

October 2023

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Mission Hospital continues to have a robust cancer care team

Now more than ever, the key to maintaining good health is seeing your physician for regular check-ups. Having consistent medical visits is critical so that your physician can monitor you at various points in your life, watch if conditions progress and, most importantly, help prevent health problems later in your life.

This means addressing any signs or symptoms that may be new to you and keeping up with preventative care such as cancer screenings.

Which screenings you may need depend on several risk factors including age, lifestyle behaviors and family history. Recommended screenings include those that scan for cervical, breast, colorectal, lung and prostate cancers.

Talk to your doctor about which tests you may need and the frequency that's right for you. Early detection of cancer is one of the most important ways



to ensure successful treatment.

If you or someone you care for needs treatment for a new cancer diagnosis or recurring cancer, Mission Hospital continues to have a robust team delivering oncology services in a range of specialties — breast, colorectal, hepatobiliary, gynecological, infusion, interventional, medical, orthopedic sarcoma, pediatric, plastics, radiation, surgical,

urological and more.

To ensure you receive an accurate diagnosis and effective treatment plan, these specialists collaborate with one another and with a group of nurse navigators, pathologists, radiologists and reconstructive physicians to provide you high-quality care. This highly skilled team offers care from diagnosis through survivorship.

Mission also has multiple cancer care treatment options including the largest robotics program in the State with extensive surgical oncology capabilities and the many personalized care services at Hope Women's Cancer Center and Mission Cancer Center.

Mission Health is proud of its cancer offerings for patients across Western North Carolina and of the dedicated team who is here to lift them up at any stage along their cancer journey.



HEALTHCARE & WELLNESS

Of Western North Carolina

PRESIDENT & PUBLISHER

Jonathan Key

GENERAL MANAGER

Karl Miller

EDITORIAL

Tyler Auffhammer & Becky Johnson

ADVERTISING SALES REPRESENTATIVES

Jennifer Worley – jennifer@themountaineer.com

Lori Gilbert – lgilbert@themountaineer.com

Jan George – jgeorge@themountaineer.com

Alan Sharp – asharp@themountaineer.com

DESIGN / PRODUCTION

Kylie Frazier

Mac Heishman

Heather Allen

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Battling breast cancer takes an army

By AdventHealth Medical Group Cancer Services

Receiving a shocking breast cancer diagnosis disrupts a woman's life in countless ways. From understanding options for treatment to making sure she is scheduled to take the next steps on this unwelcome journey, there is so much happening in what seems like an instant. And in that instant, you know you need an army of family, friends and leading cancer specialists to help you win this battle.

At AdventHealth, that army is made up of cancer care experts supporting you when you need it most.

"Treating cancer 'takes a village,'" says Douglas Thompson, MD, AdventHealth Hendersonville Medical Director of Hematology and Oncology. "It is a team approach where many different specialties and personnel are needed to provide care to the body, mind and spirit of a patient."

From the moment of that diag-

nosis, the AdventHealth Medical Group Cancer Services team starts building relationships with each patient.

"We have nurse navigators that help patients from diagnosis, first visit, and through the journey of scans, getting results, and education about their drugs and their regimens. They are a wonderful resource, and work closely with the social workers in providing emotional support," said Lisa Gunderesen, Director of Cancer Services at AdventHealth Hendersonville.

In addition, each patient is connected with licensed oncology social workers, and nurses that have their oncology certification of nursing (OCN).

AdventHealth also helps equip the patient's army of family and friends to support her through the breast cancer journey. When a patient knows she has that loyal corps of friends to rely on, she can let her



guard down to rest, heal and reflect.

Here are some practical ways to help support a friend with breast cancer.

While your friend is reeling from her news, she really needs someone to just listen. Let her freely express her fears and concerns. Resist the urge to fill the silences or offer unsolicited advice. Your friend needs a shoulder to lean on, which isn't the same as wanting you to solve her problems.

Above all, let your friend know you'll be by her side for the long haul, not just in the early stages and that she can trust you when she'd like to keep information and her thoughts and feelings private.

The classic response to people in a crisis is, "Let me know if you need anything." But the truth is, in most cases, your friend will feel awkward calling you out of the blue for a favor. Instead, be specific with your offers like to buy groceries, clean her house, drive the kids to activities or pick up prescriptions for her.

Remember to include the caregiver in those offers so they can get a much-needed break from time to time.

Other ways to support your friend on her breast cancer journey include

offering to go to doctors' appointments with her or becoming her "chemo" buddy. Driving her to and from, as well video chatting with her during chemotherapy or radiation therapy treatments is a bigger help than you may ever realize.

Not only will your friend appreciate the company and encouragement, but this can also give her caregiver a break.

AdventHealth's whole-person approach to breast cancer care and support is meeting the needs of women at cancer centers across Western North Carolina.

Patients can see their physicians, nurse navigators, licensed oncology social workers and more at AdventHealth Medical Group Cancer Services in Asheville, Hendersonville and Weaverville. And in September we expanded our cancer care at our office in Haywood County.

Patients there are now able to see their oncologists at our new medical office and receive their chemotherapy treatments at our state-of-the-art infusion center across the parking lot.

Learn more about whole-person cancer care when and where you need it at [AdventHealthNC.com/CancerCare](https://www.AdventHealthNC.com/CancerCare) or by calling 844-774-LIFE (5433).





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Three signs of sun-damaged skin

It's not always easy to recognize signs of sun damage when spending time outdoors. Such damage may be overlooked or more evident in the fall when people spend more time indoors. But sun-damaged skin should not be taken lightly.

In fact, the Skin Cancer Foundation notes that the vast majority of melanomas, the most dangerous form of skin cancer, are caused by the sun. The SCF even notes that one study from researchers in the United Kingdom found that 86 percent of melanomas can be attributed to exposure to the sun's ultraviolet, or UV, radiation.

Sun-damaged skin will not necessarily lead to

skin cancer. However, sun damage can lead to skin cancer. Going outdoors without adequate protection makes skin vulnerable to sun-related damage.

Learning to recognize three more common types of sun damage may compel people to visit their physicians and take potentially life-saving steps to prevent future damage.

1. Wrinkles

Wrinkles aren't always a byproduct of aging. While the Mayo Clinic notes that skin becomes less elastic and more fragile as it ages, increasing the likelihood that wrinkles will develop, wrinkles also can indicate sun-damaged skin.

2. Age spots

According to the AAD, age spots, which are flat brown, gray or black spots on the skin, appear on areas of the body that are most often exposed to the sun, including the face and hands. The AAD notes that what looks like an age spot could actually be skin cancer. If any spots are detected, you should see a board-certified dermatologist for a thorough skin exam.



3. Loose skin

Loose skin is sometimes a byproduct of aging, but it can also indicate sun damage. Various products claim to treat loose skin, but the AAD notes that facelift-like results likely won't come from any product sold in a jar. For example, the AAD says results from skin-firming creams will be subtle at best. Products that contain retinoid-like retinol, which can help the body make more collagen, might produce minor results.



Sunburn in the winter? It's possible

It's widely known that prolonged, unprotected exposure to the sun can cause sunburn. Sunburn usually appears within a few hours after overexposure to ultraviolet light from sunshine or artificial sunlamps.

A sunburn is the skin's response to UV damage. Sunburn may be minor and evident by redness and pain or, if severe, swelling and blisters may occur. Some people even feel like they have the flu and become feverish with chills.

Even though sunburn is common in spring, summer and fall, people may be surprised to learn it is possible to get sunburn in the winter, too. It's foolish to stop thinking about sun protection when bundled up in winter clothing. The sun's ultraviolet rays can be just as damaging to the skin when it's cloudy or cold.

In addition, snow and ice can reflect up to 80 percent of the sun's UV rays. According to the

Skin Cancer Foundation, a person gets hit from two angles: first from the sky and second from the ground, as the rays rebound.

It is important to practice sun safety all year long. Wear sunscreen on the face and any portion of the skin that is exposed. Also, wearing sunglasses protects not only the eyes but also the delicate skin around the eyes. UV radiation is the leading contributor to skin cancer.

Even though the amount of UV rays decreases slightly in the winter because of the angle at which they hit the Earth, the risk for UV-related sun damage persists. Use sunscreen with a sun protection factor of at least 30, and even higher when spending time in high altitudes.

