To make life easier, either eat the same thing for lunch each day, or plan your dinner for the week and make a little extra for lunch the next day. If you are already cooking dinner anyway, it does not take more of your time to make a little more.

- Plan your grocery list around your healthy food for the week. Having a plan and healthy food in the house means you are less likely to resort to last minute fast food options.

- Make a snack box (this is a fave life hack of mine). Each Sunday, grab a box or bin, and put snacks in it for the week ahead. Think fruit like apples or bananas, some low-sugar protein bars, single-serve bags of nuts, or some oatmeal packets. Bring your snack box to work on Monday for those mid-day munchies.

Systems help us leave less to chance, and minimize the daily decisions we need to make. Remember Steve Jobs wore the same shirt all the time? Keep in mind, systems that work vary from person to person. We all have different life circumstances



Aimee Moller is co-owner of Swift River CrossFit in Conway with her husband, Paul. (COURTESY PHOTO)

and what works for me may not work for you. But once you find what works, you will feel like you are purposefully moving toward your goals and have mastered some of the chaos.

Aimee Moller is an ACE (American Council on Exercise) certified personal trainer, CrossFit Level 2 trainer, and USA weightlifting level 2 Coach. She co-owns Swift River CrossFit with her husband, Paul, and she loves helping people find their fitness.

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MARIE VESELSKY, RD, LD, CDE, BC-ADM, is a licensed Registered Dietitian that specializes in weight loss and diabetes education for individuals that want to use diet and lifestyle changes first, or in addition to, any medications that have been prescribed. She is the coordinator for our weight loss, diabetes, and fitness programs.

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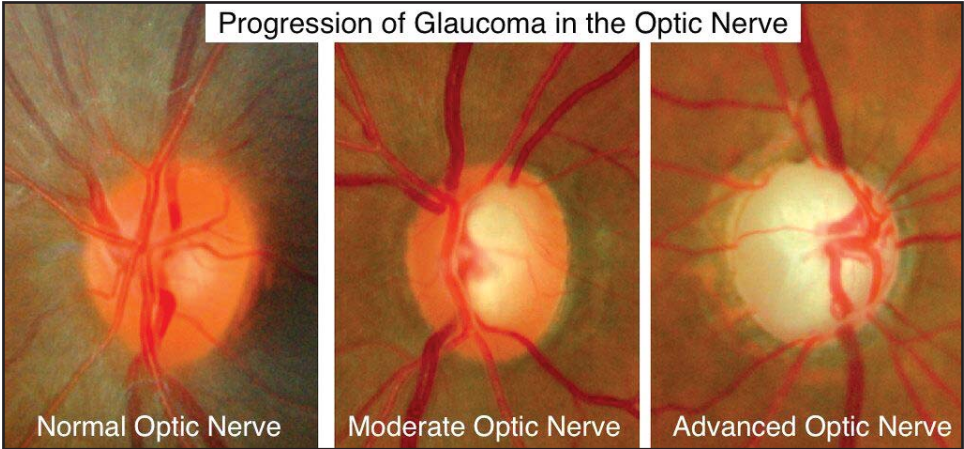
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This series of pictures of the optic nerve shows the progression of glaucoma. Treatment can help slow the progress of the disease. (COURTESY PHOTO)

GLAUCOMA from page 5

In addition to yearly, comprehensive eye exams, Conway Eye Care suggests the following tips to help maintain overall eye health and clear, comfortable vision:

- Eat green, leafy vegetables and foods rich in nutrients like beta carotene, vitamin C and zinc to protect eyes from disease.
- Cut down on those bad habits such as smoking and consuming alcohol or excessive caffeine, which can all be harmful to the eyes.
- If you work in front of a computer, practice the 20/20/20 rule; every 20 minutes, take a 20 second break and look at something 20 feet away to help avoid digital eye strain.
- Wear sunglasses with UV-A and UV-B protection year-round.

Contact Conway Eye Care at (603) 356-3000 to make an appointment for a comprehensive eye exam and to help prevent vision loss from glaucoma.

Founded in 1925, Conway Eye Care in North Conway, and the sister location, Coos Eye Care in Berlin, have been providing comprehensive medical and routine eye care to northern New Hampshire for more than 90 years. Drs. Angelique Sawyer, Elizabeth Reese and Olivia Stelmach provide primary eye care and emergency services for patients of all ages at both locations. Services include diabetic eye exams, prescription glasses and contact lenses, and the diagnosis and treatment of eye diseases, such as glaucoma, macular degeneration, cataracts, dry eye, and retinal disease. Under the ownership of Dr. Sawyer since 2018, its doctors provide the highest quality care, using state of the art technology for treatment and prevention of eye disease. For more information or to schedule an appointment, contact Conway Eye Care at (603) 356-3000 or Coos Eye Care at (603) 752-3510, or go to conwayeye.com.