Sunburn can occur at any time of the year. Precautions should be taken to protect the skin, whether it's spring, fall, summer, or winter.



How women can protect their babies from infection during pregnancy

Pregnancy is a happy time for women and their partners. While the physical challenges of pregnancy can be difficult, many women overcome them by working with their physicians and reminding themselves that they will soon have a newborn baby to hold and love.

No woman wants to imagine complications during a pregnancy. However, preparing in advance for certain issues, including prenatal infections, can make them easier to confront should they arise.

Group B Strep International, a nonprofit organization that promotes awareness and prevention of Group B Strep disease in babies from before birth through early infancy, notes that adhering to the acronym HYGIENE can be an effective way to prevent infections during pregnancy.



H: Handwashing Helps

Routine handwashing is a simple and effective way to reduce the risk of prenatal infection. Wash hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds after gardening or coming into contact with soil or sand. Once a child is born, wash hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds after changing a diaper, feeding a child and/or wiping a young child's nose or drool.

Y: Yes to prenatal care

Prioritizing prenatal care is another effective way to prevent prenatal infection. Women should request that their urine be cultured for bacteria at their first prenatal visit and see their physicians immediately if any symptoms of vaginitis appear. Physicians will discuss and may recommend vari-

ous tests during pregnancy, and women should not hesitate to ask any questions they have regarding these tests.

G: Good food prepared safely

The right foods can nourish growing babies and reduce the risk of prenatal infections. Heed physicians' recommendations on foods to avoid during a pregnancy, which will likely include, but is not limited to, unpasteurized milk and cheese made from unpasteurized milk. Make sure all meat and poultry is thoroughly cooked. When handling food, make sure to peel or wash fruits and vegetables and store raw meat separately from other foods. Thoroughly wash all surfaces, including countertops and cutting boards, after contact with raw meat, poultry, seafood, and unwashed fruits and vegetables.

I: Immunizations

Women also can reduce prenatal infection risk by making sure they are current with their immunizations. Ask your physician if you are immune to rubella and chickenpox, each of which can cause stillbirth or serious birth defects. The vaccinations for these conditions cannot be administered during pregnancy, so if you are not immune, avoid contact with anyone infected with either virus.

E: Evade others' bodily fluids

Steer clear of others' bodily fluids, including saliva, urine, blood, and semen, which may contain germs that can compromise the health of your baby. Avoid sharing drinks, utensils and toothbrushes with young children, as women are most commonly exposed to certain prenatal infections through the saliva and urine of young children.

N: No to unnecessary invasive procedures

Some germs can cross intact membranes, so avoid unnecessary, frequent or forceful internal exams that can push germs closer to the fetus. Women are advised to discuss stripping membranes with their physicians early in pregnancy so they can make the most informed decisions possible.

E: Environmental precautions

Certain environmental precautions, such as walking in the center of trails to avoid ticks and wearing gloves while gardening, can reduce the risk of prenatal infections. Women also should avoid changing cat litter and make sure there are no areas of standing water, which attract mosquitoes, around their homes.

Folic acid and pregnancy

Folic acid is a B vitamin that the body uses to make new cells. Everyone needs folic acid, and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention notes that folic acid is especially vital for women before and during pregnancy. That's because folic acid can help prevent major birth defects like anencephaly and spina bifida.

Anencephaly is a serious condition in which a baby is born without parts of the brain or skull, while spina bifida is a condition that affects the spine. Spina bifida can contribute to potentially severe physical and intellectual disabilities.

The CDC notes how important it is that women of reproductive age, even those who are not attempting to get pregnant, get 400 micrograms of folic acid each day. That's because major birth defects of the baby's brain or spine occur very early in pregnancy, typically between three and four weeks after conception.

Many women are not even aware they are pregnant at that point, and that's especially so for women who are not trying to become pregnant. By ensuring they include enough folic acid in their diets, women of reproductive age can greatly reduce the risk of giving birth to a child with major birth defects.

According to the CDC, most vitamins sold in the United States include 400 micrograms of folic acid, though it's still best to read product labels and/or speak with a physician prior to purchasing a bottle of vitamins. In addition, fortified foods, including some breads and breakfast cereals, contain the recommended daily amount of folic acid.



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Four tips for choosing hospice care

Learning a loved one has been diagnosed with a terminal illness is an emotional experience. In such instances, people tend to have many questions, including what they can do to make their loved ones as comfortable and content as possible.

Hospice care is a solution for many families looking to improve the quality of life of someone dealing with a terminal illness. According to the Hospice Foundation of America, hospice care aims to help people with terminal illnesses live as well as possible for as long as possible.

Increasing quality of life is one of the goals of hospice care. The HFA notes that hospice care is a collaborative approach bringing together a host of interdisciplinary professionals who are tasked with addressing the physical, psychosocial and spiritual distress that often confronts terminally ill patients and their families.

Many people are unfamiliar with hospice care and may not know where to begin in regard to finding a facility for themselves or their loved ones. Before hospice is considered, it may be wise to discuss the timing of such care with the patient's physicians.



The timing of hospice care

The HFA notes that determining when the time is right for hospice care is difficult. Families can discuss timing with their loved one's physician, but certain factors may indicate it's time for hospice. The HFA says it's generally time for hospice when a patient has 6 months or less to live.

Patients who are receiving medical treatment but whose conditions are declining rapidly, whether it's through significant weight loss, cognitive decline or an inability to perform daily activities, may require hospice care.

The patients themselves may indicate they are ready to forego treatment aimed at prolonging life, and, in such situations, hospice care can make their remaining days as comfortable as possible.

In addition to ensuring that the timing is right, the HFA offers the following tips to make the process of choosing a hospice facility go as smoothly as possible:

Seek recommendations

Word-of-mouth can be a great way to find the right hospice care. The HFA notes that hospital discharge

planners or social workers typically have lists of local hospice providers. In addition, physicians often interact with hospice providers, so their insight can be invaluable.

Having a loved one in hospice can be difficult for many families, but some neighbors or trusted friends may share their experiences dealing with local facilities when prompted. That insight also can be invaluable.

Interview hospice representatives

Patients, when capable, or caregivers typically meet with hospice representatives to discuss services and answer questions. Prepare questions in advance, and make sure that the visit is free and does not obligate families to choose the provider the person represents.

Ask the right questions

The HFA recommends patients and/or their families ask many questions before choosing hospice care. Such questions should pertain to the plan of care the hospice intends to employ, how quickly the facility will get a handle on pain or other symptoms, and what happens if a patient does not respond. Additional questions are at www.hospicefoundation.org.

FAQ's about hospice care

When a person is nearing the end of his or her life, their families rely on hospice care to provide care and comfort in the person's final days. The National Institute on Aging has answered some common questions to simplify this challenging period.

What is hospice care?

The NIA notes that hospice care is for people with serious illnesses who choose to cease or continue

treatment. That's an important distinction, as a misconception regarding hospice care is that it's reserved for people who have stopped receiving treatment for their illness.

Where do people receive hospice care?

Nursing homes, assisted living facilities and hospitals may provide hospice care, but it's also possible for individuals to receive

such care at home. Receiving hospice care at home is a significant benefit for many aging individuals who prefer the comfort of their own homes.

Which services are included in hospice care?

The NIA notes that pain relief, physical or occupational therapy, emotional and spiritual support, and advance care planning are some of the services that are typically offered as hospice care.

Is hospice care 24/7?

The NIA notes that hospice care

is rarely a round-the-clock service. Though a hospice care team member may be available at all hours, most of the of the day-to-day care is provided by family and friends.



AUTUMN RELIEF:

Seven strategies to manage chronic pain in cooler weather

October in Western North Carolina brings with it an abundance of vivid hues as trees welcome an array of amber, red, and gold leaves. Unfortunately, however, autumn also signals increased sensations of chronic pain for many individuals.

Temperature changes often trigger joint, back, and other chronic pain conditions to worsen—leading those seeking relief to seek it during autumn's cooler weather months. Our pain management physicians in Asheville & Western North Carolina can offer guidance in finding relief.

Why does cold weather compound my aches?

Low temperatures seem to worsen pain symptoms in unpredictable ways; their precise relationship remains unknown. Theories posit that atmospheric pressure drops cause bodily tissues to expand more and strain joints more, compounding any discomfort already felt by joints or back. Furthermore, reduced circulation could worsen muscle stiffness leading to further intensified discomfort as well as other negative sensations.

We want you to stay positive through autumn. Below are a few proven treatments and strategies from The Comprehensive Pain Consultants of the Carolinas' team of Interventional Pain Management Specialists that can help you enjoy this season with greater ease while offering long-term and sustainable relief.

1. Stay warm:

This may seem obvious, but keeping warm is one of the keys to combatting cold-induced pain. Layer up when dressing for outdoor activities to protect sensitive areas like knees or the lower back that are susceptible to discomfort. Heated blankets, warm bath and thermal wear can help in-

crease blood flow while relaxing tight muscles for soothing relief.

2. Engage in physical activity:

In times like these, it can be tempting to resort to staying indoors all day — however engaging in an active lifestyle can actually benefit those experiencing chronic pain by producing endorphins. These act as natural painkillers, while keeping joints flexible through activities like swimming, yoga and taking short strolls. Stay warm this winter season by swimming, practicing yoga or going for a brisk walk!

3. Optimize your diet:

Certain foods contain anti-inflammatory compounds which may help manage pain effectively. Integrating omega-3 rich foods like fish, walnuts and flaxseeds into your diet, as well as turmeric, ginger and green tea which have also shown promise with relieving pain due to their anti-inflammatory compounds may be effective at relieving discomfort. Check out this easy anti-inflammatory vegetable

soup recipe perfect for cold fall evenings at home!

4. Consider physical therapy:

Physical therapy can provide invaluable relief for joint or back discomfort. Trained physical therapists use exercises tailored specifically to your needs in order to increase mobility and strength and ultimately, improve overall mobility and strength.

5. Stay hydrated:

As temperatures begin to dip, thirst may not be an immediate priority; however, staying hydrated remains essential during cold weather months. Dehydration can leave tissues parched, leading to increased pain. For optimal hydration levels aim for eight glasses of water daily in order to keep yourself and tissues well lubricated.

6. Seek help from an experienced pain specialist:

When discomfort becomes difficult to manage on its own, don't hesitate to seek professional help from pain specialists like the Comprehensive

Pain Consultants of the Carolinas with clinics located throughout Western North Carolina. Their experienced team is equipped with cutting-edge pain management treatments designed to make each season of the year bearable with minimum discomfort; and look forward to assisting our patients through each stage of life's journey without suffering.

7. Mindfulness and meditation:

Both mindfulness and meditation can be highly effective tools in managing chronic pain. Not only can they relax you, but these practices may even alter how your brain perceives pain thereby lessening its intensity. Consider some of these ideas:

- Journaling
- Deep breathing exercise
- Gratitude meditation.
- 10-minute stretching session.
- Western North Carolina pain management treatment providers

Autumn in Western NC should be an enjoyable season filled with scenic mountain drives, pumpkin-spiced treats and the soft rustling of leaves. Don't allow joint or back pain to disrupt this pleasure! With effective strategies and treatments in place, autumn can still be appreciated without experiencing chronic ache.

At Comprehensive Pain Consultants of the Carolinas, our goal is to enhance your quality of life by listening and creating tailored treatment plans — as well as informing and educating you about any associated medical conditions. We care deeply about providing long-term relief.

Before making significant adjustments to your pain management regimen, consult with a medical provider first. Reach out to one of the WNC clinics now!





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The benefits of movement and exercise

Exercise keeps the body and brain healthy. That's why exercise should be an important component of daily life always, but especially as we age it becomes even more important.

There are many reasons to make movement an important part of every day. Weight loss tends to be the focus but there are so many reasons, like preventing or reversing negative health effects, such as high cholesterol or increased diabetes risk. Routine exercise also can improve life expectancy.

Research says exercise keeps the body and brain healthy. That's why exercise and movement should be an important component of daily life no matter one's age.

Cardiorespiratory fitness

Many health experts say that car-



diorespiratory fitness may be just as valuable a metric to determine overall health as blood pressure and lipid levels. People with a high aerobic capacity can deliver oxygen to tissues and cells efficiently to fuel exercise.

Manage stress and mood

Exercise has direct stress-busting benefits that can promote longevity.

Physical activity can increase the production of endorphins, which are the body's feel-good neurotransmitters. In addition, exercise can imitate the effects of stress, helping the body adjust its flight or fight response accordingly, and help them cope with mildly stressful situations. While engaged in exercise, people may forget about their problems as they are focused on

the activity at hand.

Improve bone health

Strength training and physical activity can stave off the effects of frailty and osteoporosis, which affects bone strength. Hip fractures are associated with diminished quality of life and survival among the elderly. Building muscle strength, balance and bone density through exercise can reduce falls and frailty, helping to prevent fracture-related health risks.

Reducing muscle loss

The loss of muscle mass related to aging can affect stamina and lead to weakness. Exercise is the main treatment regimen for sarcopenia, particularly resistance training. This is designed to improve muscle strength and help balance hormone levels by turning protein into energy for older adults.



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Lesser known benefits of breaking a sweat

Most people know that routine exercise does a body good. While it may not require a degree from medical school to know that exercise can be a great way to lose weight and reduce risk for various illnesses, there are even more beneficial side effects of regular exercise that might surprise even the most ardent fitness enthusiasts.

- **Exercise produces positive psychological benefits.**

There are several psychological benefits of routine exercise. Those benefits occur because exercise triggers the release of endorphins, which are hormones that interact with receptors in the brain that reduce a person's perception of pain. Some additional psychological benefits of exercise include stress reduction and prevention of anxiety and depression.

- **Exercise can improve your social life.**



Routine exercise can improve self-esteem, which can make it easier for people to connect with others. Participation in sports activities can induce prosocial behaviors. Though participation in sports is often promoted as a great way for kids to make new friends, the social aspect of exercise

and sports participation is no less beneficial for adults.

- **Regular exercise can benefit your career.**

Regular exercise is linked with an annual wage increase of between 6 and 10 percent. Researchers have

found that moderate exercise yields a positive earnings effect, but individuals who exercised frequently had even higher wage increases.

- **Exercise can benefit long-term cognitive health.**

Though the reasons remain unclear, there seems to be a link between regular physical activity and long-term cognitive health. A study published in the Journal of Alzheimer's Disease found that regular exercise can positively influence cognitive ability, reduce the rate of cognitive aging and lower the risk for certain dementias, including Alzheimer's disease.

Many people feel a significant sense of accomplishment by the end of a vigorous workout. Such feelings could grow even more profound when individuals recognize the many lesser-known benefits of breaking a sweat.

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Find relief with proper foot care

Many people lament having achy feet, especially women who squeeze into uncomfortable shoes in the name of fashion. Feet carry the weight of the entire body while a person is upright. That can mean hours of enduring pressure from walking or standing.

Pain or discomfort can be exacerbated by wearing uncomfortable shoes like high heels. Heels position the foot to point downwards, which can put stress on the balls of the feet and toes. Pain can extend into the knees and lower back.



These footcare steps can help find relief:

- **Wear supportive shoes:** Podiatrists state that foot and heel pain is a common byproduct of plantar fasciitis, which is a stabbing pain felt under the soft part of the foot and around the heel. Proper arch support — through shoes or insoles — can relieve such pain by providing ample support to the arches.

- **Stretch your feet:** Regularly stretching the feet or practicing yoga can help alleviate tight muscles in the feet and around the ankles that can contribute to discomfort.

- **Skip the flip-flops:** We know that flip-flops are the ultimate warm-weather footwear, but the lack of support such footwear offers can lead to pain. Furthermore, trying

to keep the flip-flops on by “toe scrunching” can trigger tendinitis, offers the custom shoe insole company Wiivv. Opt for more supportive and secure sandals.

- **Soak and massage feet:** Epsom salt soaks are great for dealing with muscle aches and reducing inflammation. After the soak, rub on an essential oil moisturizer and either massage your feet or ask a partner to do so. Don a pair of cotton socks to let the oils penetrate and moisturize the feet.