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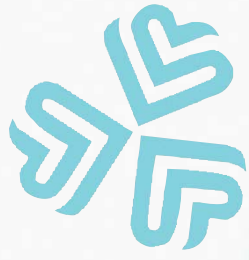
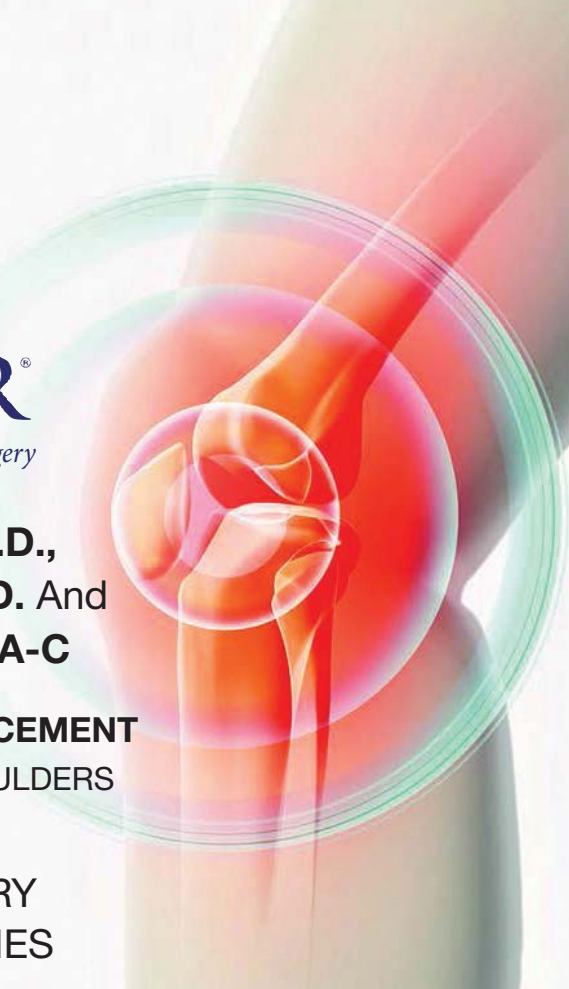


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Meghan Vestal

Make movement a daily habit

It's no surprise that exercise is an important factor to support our health. However, exercising on occasion is not really going to make much of a difference in the long run. Establishing a regular habit of physical activity is absolutely crucial for making positive changes to your life and making progress over time.

Aim for at least 150 minutes of moderate-intensity aerobic activity or 75 minutes of vigorous-intensity aerobic activity per week. Aerobic exercise is cardiovascular conditioning that can be sustained over a period of time and includes activities such as jogging or swimming.

You'll also want to include anaerobic exercises at least two days per week. Anaerobic exercise is short bursts of activity that can't be sustained for long but help to build muscle, such as weightlifting and high-intensity interval training.

Only about 23 percent of American adults are meeting these guidelines, so here are some tips to help you create a daily habit and maintain it.

Find a time that works for you. Morning workouts are an excellent way to wake up and set the tone for a productive day ahead, while mid-day exercise is great for breaking up the day and preventing an afternoon slump. Alternatively, evening may be the best opportunity for you to dedicate time for some uninterrupted movement. Keep in mind that exercising too close to bedtime may disrupt your sleep, so allow adequate time to wind down and rest before heading to bed.

Exercise with a friend. Encourage your friends and family members to join in, whether together in-person or online through a virtual class. Having a supportive community that helps to keep you moving and motivated is key. The added accountability of a positive person alongside you will keep

you showing up time and time again.

Try something new. Keep in mind that you want to include a variety of different types of exercise so as not to get bored or plateau in your progress. Try hiking, dancing, chair yoga, biking and resistance training. Challenge yourself by stepping out of your comfort zone, and you just might find a new favorite activity that you've been missing out on. You'll be more inclined to exercise if



Meghan Vestal

you actually enjoy what you are doing!

Get outdoors. With warmer weather ahead, take your physical activity outside. You can explore new trails to walk on, go kayaking on a river or lake, or work on functional strength training in a park. Breathing in fresh air, getting some sunshine, and changing up your environment can help make each workout unique and interesting.

Rest when you need to. To prevent burnout and injury, rest when necessary. You may choose to take a full day of rest once per week to fully recover, or if you are feeling sore in one part of your body, focus the attention of your exercise on a different area of the body. For example, if one day your shoulders and arms are feeling sore go for a nice long walk. As Newton's first law of motion states, "an object at rest

see **MOVEMENT** page 15

GOALS from page 10

your fitness program, ask yourself a few key questions (again, just like a personal trainer should): A. Where do you prefer to exercise? Inside? Outside? Combination? B. What time do you like to exercise? Early morning, morning, midmorning, afternoon, late afternoon, evening, late evening? C. How many times per week can you exercise/train? D. How much time can you spend daily on exercise/training? E. What are the best days for you to exercise/train? This assessment will give you clues that help to organize your workout schedule.

6. Take a fitness assessment

Take a look at shapeup.org/fitness/assess/strength1.html for a variety of fitness assessments. Take these every six weeks and note your progress.

7. Keep a training log.

Write down everything you're doing and take a look at the numbers every four weeks. Trainers know what your body is capable of doing not because of their expertise but because they're taking the time to measure your successes and failures. The best tools on the market right now are the apps for your phone. Nike Training Club not only helps you keep track but also has a full-body training application: nike.com/nike-women/features/ntc?locale=en_US.

There is also GAIN Fitness, which costs \$2.99 per exercise pack. According to PC Magazine, "MyFitnessPal is one of the best all-in-one calorie counter and exercise trackers for the iPhone." I also like Fitocracy as a tracker. It's free and loaded with wonderful features, including a social media component. Using an app is a quick way to keep up with what can be a time-consuming chore that is essential for success.

8. Learn to do your routine correctly.

Plan your specific exercises and learn how to do them correctly. There are many websites that have fantastic, helpful instructional videos on how to do exercises correctly. The University of Florida has something called Trainer Time which offers instructional videos with personal trainers. See recsports.ufl.edu/fitness/personal-training/trainer-time.

One of the best video libraries is from the American Council on Exercise (ACE); see their Kick Start Workout Guide goo.gl/Srxtm and make sure to check out their complete library of great exercise resources: acefitness.org/acefit/exercise-library-main.

9. Plan as you rest.

Instead of counting seconds between sets, use the time to start planning your next move. Thinking two steps ahead will keep you from wasting time during your workout.

10. Try an at-home (no equipment) workout from the American Council on Exercise (ACE).

I really like the idea of getting in shape without using any equipment.