- **Don't walk barefoot:** Walking barefoot on hard surfaces, even indoors at home, can lead the foot to collapse. This can lead to a tremendous amount of stress on the foot and the rest of the body. Going barefoot also exposes the feet to bacteria and fungi that can infect the skin.

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By Jared Sonnier

Smoky Mountain Sports Medicine

We've all been there. Life gets busy, and we first put our needs and self-care on the back burner. We tell ourselves, "I don't have time," and can't seem to get everything done. We justify unhealthy decisions as a means to manage stress, like watching TV and scrolling on our phones to unwind.

Author and podcaster Tim Ferris wrote, "A lack of time is actually a lack of priorities." Every day, we have a limited amount of time to get things done. We know that not all tasks are equally important, and time should be prioritized for those most essential.

Without question, there's no task of greater importance than our own health and wellness, which encompasses exercise, diet and mental health, to name a few. Health truly is our greatest wealth, and we should treat it as such.

The Centers for Disease Control and World Health Organization issued activity guidelines that state, "All adults should undertake 150–300 min of moderate-intensity, or 75–150 min of vigorous-intensity physical activity per week."

Exercise is known to promote good health, but our behaviors don't reflect this common knowledge for many of us. "In 2020, 24.2% of adults aged 18 and over met the 2018 Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans for both

aerobic and muscle-strengthening activities."

Ignoring our health is a real problem that has widespread effects within ourselves. But by prioritizing and focusing on our body's needs first, we can begin to improve the quality of our lives while gaining more control over it.

Making time for ourselves is hard, but it's essential, and you're not alone. My intent is to empower you to take action. Start small and build up to create meaningful change in your life and health.

If you don't know where to start, make an appointment with Smoky Mountain Sports Medicine to discuss safe options, with locations in Waynesville, Sylva, Cullowhee and Bryson City. Visit www.smsmpt.com.



Jared Sonnier
Smoky Mountain Sports Medicine



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Fast action is critical in cardiac arrest

A primetime NFL game in early January 2023 was interrupted and ultimately postponed when Buffalo Bills' player Damar Hamlin went into cardiac arrest. While Hamlin recovered, nine out of 10 people who have cardiac arrest outside of a hospital die.

Hamlin's story made international headlines and left many people across the globe asking questions about cardiac arrest.

What is cardiac arrest?

Cardiac arrest occurs when the heart suddenly and unexpectedly stops pumping blood to the brain and other vital organs.

In the days after doctors first shared news regarding Hamlin's recovery, praise was heaped on the medical personnel and

trainers for their rapid response. They administered CPR on the field for several minutes, which saved Hamlin's life and helped preserve the 24-year-old safety's neurological function.

What are the symptoms of cardiac arrest?

In some cases, there are no symptoms. However, individuals may experience these symptoms prior to cardiac arrest:

- Fatigue
- Dizziness
- Shortness of breath
- Nausea
- Chest pain
- Heart palpitations
- Loss of consciousness



What causes cardiac arrest?

The suddenness of Hamlin's attack undoubtedly left millions of people confused about how the condition could affect a young professional athlete seemingly in peak physical condition. There are three main causes of the condition.

• **Arrhythmia and ventricular fibrillation:** A condition marked by problematic electrical signals in the heart that lead to an abnormal heartbeat. Ventricular fibrillation is

a type of arrhythmia that causes the heart to tremble rather than pump blood normally. It is the most common cause of cardiac arrest.

• **Cardiomyopathy:** A condition in which the heart is enlarged. The heart muscle thickens or dilates, which causes abnormal contractions of the heart.

• **Coronary artery disease:** The most common cause is the buildup of cholesterol inside the lining of the coronary arteries. That buildup leads to the formation of plaque which can partially or completely block blood flow in the arteries of the heart.

Certain behaviors or lifestyle choices also can trigger cardiac arrest, including drugs, severe emotional stress and physical exertion.

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Maintain your balance as nature turns to fall



Ayu (life) Veda (knowledge), is the oldest recorded form of health practice, with evidence dating as far back as 3000 BCE.

Ayurveda is an elemental life science, viewing all things on our planet as composed of ether, air, fire, water, and earth; including us. Combinations of these elements, known as the doshas, give rise to specialized properties, like the blended shades of a color wheel.

Each person is born with a different combination of doshas: vata (ether + air), pitta (fire + water), and kapha (earth + water). Ayurveda helps us learn more about what makes us fundamentally unique and teaches us about the sacred balance between our doshas and how to maintain balance.

The leaves are preparing for their grand finale of autumn colors, and change is in the air. As the turn of the season brings cooler temperatures, dryer air and shorter days, Ayurveda helps us to learn how we should adapt our habits to maintain our happiness and well-being.

Ayurveda, which translates as

According to Ayurveda, Autumn coincides with vata season. Vata, as the combination of ether and air, has the qualities of dry, cool, subtle, mobile and light.

During this season, we should bring about more of the opposite qualities such as moist, warm, stable, heavy, etc. Here are a few things we recommend to maintain balance in this season:

- Show preference towards warm, lightly cooked foods.
- Try to plan your meals so as to not overeat or leave leftovers.
- Establish a food routine — eat meals at the same time daily.
- Apply warm sesame oil to the skin daily.
- Begin to slow down — opt for a long walk instead of a jog.

- Try restorative yoga.
- Cover your head and neck when outside to protect yourself from excess wind exposure.
- Consider Ashwagandha herbal supplements if stress and anxiety are high.

This article was provided by Maggie Valley Wellness Center.



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Do you ever wonder what it is that makes some doctors so incredibly compassionate while others have a bedside manner better suited for the DMV?

In the case of Dr. Autumn Kirgan, DACM, C.SMA, L.Ac of South Slope Acupuncture & Wellness it is a case of true empathy. "I suffered from chronic lower back pain from a near-death experience in a car crash at 15 years old." Chronic low back pain is the leading cause of disability worldwide and is a major public health issue.

"From a young age, my lower back pain kept me from playing sports, hiking, and moving my body

the way I wanted to. It was quickly hindering my quality of life."

Being that Chronic Low Back Pain is a complex and often complicated condition, Dr. Kirgan's options were prescription medications that did not work or had bad side effects or surgery. "It was no way to live," she shares "I was young and should've been living a bright vibrant life. Instead, I was avoiding social activities, spending too much time seeking unhelpful ways to manage my pain, and doing my best to keep up with house and yard work.

As you can imagine Summer and Winter were rough. Summer is full of yard work and social activities. Winter is cold, damp, and brutal for almost anyone with joint and muscle pain."

As you can imagine Summer and Winter were rough. Summer is full of yard work and social activities. Winter is cold, damp, and brutal for almost anyone with joint and muscle pain."

It wasn't until she found Acupuncture that she found real lasting relief.

This is why I often refer to my practice as 'Last Resort With The Best Results.' You've been everywhere else and been given the same disheartening prognosis, prescribed the same medications and told 'this is just something you're going to have to learn to live with.' Soon after her incredible experience with the healing arts she made the life changing decision to switch careers and pursue her doctorate in Acupuncture, "acupuncture has quite literally saved my life and I want to share it with the world," she proclaims.

Your Golden Years Should Be Golden

While in school she watched as her aunt began to suffer from peripheral neuropathy. "Your golden years should be golden, not plagued with insufferable pain while doctors and specialists tell you there is nothing they can do."

Understanding that Eastern Medicine excels where Western Medicine fails, Dr. Autumn set forth to develop treatment protocols for all variations of Peripheral Neuropathy (including Diabetic and Chemo-Induced) and now has a 90% success rate in treating this once difficult-to-manage condition.

I am tired of seeing the older generation suffer unnecessarily," shares Dr. Kirgan. "Diagnosing them as 'just getting older and giving them



KIND OF DOCTOR

a treatment plan of you're just going to have to get used to it' has never set well with me so I wanted to offer them a real option for treatment and care.'

Dr. Kirgan has designed similar treatment protocols for other complicated, chronic conditions including fibromyalgia, rheumatoid arthritis, and even post-shingles pain. While each patient plan is tailored specifically to that patient's concerns and goals, all of her treatments are based on evidence-based medicine and a framework that's over a decade in the making.

In addition, Dr. Kirgan isn't opposed to more modern medical solutions.

"It's blending the time-tested science of acupuncture with recent innovations of medicine that get me the best results." One of those advancements is Frequency Specific MicroCurrent Therapy, originally developed by NASA, it aids nerves in regeneration by providing them the nutrients they need to repair and renew, "very similar to what water does for a plant."

The Magic of Compassionate Care

And what do those in her care have to say?

Dr. Kirgan looked me in the eyes and wanted to know about me,

not just my condition. I feel like a person, not just a patient," shares Shelia. "In fact, I don't think she ever used the word patient." Others proclaim "She saved my life", "her neuropathy treatments gave me my life back," and "It's a miracle she treated my fibromyalgia, I don't know how else to explain it."

Dr. Autum Kirgan has a long personal history in complicated, difficult-to-understand conditions and understands how tragic it can all be if left untreated.

"I have sat where my patients sit. I've experienced their pain and suffering in a very real way. I know the frustration of feeling hopeless on an intimate level. It's why I practice the brand of medicine I do and why I've made my life's mission to treat the 'untreatable'. It brings me incredible joy when I get to say 'I can help you!'"

Furthermore, Dr. Kirgan has surrounded herself with staff that embraces this same approach to patient care. "You can ask any one of my patients and they will tell you that their favorite part about South Slope Acupuncture is my staff."

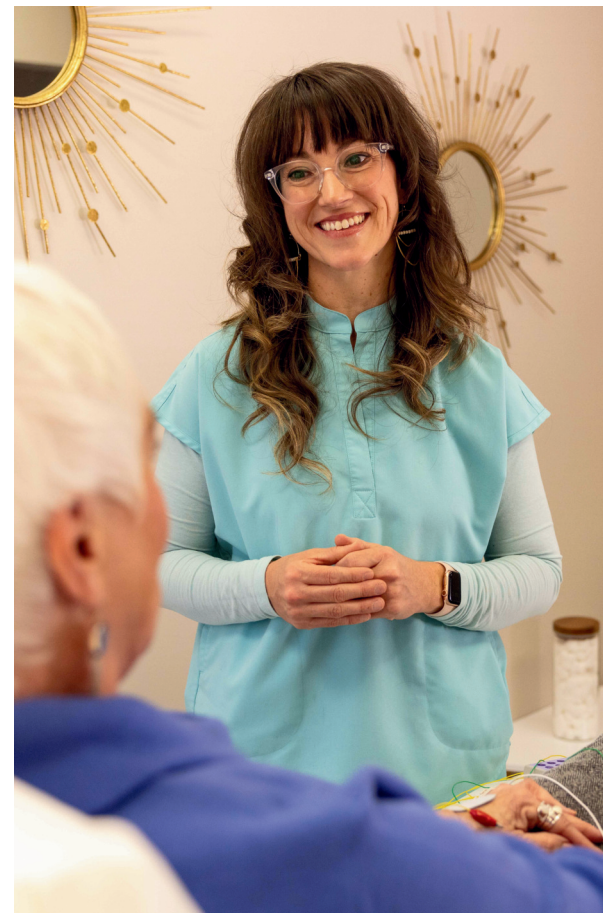
"I just love everyone here" shares Betsy, who has been a patient of South Slope for well over a year. "The girls are always so kind, it's like going to doctor with my girlfriends."

Dr. Kirgan and her staff specialize in treating chronic pain, complicated neurological conditions, and autoimmune diseases that leave other professionals scratching their heads.

For more information about Dr. Kirgan, her team, and what they treat, visit **SouthSlopeAcupuncture.com**.

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 SOUTH SLOPE
acupuncture & wellness

Get the facts about the cold and flu

Although colds and flu can be contracted any time of the year, winter tends to be a prime time for cold and flu outbreaks, as more time spent indoors near others provides an easy way for viruses to pass from one person to another.

Despite how common these illnesses can be, there is no shortage of misinformation concerning the prevention and treatment of the viruses.

Cold

Colds are relatively minor throat and nose infections caused by more than 200 different viruses.

Rhinovirus is the most common cause, which accounts for between 10% and 40% of infections. Adults get an average of two to four colds yearly, while children suffer six to eight colds annually.

Colds are contracted from inhalation of microscopic particles in the air or contact with contaminated surfaces. Symptoms can include runny nose, sneezing and nasal congestion, often with a sore throat, mild cough,

mild aches/ fatigue and fever in youngsters.

Influenza

The flu is a contagious respiratory illness caused by the influenza virus. It infects the throat, nose, and some-

times the lungs. Like colds, the flu can also be spread through tiny droplets made when infected individuals cough, sneeze, talk, or touch infected surfaces.

One common misconception about the flu is that it can be contracted from the flu vaccine. This is not true. The flu shot is made from an inactivated virus that can't transmit infection. People who get sick after receiving a flu vaccination would get sick anyway, as it takes a week or two to get protection from the vaccine.

Even though the flu and colds share some symptoms, such as runny nose, sneezing, hoarseness, and cough, the flu is not just a bad cold. While very few people have landed in the hospital with a cold, the flu can be so severe as to require hospitalization.



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Breast cancer: Be aware and take action

By Haywood Regional Medical Center

Breast Cancer Awareness Month is every October to raise awareness about breast cancer. By staying informed and taking preventive action, we can help to minimize the effect this disease has on women in our communities.

Dr. Allison Johnson, MD, a general surgeon at Haywood Regional Medical Center, answered some questions concerning breast cancer:



Allison Johnson, MD, Haywood Regional Medical Center

Why is Breast Cancer Awareness Month so important?

The average woman's risk of breast cancer is around 13 percent in the U.S. – meaning about one in eight women will be diagnosed with invasive breast cancer in her lifetime. Breast cancer is one of the most common forms of cancer among American women. Breast cancer is also the second leading cause of cancer death in women, superseded only by lung cancer.

What are the risk factors?

The biggest risk factor for developing breast cancer is aging, but all women can develop breast cancer. You may need annual screenings sooner if you are at higher risk of developing the disease. Important risk factors to consider include genetic mutations, dense breasts, a family history, lack of



physical activity and being overweight after menopause.

What are the symptoms?

There are many types of breast cancer, and they can present with various warning signs. Some of these signs may include a new lump in the breast or underarm, any change in the size or shape of the breast, breast skin irritation, pain in any area of the breast and discharge other than breast milk. Some people diagnosed with breast cancer have no signs at all.

What is a mammogram?

A mammogram is a simple, routine screening that takes about an hour and can detect breast cancer before symptoms appear. Mammograms have been proven to help reduce deaths from breast cancer by identifying the disease early. Most women should get their first mammogram at age 40.

What else can I do?

It's important to exercise regularly, get enough sleep, eat healthy, limit alcohol intake and avoid chemicals that can cause cancer. Clinical breast exams and self-exams are good secondary methods.

To schedule a mammogram or talk with a provider, call 800-424-3627 and visit the "Find a Provider" tab at MyHaywoodRegional.com.

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Crossing the rapids of grief gets easier with a friend

By Peter Constantian

Haywood Hospice and Palliative Care

“We’ve been expecting this for a while now, and I feel like I’ve already done my grieving.”

This comes up frequently in my phone conversations with the loved ones of hospice patients who have recently passed away. I wish it were true. In some cases, where a beloved parent or partner has been in slow decline, the grief process has already begun.

This is called anticipatory grief: a letting go that we begin to do as we anticipate the death of someone we love.

On a recent hiking trip in the Pacific Northwest, my wife and I faced the challenge of crossing a handful of dangerous rivers. With 30-pound packs on our backs and slippery

logs beneath us, these river crossings overwhelmed us the closer we approached them.

Once in view, we looked for the best place to cross. Though the river was far off, we couldn’t help but try to guess how we would get over it.

In the same way, when the death of a loved one approaches, we may find ourselves attempting to pre-grieve. This grief is not a bad thing, and there may be ways in which it prepares us for the eventual loss.

We found out on our hiking trip

that, despite all our planning from a distance, once we got right up to the riverbank, the options for crossing were totally different.

Boulders we thought were close together seemed impossible to jump, while smaller rocks we hadn’t seen revealed themselves to us. The path across became apparent only when we were right in the middle of the river.

In my experience with grieving families, the grief journey is like a river crossing. As much as we try to let go ahead of time, once our loved one is gone, the reality of loss sets in in unexpected ways.