11. Use a heart rate monitor.

You should be aiming for your target heart rate zone, which is the minimum and maximum number of times your heart should beat during one minute of exercise. You can find your target heart rate by going to the American Heart Association's website at goo.gl/6fuMx. It's recommended that you exercise within 60 percent (even lower for beginners) to 85 percent of your maximum heart rate.

12. Keep it fresh.

Change your exercise routine and shock your body. Your body adapts to repetitive training stimuli. Change your routine every two weeks. Try some new exercises, and change the intensity of your workouts.

Diet Detective is a not-for-profit organization working to uncover the mysteries and myths surrounding food, nutrition, fitness and medicine with the goal of educating, engaging, inspiring and creating a catalyst for meaningful change in personal and community health and wellness.



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SLEEP from page 9

- A consistent sleep schedule and bedtime routine.
- A comfortable, dark, cool bedroom environment.
- Minimizing artificial light and screen time within two hours of bedtime.

If you struggle to fall asleep, there are safe, natural remedies you might try.

These include the use of sleep-inducing white noise, ocean waves, waterfalls or rain-forest sounds. Calming mantras or meditation before bed, deep breathing techniques, essential oils or relaxing teas can also be wonderful for reducing stress or anxiety and promoting sleep. A warm bath or foot soak is another effective way to help the body relax into sleep by lifting then dropping body temperature.

If you are still struggling to get a good night's rest, a Functional Medicine practitioner can help you get to the root cause so that you can optimize your sleep and your health.

For more information on insomnia, anxiety and other health topics, go to the Health Library at discoverhealthfmc.com.

Trish Chaput is the health coach at Discover Health Functional Medicine Center. As a partner in your health journey, she provides personalized care through one-to-one and small group coaching. Call the office (603) 447-3112 or sign up for a free consultation with Coach Trish or Dr. Trish Murray at discoverhealthfmc.com.

Anjali Rose, MEd., RMT, RYT500

Mindfulness, self-care can transform well-being

Recently, I had the pleasure of teaching a virtual workshop for the Jackson Community Church on mindfulness for a healthy well-being.

Our intention is to bring the community together to create health and well-being.

Here's what I discovered: Most everyone is looking to increase their levels of joy and happiness in their lives by reducing stress and anxiety. It seems as a society we are constantly looking to improve our health in one way or another, and why not? Science shows mindfulness improves our everyday health and well-being. During this of all years, we need it even more.

There are numerous types of mindfulness activities that can sometimes create indecision on where to begin. Ever had the thought, "Oh my gosh, I don't know where to begin, so I didn't"? Well, here in this article, I hope to simplify those choices and create a pathway for you as each of us can integrate one or more practices into our daily routines and create moments, minutes, hours, days and weeks of ongoing happiness and joy!

Mindful movement — Mindful movement is where the breath and movement connect to create a deep awareness of the physical, emotional and mental well-being in the present moment. In my practice, I teach this through yoga. Whether it be a hatha yoga flow or a Yin/Restorative practice, we move our bodies with the breath to release and let go of inner chatter allowing for the flow of joy and happiness.

Mindful eating — Here we take



Anjali Rose is a local community leader in the health and wellness field and a holistic health practitioner offering yoga, mindfulness, reiki, oracle cards, plant-based cooking classes and retreats to individuals, community and corporate business. (COURTESY PHOTO)

time to plan what we eat, eat when we are hungry, choose healthy foods and portions and remove all distractions while eating. This practice tends to be one of the more challenging for me and many of my clients as it takes true commitment and focus. As I write this I'm chuckling about sharing a bag of Twizzlers yesterday with my friend Maureen, truly "mindless" eating. It happens. Each month, I teach a virtual plant-based cooking class to bring in the mindfulness of cooking and eating. Practice is the key.

Mindful listening — Listening to the nuances of soft sound, hearing and

digesting what a person is communicating to us, relishing in the sounds of nature and music and processing the

feeling of what we hear in our bodies versus our brain. What feelings does it conjure up? We all have our favorite genres, try listening to meditation music and notice how you feel.

Mindful energy — Being in the flow, creating a sense of movement energetically and being attuned to our physical, mental and emotional energy and where we place it in the moment.

My dad died recently and as I noticed the heaviness of grief, it became apparent this kind of energy needed to be cared for. My practice includes the use of Reiki healing energy and this type of healing is profound for removing stagnant energy and creating the natural healing flow of energy within the body. Our mind, body, spiritual connection is meant to be clear so our energy can flow through all aspects of us for a healthy well-being.

Mindfulness meditation — Meditation is key to all mindfulness as it slows the chatter of the mind, brings our breath and focus into attention and taps into the parasympathetic nervous system. This system is the opposite of fight and flight, which is where most

see **MINDFULNESS** page 16

MOVEMENT from page 14

stays at rest and an object in motion stays in motion." Taking too much time away from physical activity can make regaining momentum and getting back into the routine more challenging.

Focus on your goals. If you are ever struggling with finding the motivation to get moving, think back to why exercise is important to you. Define and focus on your goals and realize that achieving those goals takes time, energy, consistency and determination of a regular movement practice.

Celebrate your achievements. You may discover that being more active improves your sleep quality and energy levels, elevates your mood and brain function, and builds your confidence. Celebrate these amazing benefits that you've gained as you recognize them and keep up the good work.

Looking for a good place to get started? Discover Health Movement Membership is an online movement membership created to help you enhance your mobility, build your strength, and move with confidence and ease. The membership provides live, instructor-led classes three times per week including Self-Myofascial Release with Lisa Buerk, Movement for Longevity with Jim Chaput and Discover Yoga with Meghan Vestal. Classes are also recorded so that members can watch and re-watch them at their convenience.

Meghan Vestal is a registered yoga teacher (RYT-500) and teaches yoga for Discover Health Movement Membership. To learn more, go to discoverhealthfmc.com/#Movement, call the Discover Health Functional Medicine Center at (603) 447-3112, or email discoverhealthcoaching@gmail.com.



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Janice Spinney

Many benefits to community independent pharmacy

There are many benefits to choosing a community independent pharmacy over a chain or grocery drug store.

Here are a few of them:

- Customer service and friendliness. According to a Consumer Reports survey, 50 percent of people who fill prescriptions at an independent pharmacy said their pharmacist knew them by name compared to only 14 percent at a chain.
- Patient-centered focus. A smaller staff at independent pharmacies means the pharmacist could often be your cashier with more time to converse. It's easier to access the pharmacist and you may be able to ask questions about your prescription without interrupting a busy chain pharmacist.
- Same day delivery. Most independent pharmacies have same day delivery to local customers at no cost.
- Custom prescription orders. As with delivery, some independents offer custom compounding and customer blend options, special packaging and special product ordering.
- Autonomy. The community pharmacist is usually the business' owner. Decisions concerning product selection, billing, and policies and procedures are made locally and determined by local management,

usually on the spot.

• Community pulse. Local independent pharmacists have their fingers on the pulse of the community and reach into the community as active participants in the health and well-being of their friends and neighbors. Many independent pharmacists are active in local politics, clubs and community issues; they volunteer as coaches and for non-profit organizations.

To learn more about the advantages for consumers of an independent pharmacy, read Douglas Hoey points out a number of advantages in his book "A Roadmap for Independent Community Pharmacist" and Lisa Gill's 2018 Consumer Reports article "Consumers Still Prefer Independent Pharmacies."

All retail pharmacists and their staffs strive to provide superior prescription service.

Many community pharmacists are able to provide all the services described above and they work extremely hard for their patients/customers.

Independent pharmacies are an option we have not had in the Mount Washington Valley for some time and VIP, or Valley Independent Pharmacy, is poised to offer just that, an alternative, when it opens this spring.

The new independent pharmacy located 3 miles

north of Memorial Hospital with a majestic view of Mount Washington at the scenic overlook, the office can be accessed on the Intervale Crossroads side of Cannell's Country Store complex.

VIP provides pharmacy services in a quiet office setting. Its services include prescriptions, routine vaccinations and annual flu shots, COVID-19 vaccinations once available, medication therapy management, over-the-counter vitamins, CBDs, cough and cold, pain relief, canes, crutches home testing supplies and special ordering and packaging and more planned to meet the community's needs.

VIP will offer refill reminders through text or call only if you request it and has paper-free options.

VIP is co-owned by pharmacists Janice Spinney, who will act as pharmacy manager, and Sejal Patel, who will be staff pharmacist. They urge new patients to call a few days prior to coming by for the first time to be sure the pharmacy has what they need in stock, and has contracted with their insurance provider.

Spinney and Patel describe their new business as a new pharmacy experience like an old-time mom-and-pop drug store and say they are looking forward to seeing old friends and new faces. Find out more on Facebook at Valley Independent Pharmacy.

MINDFULNESS from page 15

Americans live, and the parasympathetic nervous system creates a healthy and healing response for the body to restore and repair itself naturally.

Mindfulness guidance — Connecting with a holistic practitioner

for guidance on where to begin, what baby steps to take on your pathway to health and well-being, whether you begin, physically, mentally or emotionally, eventually the pathway integrates all of these into a holistic plan or path; some would call a spiritual path to wholeness.

Where do I start you ask? Wisdom comes from within and whether you begin with mindful movement or a "guidance" call with me to create your plan, my role at Anjali Rose Bliss Healing is to mentor and guide you on this mindfulness process. During this year, many of us have gone to virtual platforms for movement classes and mindfulness activities. Any aspect of your path can be done virtually or in person with me.

Anjali Rose, MEd., RMT, RYT500 is a local community leader in the health and wellness field and a holistic health practitioner offering yoga, mindfulness, reiki, oracle cards, plant based cooking classes and retreats to individuals, community and corporate business. Recently she has gone international with clients in Japan. Look for what's happening with classes and events at her new website anjali-rose.com.

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Got black fly woes? Try lemon eucalyptus

Living here in the great northern parts of New Hampshire, we generally experience the plague of black flies in the spring and summer.

Let me introduce you to the essential oil that is at the heart of our very own insect deterrent at Fields of Ambrosia. Lemon eucalyptus oil is the common name of one of the natural oils obtained from the lemon-scented gum eucalyptus plant that has gained popularity as an insect deterrent in the past decade.

This use is important when you consider the dangers of DEET and other toxic solutions, and want to steer clear of them. This natural plant oil contains p-menthane-diol, which has proven to be more effective than its foremost chemical alternative, DEET, which has been documented to cause serious adverse effects, especially in children.

According to The New England Journal of Medicine, "Insect-transmitted disease remains a major source of illness and death worldwide. Mosquitoes alone transmit disease to more than 700 million persons annually. Protection from arthropod bites is best achieved by avoiding infested habitats, wearing protective clothing, and using insect repellent. Applying repellent to the skin may be the only feasible way to protect against insect bites. Commercially available insect repellents can be divided into two categories — synthetic chemicals and plant-derived essential oils."

The best-known chemical insect repellent is N,N-diethyl-m-toluamide, now called N,N-diethyl-3-methylbenzamide (DEET).

Oil of lemon eucalyptus is the only botanical (a k a, plant-derived) ingredient registered by the EPA and approved by the CDC as a repellent.

The repellent originated as an extract of an Australian eucalyptus tree and studies suggest that products with 30 percent oil of lemon eucalyptus repel as well as those with 15 to 20 percent DEET.

What is lemon eucalyptus oil?