Thankfully, just like a river crossing, the way through is often easier to see once we’re in it. As much as we’d like it to be true, there’s just no way to get

Continued on page 25



For some of us, the Holidays can be hard.

If you are experiencing grief and loss during the holidays, you are not alone. At Haywood Hospice, we have resources available for you during the holidays:

Grief Gatherings at the Coffee Café

November 8
3:30 PM

December 13
3:30 PM

“Keys to My Heart” Creative Healing Workshop

Saturday, November 18

10 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. (lunch is provided)
Each participant will create a key chain memento as a reminder that grief is love with nowhere to go.

**For more information, call 452-5039
or see our Facebook page.**

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Continued from page 24

all our grieving done ahead of time.

But there's one more thing we learned from those rivers — when we're in the middle of it, be it a rushing river or the loss of a loved one, it helps to have a helping hand.

If you are having trouble crossing through grief or loss, even if it's not related to a family member in hospice, you're welcome to join our monthly Grief Gatherings at the Coffee Cup Café in Clyde on the second Wednesday of every month at 3:30 p.m. Call 828-452-5039 for more information.

Peter Constantian, M.Div. serves as a Hospice Chaplain and Bereavement Coordinator for Haywood Hospice & Palliative Care. Previously, he served as Pastor of Long's United Methodist Church in Canton, and Cruso United Methodist Church in Cruso.

Memory Trees honor cherished loved ones who passed

An annual Celebration of Life — with the theme “Gathering the Harvest of Memories” — brought together those who had lost loved ones over the past year to remember and celebrate their cherished memories.

Those who attended wrote down memories of their loved ones to hang on a Memory Tree. The concept of a Memory Tree can be a helpful exercise for anyone whose grieving the loss of a loved one. It allows you to reflect on precious moments and capture your remembrances, as well as paying tribute to the life of your loved one.

Haywood Hospice Chaplain Patrick Davis spoke on the different seasons of life, and how we associate memories of our loved ones with the changing seasons.

“It's a beautiful experience when people who are grieving come together to connect with nature and each other,” Davis stated. “We are honored to offer grief programs for free to anyone in our community. Our monthly grief gathering at the Coffee Cup Café is for all in our community who are grieving.”

The service was hosted by Haywood Hospice & Palliative Care and Haywood Healthcare Foundation at Lake Junaluska in early October.



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How to stay mentally sharp after retirement

Researchers have long since recognized that certain cognitive abilities begin to decline with advanced age, even among elderly individuals who are healthy. However, despite that decline, dementias like Alzheimer's disease are not an inevitable part of aging.

As many as 40 percent of dementia cases may be prevented or delayed. In addition, it's not uncommon for routine memory, skills and knowledge to stabilize or even improve as the brain ages.

That's good news for retirees who want to spend their post-work life pursuing their passions and hobbies. Individuals also can embrace these strategies to stay mentally sharp in retirement:

Consider delaying retirement

Even if early retirement is a dream,

it might be better to work a little longer than you had planned. Postponed retirement benefits cognitive function for all genders, races/ethnicities, educational levels, and professional status. Individuals who waited until age 67 to retire experienced less cognitive decline than those who retired before turning 67, according to studies.

Make exercise part of your retirement routine

A lack of structure may seem enticing to individuals who have spent decades working. However, many retirees find that little structure loses its appeal quickly after calling it quits. When creating a new routine in retirement, include regular exer-

cise. According to the Mayo Clinic, studies indicate that people who are physically active are less likely to experience a decline in their mental function. So daily exercise not only gives retirees something to do but also benefits their brains.

Enroll in an adult education course

Studies have examined the association between lifetime intellectual enrichment and cognitive decline in the older population. The studies find that higher levels of late-life cognitive activity are associated with higher levels of cognition. Lifetime intellectual enrichment might delay the onset of cognitive impairment. Retirees can look into adult learning programs at local colleges and universities to see if anything piques their interest.



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Why are migraines so much worse than other headaches?

Anyone who has experienced a headache knows how overwhelming they can be. And when it comes to pain and disruption of daily life, perhaps no headache is more overwhelming than migraines.

Migraines are caused by the activation of a mechanism deep in the brain that leads to the release of pain-producing inflammatory substances around the nerves and blood vessels of the head. Though all headaches can be painful, migraines tend to be especially so, and even long-time migraine sufferers may not know why that is.

Migraines are more than just headaches. When a person is suffering a migraine, the changes in brain activity that are occurring affect blood in the brain and surrounding tissues. That can cause a range of symptoms that can make migraines an especially difficult issue to contend with.

Severe head pain is a common char-

acteristic of migraines, individuals also may develop these symptoms while suffering from a migraine:

- Nausea
- Increasing sensitivity to light, sound or smells
- Dizziness
- Extreme fatigue

Each of these symptoms is difficult to contend with on its own, and much more so when individuals are also experiencing migraine-related pain. In addition, some individuals experience some or all of these symptoms during the course of a migraine. What's more, estimates from the American Migraine Foundation indicate that untreated migraines can last anywhere from four to 72 hours.

A migraine attack is made up of four phases, and a week can go by between the onset of the first phase and the completion of the fourth. The symp-

toms combined with the length of the migraine undoubtedly contribute to the well-earned reputation that migraines are the most difficult of all headaches to confront.

The exact causes of migraines remain unclear. However, there may be a hereditary link, and various environmental factors can trigger an attack. Individuals should ask close family members, including parents, if they

have dealt with migraines.

It also can be wise to avoid common triggers, which may include certain foods and alcohol. Making a concerted effort to stay hydrated also may help in the fight against migraines. Data indicates that women suffer considerably more migraines than men, and hormonal fluctuations, like those that occur during menstrual cycles, could be behind that.

What to do when migraines strike

Migraines can range from a simple nuisance to debilitating, affecting your ability to live, work and play like you're used to doing. Unfortunately, there is not one quick fix for migraines. Treating migraines isn't always simple because symptoms are different for everyone.

The Mayo Clinic notes that these steps may help to reduce the severity of migraine symptoms:

- Find a calm environment away from stressors.
- Relax in a dark, quiet room, as light and sound can exacerbate migraine pain.
- Small amounts of caffeine (caffeinated soda, tea or coffee) can relieve migraine pain in the earliest stages and enhance the effects of common

OTC pain medications like acetaminophen and ibuprofen. Don't overdo it, as that can lead to caffeine withdrawal headaches.

- Try to get steady, uninterrupted sleep each night. Poor sleep may trigger a migraine. If you have difficulty sleeping, listen to soothing music, establish a bedtime routine, go to bed and wake up at the same time each day, and exercise regularly.
- Eat a healthy, balanced diet at regular intervals. Fasting may contribute to migraine onset. Avoid foods such as aged cheese, alcohol and chocolate if they trigger migraines.
- Try to manage stress in any way you can, which may include time management and simplifying your life. Delegate to others if you're taking on too much.

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Signs kids could be hard of hearing

Hearing loss is often associated with aging. Individuals from all walks of life have an aging friend or relative who has experienced some degree of hearing loss, and millions of seniors across the globe would admit to having some difficulty with their hearing. But hearing loss also can affect children and, if undiagnosed, it can harm all aspects of their lives.

Approximately 34 million children present with hearing loss that requires rehabilitation. Hearing loss in children can be present at birth or develop later in childhood. Hearing loss that develops later in childhood is known as acquired hearing loss, and parents can look for various signs that kids could be losing their hearing.

What causes acquired hearing loss in children?

- Delayed speech or language development
- Speech sound disorder, including any difficulty with perception, motor production, or phonological representation
- Difficulty in following or understanding instructions
- Frequent requests for repetition
- Use of increased volume on devices, including televisions and tablets
- Difficulty effectively expressing themselves
- Frustration with communication
- Feeling of exhaustion at the end of a school day
- Difficulties at school, including academic, behavioral, or social difficulties in the classroom



The causes of hearing loss in children can be as simple as cerumen (ear wax) or as complex as damage to middle or inner structures after suffering trauma to the head.

Over-the-counter ear wax removal drops can effectively clean ears and restore kids' hearing, though such drops may need to be part of routine

preventive health care measures.