There are over 700 species of eucalyptus, so do not confuse our lemon eucalyptus (*Eucalyptus citriodora*) with its more common sister *Eucalyptus globules*. This oil is commonly known as eucalyptus or blue gum oil. It contains 60-75 percent 1,8 cineol and is the eucalyptus that is known to provides support for a healthy respiratory system and soothe muscles after exercise. It is originally from Australia, it is also grows in Brazil, China, Corsica and Ecuador.

Lemon eucalyptus oil is extracted from the leaves and twigs of the lemon-scented gum eucalyptus



Lemon eucalyptus leaves are used to produce an essential oil that can be used as an insect repellent. (COURTESY PHOTO)

plant. It smells sweet, lemony and fresh, with a woody hint. Note, however, that this pure oil is not registered with the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) as an insect repellent.

In 2000, the EPA registered oil of lemon eucalyptus as a "biopesticide repellent," meaning it is derived from natural materials. The resulting products can be applied to human skin and clothing for repelling insects such as mosquitoes, biting flies and gnats. They are formulated as a spray or a lotion. When it was tested on humans, it gave complete protection from biting for between six to 7.75 hours. Compared to DEET, there was no significant difference in efficacy and duration of protection. Other studies have also demonstrated its protection against the biting midge, deer tick, and the stable fly.

Personal Insect Control 101

Using insect repellent is a balancing act of getting adequate protection without unnecessary exposure — and it isn't foolproof.

Marc L. Lame, Ph.D., clinical professor of environmental science at Indiana University in Bloomington, Ind., and Melissa Piliang, M.D., dermatologist at the Cleveland Clinic Foundation in Cleveland, Ohio, recommend the following Do's and Don'ts to get the safest, most effective repellent protection.

Do

- Base your repellent decisions on your activity. If you're going kayaking in a heavily wooded, mosquito ridden area, DEET is your best bet, but if you're going into your backyard for a barbecue, alternative

repellents are probably sufficient.

- Employ non-chemical ways to keep mosquitoes at bay. Stay indoors when mosquitoes are at their peak. If you must go outdoors, wear long sleeve shirts and pants. And remove standing water (including Fido's water bowl), which is where female mosquitoes lay their eggs.

- Wash clothing and repellent-coated skin at the end of the day.

Don't

- Wear permethrin-treated clothing. It results in unnecessary exposure to the pesticide and it's more toxic than applying repellent directly to the skin.

- If you use DEET, don't use more than 30 percent DEET. Research shows that products sporting more than 50 percent DEET don't offer additional protection and could cause serious side effects.

- Choose products that combine both sunscreen and repellent. If you reapply sunscreen every two hours (as advised), you risk overexposing yourself to repellent.

Other uses for lemon eucalyptus oil

- Anti-fungal and antiseptic — occasionally used to treat athlete's foot. The oil is used in personal hygiene products, such as soaps, for its antimicrobial properties.

- Anti-inflammatory and analgesic — can be applied to wounds to help prevent infection. When diluted, lemon eucalyptus essential oil helps soothe aching muscles and joints as well.

- Air freshener — The aroma is thought to soothe the nerves and awaken the mind.

Safety/precautions:

Lemon eucalyptus oil is generally safe for most adults when applied to skin as an insect deterrent. Note, though, that some individuals might have a skin reaction to it. On the other hand, I strongly discourage internal applications of lemon eucalyptus oil as it is unsafe. Chest rubs for congestion contain lemon eucalyptus oil and can cause seizures and death if eaten. Children under the age of 3 should not be over-dosed with any repellent.

General: As with all essential oils, never use them undiluted, in eyes or on mucus membranes. Do not take

see **REPELLENT** page 19

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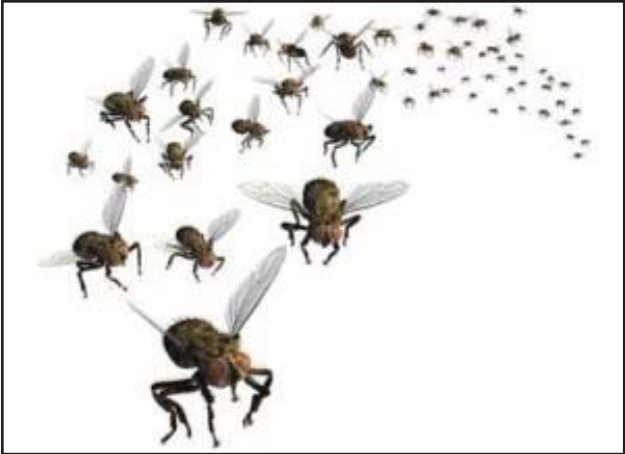
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REPELLENT from page 17

internally unless working with a qualified and expert practitioner. Keep away from children. If applying an essential oil to your skin always perform a small patch test to an insensitive part of the body (after you have properly diluted the oil in an appropriate carrier.

This article is for educational purposes only. The information has not been evaluated by the FDA and is not intended to diagnose, treat, cure or prevent any disease.

Deborah Jasien is the owner and maker at Fields of Ambrosia: Bath-Body-Aroma in North Conway Village. Since 2001, Fields of Ambrosia has been using all natural plant and vegetable based ingredients — free from animal derivatives, petroleum products and detergents. Products are made right in the store, which also uses recycled glass, paper, plastic and wood packaging whenever possible. Fields of Ambrosia supports cancer awareness through the gift of a portion of yearly sales to Jen's Friends Cancer Foundation.



Black fly season will soon be upon us. There are natural solutions to protect you from insects while you enjoy the out of doors. (COURTESY PHOTO)

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As we continue moving forward, we are thrilled to see so many vaccinations among patients and staff, however we will continue to require mask use in-office and we will continue to require appointments for all services, to help maintain safety for all. To aid in the increasing patient flow, we now ask that all optical appointments enter through the left side door at the top of the ramp.

We are proud of the strength, resilience, and kindness throughout the Mt Washington Valley that we have witnessed in the last year. We are grateful to serve such a wonderful community, and we happy to do our part to keep everyone safe and healthy.



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Becky Mulkern, N.D.

Consciously breathing life in

The joy that we feel in our life can be determined by how we see the world and how we observe life. How we label what we see and if we can breathe life in and breathe life out can affect how we feel and think and the quality of our life.

As Swami Rama says in “Meditation: an Essential Science,” “We need to have inner tranquility and equilibrium to live peacefully in the world. If we do not have peace of mind and contentment, all other possessions are useless.”

Many people walk through life half asleep to their potentials. Many are seemingly unconscious as to how they experience what happens in their lives. We can become numb without even seeing and knowing that we are.

There are many factors that contribute to individuals becoming numb and dull to life. Those factors might include: trauma, uncomfortable living situations, COVID-19, financial worries, relationship woes, health issues, anxiety and unhappiness. Not wanting to see what we are experiencing in our lives can really cause us to “shut down” and be half asleep or half awake on a daily basis.

How present, awake and alive do you feel in this moment? Are you aware of your breathing, how your body feels, your immediate surroundings and the sounds around you. How you feel emotionally? Taking time to check in with yourself throughout the day can help you to be more in touch with yourself and to make better choices for your present and future self.

If we have become disconnected from ourselves, there are many ways to bring ourselves back to ourselves. Even just being aware that we are disconnected is a first step. I know that I will feel disconnected from myself if I don’t have enough time alone, or time out in nature and just being still.

When we aren’t present in this moment and present in the “now,” we may be spending time thinking (somewhat unconsciously) and tied up in our fears, worries and anxieties. We could be fearing loss of love, health, money, family or material possessions; or fearing death, life, both physical and emotional pain, being wrong, disease, or losing control, a job



Becky Mulkern is a licensed naturopathic doctor who has worked for over 40 years in her clinic in Conway. (COURTESY PHOTO)

and social status, or purpose and meaning in our lives.

Individuals may fear the unknown instead of welcoming all its potentials, possibilities and opportunities.

What frightens you most? How much of your day is taken up thinking about your fears? How much of your day is filled with focusing on your hopes and dreams?

We are all creators. We are powerful. We can create our own reality by what we think about and believe all day long. Look at the words that you use to describe your experience. Do these words accurately describe how you feel and want to feel. Be thoughtful about what words you use because they create your experience and how you feel. Words help us to express our state of mind: tranquil, clear, vibrant. They help us to share our feelings: “I’m feeling stressed,” “I’m satisfied,” “I’m joyful,” “I’m energetic,” and words help us to describe how we are changing: “I’m evolving,” “I am letting go,” “I did my best and made the best choices that I could,” or “I am ready to live life to the fullest.”

We are living in a time of change and opportunity. Some people even call this time the “Great Turning.” In choosing to see life differently and dreaming big we can reduce our fears, our negative beliefs and self-talk

and begin to move toward what we really want to create. Can you imagine a future of your dreams? Have fun playing with that.

In this process of being still (presence without constant thoughts) and moving toward all we want, we can start with a quiet mind, being present, breathing slowly and deeply. We can be aware of the here and now, the present moment, and we can let everything go but this moment.

That means letting go of fears, negative thinking, impossibility, the “I can’ts” and everything that holds us back. The potential for all that is possible for us is held in the present moment. We can birth it here and now through a quiet mind, letting go of the past and conscious breathing and living. It is our opportunity to practice being instead of doing.

Focused breathing can help us to release stress and trauma because long and slow inhalations and exhalations can be very healing and relaxing for our physical and emotional bodies. The exhalation should be long and equal in length to your inhalation because this aids in connecting with the vagus nerve and calming the whole parasympathetic nervous system. This in turn aids the body in releasing stress and trauma and moving



Certified Registered Nurse Anesthetists (from left) David Esmay, Ashley Cyr, Luke Stafford and Zachary Chase are part of the pain intervention team at Memorial Hospital. (COURTESY PHOTO)

PAIN CLINIC from page one

sedation in this setting for appropriate patients.

Interventional pain services such as Memorial's are often prescribed for patients when other treatments, such as ibuprofen or oral steroids, prove ineffective.

Patients attempting to transition from narcotics to other forms of treatment, as well as patients with a fear of narcotics are also appropriate candidates for this kind of treatment.

Chase says offering this kind of treatment is important because opioid misuse is at a high level in New Hampshire.

"We offer non-narcotic options for patients looking to avoid opiates, or for those who don't want to be exposed to them. We help keep our patients pain free without complications and issues associated with opioid medications."

All of Memorial's CRNAs are participating in interventional pain services.

Chase says this makes scheduling an appointment easier and provides the patient with "a familiar face" for the procedure.

"Patients will likely see a provider who they met

for a previous surgery or procedure. That's an advantage of getting your care from a community hospital like Memorial," he said.

Because they have a prior relationship, providers may already be familiar with the patient's background.

"It's good when we already have some experience with the patient. What is their health history? Are they nervous? Do they want to be awake? We can provide sedation if the patient requests it or is anxious. This can make the patient much more comfortable during the injection. It's a collaboration."

In addition to the spinal injections, the interventional pain program also performs joint injections and trigger point injections.

Memorial plans to grow these services over time. In the near future the hospital plans to start treatment for chronic migraines and cervical dystonia (muscle spasm) with targeted Botox injections.

The department "is very cutting edge," Chase said. "We will be the only one in the region offering this treatment."

For more information, call Memorial Hospital at (603) 356-5461 or go to memorialhospitalnh.org.

BREATHE from page 20

toward healing old anxieties and traumas.

When we are anxious and we stop breathing, we internalize the stress that we are feeling in that moment. If we are aware of continually breathing, inhaling slowly and exhaling slowly, we can break the pattern of internalizing our traumatic experiences. This is an important reason to continually breathe.