Ear infections, encephalitis, excessive noise exposure, meningitis, the presence of a foreign body in the ear, and viral infections like measles or mumps also can contribute to hearing loss in kids. Some hearing loss may require long-term use of hearing aids, surgery or medication.

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Let your body do the talking — and listen to it

By Kathy Foster

At a wedding recently, my husband and I reconnected with some old friends. When I say old, I mean from years ago, high school friends. We are not “old,” we are now middle-aged, late 50s and early 60s, you know, the new 30s and 40s.

Or are we old? I was amazed at how quickly after the “Hey, so good to see you,” the conversation went to body parts being replaced or tweaked, creaking, popping, or just plain aching. Were we at a wedding or at a rehab reunion?

Mary had a knee replacement that didn't go well. Dianne needed some knee work and wondered how I could stay crouched down between her and Kathy during our conversation as they sat at the table, and still get back up. I can do that, but oh



the bursitis in my right hip gives me trouble, I said.

Another guest piped in about her gastritis, and another is watching his salt intake due to high blood pressure, and don't even get me started about the LDL and triglycerides everyone is worried about.

In life we don't always have a choice, as some medical conditions are hereditary. However, there is always a good reason to maintain a good diet and exercise program, regardless of what ailment one might have.

My husband and I left the wedding and had a very familiar conversation about really getting serious this time about using the exercise equipment every day and only bringing healthy food into the house — and we are going to start on Monday (of course).

We feel we have reached an age

where it truly is imperative that we follow through on our plans to live a healthier lifestyle.

The truth is that when I eat a salad, or a steamed vegetable or a bowl of fresh fruit, my body rejoices! I literally feel my insides shouting with joy! And it tastes good.

When I start my day with a walk or twenty minutes on the rowing machine, I feel energized and strong. Who wouldn't want that all the time? The trick is to let our bodies do the talking, not our brains.

The brain says potato chips are salty and oh so good, and once you eat one you have to eat the whole bag — because you do not want that bag of chips hanging around. Monday is coming after all.

Kathy Foster is the Director of Marketing and Transitions at Deerfield.

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Preserving healthy vision: Understanding cataracts

Vision is often described as one of our most precious senses, allowing us to savor life's vibrant moments and navigate its challenges. Yet, the journey to maintaining a healthy vision can sometimes be disrupted by a common adversary.

Cataracts are a prevalent eye condition that primarily affects older adults and is the leading cause of blindness in the U.S. They develop when the eye's natural lens, positioned behind the pupil, becomes cloudy, leading to blurred vision and diminished visual clarity.

Although aging is the primary catalyst for cataract formation, they can also result from factors like genetics, diabetes, excessive UV exposure, and certain medications.

Preventing cataracts begins with embracing a lifestyle conducive to eye health. Here are some essential strategies:

1. Nutrition: A diet rich in antioxidants, vitamins C and E, and other nutrients can bolster eye health. Leafy green, colorful fruits and fish high in Omega-3 fatty acids are valuable addi-

tions to your meals.

2. UV Protection: Protect your eye from UV rays' harmful effects by wearing sunglasses with adequate UV protection. This simple habit can



significantly reduce your risk of cataracts.

3. Regular Check-Ups: Routine eye examinations are essential, even if you don't experience noticeable vision changes. Early detection of cataracts allows for timely intervention.

4. Smoking Cessation: If you smoke, quitting is another step toward preserving your vision. Smoking is a known risk factor for cataracts.

Cataracts can progress slowly, and you might not notice significant visual disturbances in their early stages. However, cataract surgery becomes a viable option when cataracts begin to interfere with daily life. During this procedure, the cloudy lens is removed and replaced with an artificial intraocular lens.

The success rate of cataract surgery is remarkably high and substantially improves your vision and overall quality of life. Remember, your eyes are your windows to the world, and protecting them is a worthwhile investment.

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Time outdoors is time well spent for seniors

The benefits of spending time in the great outdoors are significant. It improves mental health and helps to reduce stress, and the vitamin D the body absorbs while outside can have a positive effect on blood cells and the immune system.

Seniors can benefit from the great outdoors as much as anyone. Vitamin D helps the body absorb calcium, which strengthens

bones. That's especially beneficial for seniors, as bone density often decreases after age 50, which can increase the risk of fractures.

Spending time in the great outdoors also provides a social benefit, encouraging individuals from all walks of life, including seniors, to get out of their homes and spend time with other people.

Walking

Walking is free and effective. In fact, a brisk 30-minute walk can improve blood flow, contribute to a stronger heart, strengthen bones, and even help people sleep better at night. In addition, a study found that people between the ages of 40 and 79 who walked about 9,800 steps per day were 51% less likely to develop dementia than people who didn't walk much at all.

Cycling

Riding a bike is both fun and a great form of outdoor exercise. A study found that people who cycled to work were 24% less likely to die of heart disease and 11 percent less likely to develop cancer. Seniors, whether they are still working or retired, can incorporate cycling into their daily routines and enjoy all the fun and health benefits that riding a bike provides.

Hiking

Hiking is a bit more strenuous than walking, particularly when individuals choose to traverse steep or rocky terrain. Hiking after age 60 can help people reduce their risk of falls and fractures; lower their risk for a host of ailments, including coronary heart

disease, colon cancer and diabetes; reduce blood pressure, even in adults who have already been diagnosed with hypertension; and maintain healthy bones and joints.



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Seven warning signs for diabetes

Everyone knows somebody who has been affected by diabetes. A chronic metabolic disease characterized by elevated levels of blood glucose, diabetes is a disease that can cause serious damage to the eyes, kidneys, nerves, heart and blood vessels over time if left untreated.

Type 2 diabetes occurs when the body becomes resistant to insulin or doesn't make enough insulin. About 422 million people worldwide have diabetes, and 1.5 million deaths are directly attributed to diabetes each year.

Catching diabetes at its earliest can help people avoid long-term damage to the body and improve their overall health. This means it is very important to recognize signs that suggest the presence of diabetes and its precursor, prediabetes.

The following are seven potential warning signs of diabetes:

1. Frequent urination: This is one of the key indicators of diabetes. When diabetes is present, the kidneys work harder to rid the body of excess sugar, producing more urine.

2. Dry mouth and excessive thirst: This goes in conjunction with frequent urination, as the body is trying to increase fluid to alleviate excess sugar.

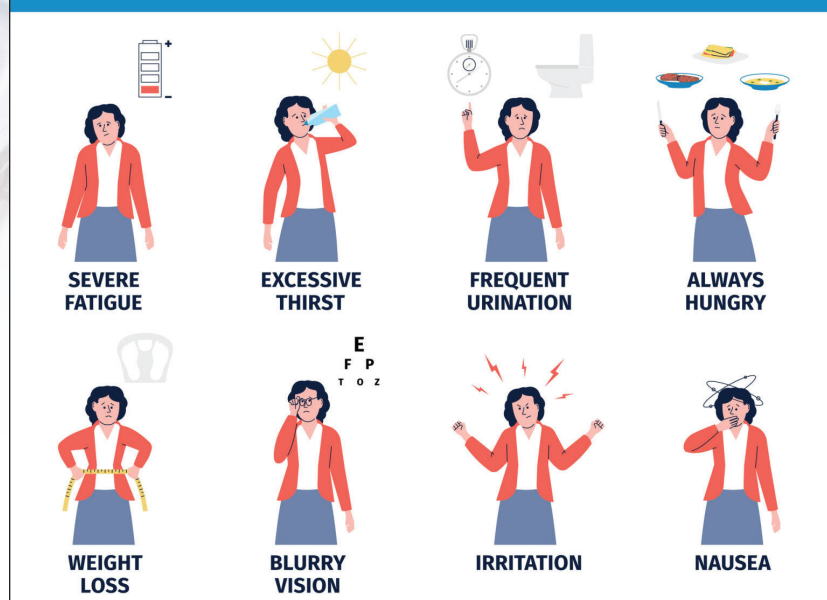
3. Dry skin: Dry skin, especially around the feet, can be a symptom of diabetes.

4. Slow-healing wounds: A higher blood sugar level can interfere with the body's ability to heal wounds.

5. Blurry vision: Some people notice vision changes that do not seem to be tied to an eye illness or another condition. This may be a result of diabetes.