What is really therapeutic about breathing, especially, slow and deep is that we gain 19 times more energy from breathing than we do from food! Oxygen energizes the body, so when you feel tired, remember that you may really need to go for a walk and breathe some fresh air.

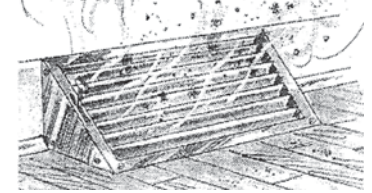
Lately, one thing that I personally have found

helpful when I am quieting my mind and meditating, is slowing my breathing down and imagining a smile across my face, then a smile across my chest and then my abdomen and then throughout my body. Scientific research has found that people recover more quickly from stressful situations when they smile. If it is done continually it may help to reset the body and mind. You can have fun imagining a smile anywhere in your body and then breathe out any stress and trauma. It is really wonderful. Please try it.

Research studies have been done for years on meditation and its many healthy benefits. Researchers have found that transcendental meditation reduces stress, insomnia, anxiety, depression, irritability and

see **BREATHE** page 23

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Linda L Souliere, LD.

Dedicated to making smiles

I would like to take this opportunity in educating you as to what exactly a denturist is. A denturist is defined as a dental health care professional who provides denture care directly to the public. A denturist is an independent professional who works with other oral health care providers, including dentists, dental hygienists, dental technicians, and oral surgeons, as part of the dental health team to provide the best denture care and service to their patients.

Denturism is a recognized profession throughout the world, in which a specialized dental practitioner, a denturist, fabricates dentures and dental appliances directly for the public.

The International Federation of Denturists consists of national organizations of denturism from around the world that are interested in furthering the profession, and providing the world's fully and partially edentulous population with affordable, professional denture care. Denturism is legislated and practiced in six U.S. states: Maine, Arizona, Washington, Oregon, Montana and Colorado.

Unlike a dentist who works with a variety of patients and can treat a range of dental issues including cavities or gum disease, a denturist is a specialized dental-care professional who is trained and works exclusively with denture patients, whether it is for a partial denture or full denture. You as a patient, are able to call your local denturist and schedule an appointment with no referral needed. If you need attention by a dentist, hygienist or oral surgeon, a denturist can then refer you.

Take the time to research a denturist near you by going online to the website of the Maine Licensed Denturist Association at www.mainelda.com or email the Cornish Denture Center website at cornishdenture-center@gmail.com.

Linda Souliere is a denturist at Cornish Denture Center, LLC, located at 202 Maple St., Unit C in Cornish, Maine. For more information, call (207) 625-9227.



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Valerie J. Lozier

Spring is in the air and so is pollen

Spring in New England — a little snow, a little rain, a lot of mud, then eventually the sun comes out and New England is in bloom. Everywhere you look there are flowers popping up and buds on the trees. But if you are one of the millions of people with seasonal allergies, spring in New England also means sneezing, congestion, itchy watery eyes, a runny nose and other bothersome symptoms.

Seasonal allergies, also known as allergic rhinitis or hay fever, can make spring miserable. Symptoms are caused by exposure to allergy triggers, such as pollen in the air. To help reduce exposure to allergens that trigger symptoms there are a few things that you can do:

Keep outdoor pollen out

- If possible, stay inside on dry, windy days. The best times to be outside are after a heavy rain which helps clear pollen from the air.
- Lawn mowing and other yard work can stir up allergens, delegate this work. If you do the yard work wear a pollen mask. (I know, I know, lately all we've done is wear masks!)
- Remove clothes and shower right away if you have been outside for a long period of time, the shower will remove the pollen from your hair and skin.

- Do not hang your laundry on the clothesline outside, pollen can stick to clothes, sheets and towels.



Valerie J. Lozier

Keep indoor air clean

While none of the indoor recommendations will guarantee you have no symptoms, they will help reduce the allergens in your home.

- Use the air conditioning in your house (if you have it) and in your car.

- Check local sources of information such as the TV, radio, internet or local newspaper for pollen forecasts and pollen levels.

- Make sure your windows are closed at night when the pollen counts are high.

- Avoid early-morning outdoor activity; this is when pollen counts at the highest.

see **POLLEN** page 23

Thomas King

Outpatient total hip and total knee replacement trending paradigm shift

Across the country, a three-night stay in the hospital has been the standard of care for most people undergoing total joint replacement.

The principal reason for the hospital stay is to provide pain management with intravenous narcotics and to offer supervised inpatient physical therapy.

Gradually, with better preparation for surgery and better pain management techniques, the hospital stay is shrinking. Now, roughly 35 percent of patients are discharged one day and one night after joint replacement and a smaller percentage of patients may even go home the same day.

Same-day outpatient joint replacement has many advantages: Patients are more comfortable and safer at home especially since the arrival of COVID-19.

As surgeons and programs gain experience with same-day discharge, the criteria for who is eligible for this option have expanded to older patients and those with well-managed medical conditions. The major impediment to outpatient joint replacement is fear of early hospital readmission. In addition, some hospitals have been slow to adopt same-day discharge because of the concern for lost revenue.

Our practice began the transition to outpatient (same-day) hip, knee and shoulder replacement over six years ago. Over this time period we have developed our AVATAR (Alignment of Vital Assets To Accelerate Recovery) program, which now allows over 80 percent of our patients to recover in the comfort of their own homes just hours after surgery.

AVATAR focuses on all aspects of the joint replacement process from preoperative education and preparation, to patient optimization, best surgical

techniques, multimodal pain management and personalized stewardship of the postoperative process. We emphasize close and careful management of the treatment in the home.

For patients with commercial insurance plans and for Medicare patients who require a total knee replacement, AVATAR joint replacement can be performed in an outpatient surgery center, avoiding the hospital altogether. With the COVID-19 pandemic, outpatient surgery may prove to be safer for patients undergoing these elective procedures.

Our outpatient joint replacement program, with an experience of over 2,000 patients has demonstrated a complication rate well below the national average for infections, surgical complications and hospital readmissions. In other words, it is safer than being in the hospital. Our navigation team allows us to care for many patients traveling from a distance to our center from all over New England and Canada. We are capable of managing medical tourism for knee replacement, hip replacement and shoulder replacement including physical therapy services in local hotels.

If you are considering joint replacement surgery, there are advantages to outpatient surgery. For our practice, this is a commonplace practice and AVATAR focuses on safe post-surgical care and makes the difference in outcomes.

Thomas V. King, M.D., Moby Parsons, M.D., and Kathleen Leavitt, PA-C, are at The Knee, Hip, and Shoulder Center in Portsmouth. They can be reached at (603) 431-5858 or by email at avatar@kneehipsho.com. For more information, go to orthopedicsnh.com.

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- Keep indoor air dry with the dehumidifier.
- Use an air purifier with HEPA filter in your bedroom.

• Clean floors often with a vacuum cleaner that has a HEPA filter.

Besides taking steps to reduce allergen exposure there are many types of over-the-counter remedies available, from sinus rinses to allergy medications, that will help relieve allergy symptoms.

When taking medications make sure to read the packing information. Always use caution if you take medications on a daily basis and check with your health-care provider if you have any questions about medication interactions.

Remember, your health-care provider is there for you.

If your symptoms worsening or you have questions about non-prescription treatments contact your health-care provider.

Being stuck indoors for most the past year has been stressful and everyone would like to get outside and enjoy some nicer weather. Take precautions and stay safe.

Valerie J Lozier PsyD, FNP-BC, is a family nurse practitioner at Cranmore Health Partners.

Catherine Kasprak

Poor oral health and COVID-19

Can poor oral health increase the risk of complications from COVID-19?

We know there is a link between oral bacteria and body health. The mouth and body connection is strong with diabetes, cardiovascular disease, respiratory infections, obesity, chronic kidney disease, arthritis along with other medical conditions.

With decades of research and clinical experience, it seems that the mouth/body connection might also play a role in severe complications from COVID-19. We have known for the past several decades that a number of systemic diseases have been associated with oral health.

In a newly published article in the British Dental Journal examines how increased bacterial load may impact the severity of COVID-19.

COVID-19 is a viral infection with high levels of bacteria, also called a "bacterial superinfection" which could compound the effects of the virus. Oral bacteria can be aspirated into the lungs and produce cytokines. It is possible that the cytokine storm seen in severe cases of COVID-19 is magnified by

these pathogens. Poor oral hygiene and periodontitis can make these conditions worse.



Catherine Kasprak

Periodontal bacteria are often involved in systemic inflammation, bacteremia, pneumonia and even death. Periodontal bacteria has been found in genetic testing of patients severely infected with SARS-CoV-2 which is the virus that causes COVID-19.

Dental health is an important part of staying healthy and preventing more complicated issues in the mouth. It has been recommended that oral hygiene be maintained during SARS-CoV-2 infection to reduce the bacteria in the mouth and the potential risk

of a bacterial superinfection in the body.

Systemic medical conditions can have a negative impact on oral health just as poor oral health can have negative impact on your body's health. Also, the medications used to treat systemic conditions may also themselves cause oral symptoms.

Stay healthy, continue to keep your appointments with your dental professional for routine cleanings to stay ahead of preventable issues.

If your mouth isn't healthy, you are not healthy.

Catherine Kasprak, CDA, AAS, RDH, IPDH, is a dental hygienist and owner of Bridgton Dental Hygiene Care, PA, located at 171-B Portland Road in Bridgton, Maine. She provides all dental hygiene services — routine cleanings for baby's with their first tooth, teens, adults and seniors, periodontal scaling and maintenance and all with braces. Find out more at bridgton-dentalhygiene.com and mydoterra.com/catherinekasprak for contact her at (207) 647-4125 or bdhc@myfairpoint.net.

BREATHE from page 21

nervousness, while increasing self-reliance, self-confidence, sociability, creativity, intelligence, energy, inner-calm and happiness. It also helps improving relationships and health and even promoting a younger biological age. Many top athletes, sports enthusiasts, CEOs and business people find it invaluable for creativity and being calm under stress.

The American Heart Association's journal, "Hypertension," published a study in November of 1995, stating that meditation

can sometimes be as effective as medication in reducing hypertension without any of medication's hazardous side-effects. The study also found that 20 minutes of meditation daily might be seven times more effective than diet and exercise in reducing high blood pressure.

Studies prove that people who meditate experience a sharp reduction of psychological and physical health symptoms. They seem to change at profound levels in terms of consciousness and their relationship to their body, mental activities, as well as their relationships to pressures

and stresses.

The bottom line is that finding time to be still, to breath slowly, consciously and deeply and to take time for yourself, away from your normal day is invaluable to your health and wellness. How can you say anything but "Yes!"?

Becky Mulkern is a licensed naturopathic doctor who has worked for 40 years in her clinic in Conway, teaching clients about healing, health and wellness. She welcomes all inquiries. Call (603) 447-3070 to schedule an appointment.

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YOUR HEALTH AND SAFETY HAVE ALWAYS BEEN OUR PRIORITY

Here at MaineHealth, COVID-19 has already taught us a great deal.

While we've always prided ourselves on leading by example,
these difficult times have called for especially innovative measures.

Like how to adapt in times of darkness.
How to give the best care in the toughest conditions.
And, with our expanded telehealth capabilities,
even how to be two places at once.

Because we've always believed that patients come first.
And that they should always feel safe along the way.

WE'RE IN THIS UNTIL WE WIN THIS.



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