6. Weight loss: Sudden weight loss without trying to lose weight is often an indication that something isn't

DIABETES SYMPTOMS



quite right. Diabetes could be the culprit.

7. Yeast infections and UTIs: Women may experience more frequent vagi-

nal yeast infections and urinary tract infections if they have diabetes.

If a person is experiencing any of these conditions, schedule an appointment with a healthcare provider

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All about asthma

Being out of breath often happens when people exert physical effort. If you are winded or having trouble catching your breath at other times, that may indicate you have asthma.

What is asthma?

Asthma occurs when the airways narrow and swell, potentially producing extra mucus. This can make breathing difficult and trigger coughing, according to the Mayo Clinic.

When does asthma occur?

Asthma can flare up in certain situations. For example, exercise-induced asthma can flare up when the air is cold and dry, or allergy-induced asthma can be brought on by pollen, mold or pet dander.

Diagnosing asthma

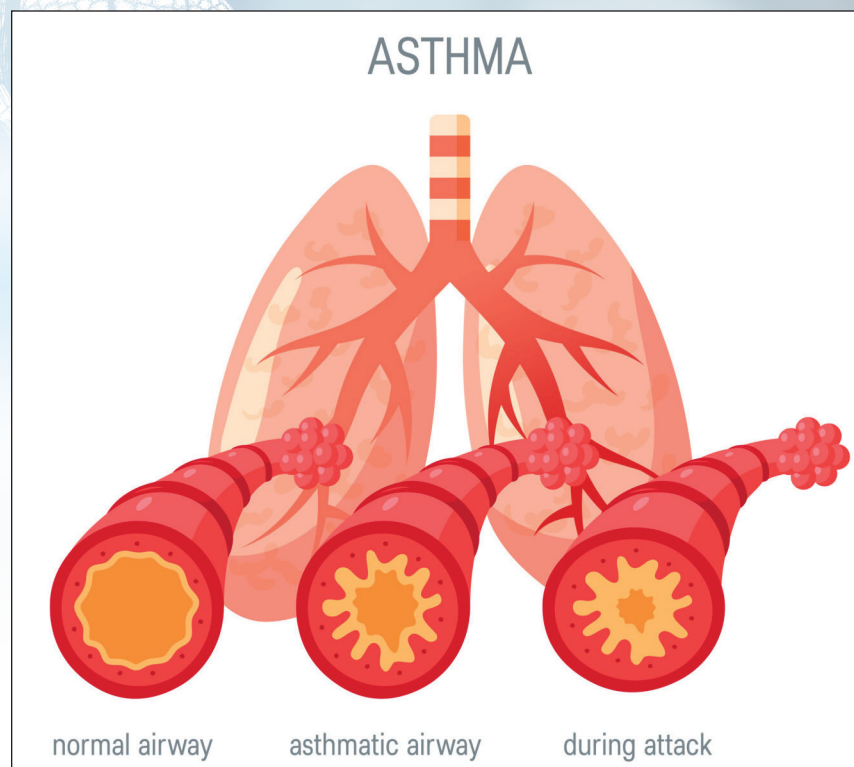
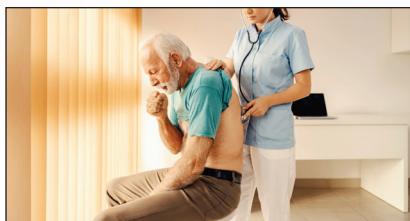
Doctors can do breathing tests to check for asthma and whether they worsen

during certain times of the year. A test called spirometry may be conducted. It measures how much air a person can breathe out after taking a deep breath.

How is asthma treated?

Asthma is typically treated with lifestyle changes and medication. Doctors may suggest avoiding triggers, like staying inside during allergy season.

Oxygen therapy is used to help patients breathe better by increasing the amount of oxygen in the bloodstream and improving the overall quality of lung function.



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Daily dental hygiene tips for optimal oral health

Although clean teeth make for a healthy mouth, oral health is tied to whole-body health. Bacteria in the mouth can multiply and spread elsewhere through the bloodstream. Gum disease has been linked to diabetes, respiratory ailments and heart disease.

Here's how to brush up on maintaining a healthy mouth:

- **Brush twice per day:** Utilizing toothpaste and a soft-bristled toothbrush, brush your teeth each morning and night. Brushing after every meal can also be done to keep teeth even cleaner.

- **Brush correctly:** Position the toothbrush at a 45-degree angle. This will help sweep away plaque and bacteria at the gum line, according to the Cleveland Clinic. Move the toothbrush in circular

motions.

- **Don't neglect your tongue:** Bacteria also can build up on the tongue, leading to bad odor and other problems. Gently brush the tongue along with the teeth.

- **Use toothpaste with fluoride:** Fluoride is a leading defender against tooth decay. It fights the germs that can lead to decay and provides a barrier for the teeth.

- **Use mouthwash:** Use an antibacterial mouthwash each day to help reduce oral bacteria. This helps wash away food and debris.





8 STEPS

for healthy teeth

			
HEALTHY DIET	REGULAR VISITS TO THE DENTIST	CLEAN YOUR TONGUE	VITAMINS
			
USE DENTAL FLOSS	NO SMOKING	CORRECT TOOTHBRUSH AND TOOTH PASTE	DO NOT DRINK VERY HOT DRINKS

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Regardless of age, muscles are vital to your overall health. Muscles comprise 35% of your body and allow for movement, balance, physical strength, organ function, skin integrity, immunity and wound healing.

Muscles perform a variety of functions that are essential to life. Adding a bit more defined muscle to the body helps people look leaner. Toned muscles also help with balance, proper posture and flexibility.

Stronger muscles provide more support to bones and connective tissues, which reduces injury risk. That's an especially important benefit for aging men and women.

Body sculpting, also called body contouring, is used to describe an aesthetic procedure designed to reshape and improve the appearance of your body.

Hazelwood Family Medicine is offering a new, innovative treatment to build muscle and reduce fat called Emsculpt NEO.

Emsculpt NEO is a non-invasive treatment that simultaneously combines radiofrequency heating and high-intensity focused electromagnetic technology. The treatment helps eliminate and remove fat cells from the body while also causing muscle growth through intense muscle contractions.

Clinical studies have shown an average of 30% reduction in subcutaneous fat and a 25% increase in muscle mass with Emsculpt NEO. Unlike liposuction, Emsculpt Neo does not require any surgery, and it's safe and effective with minimal discomfort or downtime.

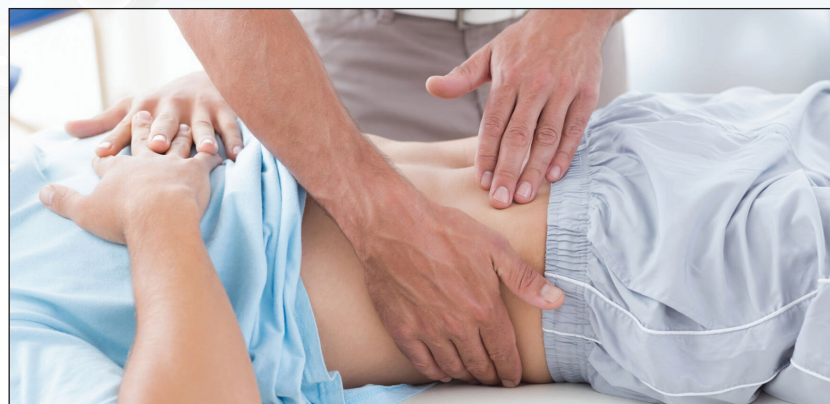
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Simple strategies to combat stress

Just about everyone experiences stressful situations. Sometimes a measure of stress can provide motivation to do one's best or strive for an especially lofty goal. However, when stress becomes a chronic condition, it can adversely affect individuals' quality of life and even their overall health.

Stress can manifest itself in myriad ways. Stress can cause tension headaches, indigestion, aches and pains, or even heart palpitations, and it may affect the mind by making it hard to concentrate or make decisions. Many people experience stress through emotional or psychological symptoms, such as irritability or feeling down. Learning how to effectively manage stress is essential for individuals' overall well-being.

Exercise regularly

Exercise serves many functions, including acting as a potent stress relief strategy. Aerobic exercise releases endorphins, which are natural substances that help a person feel better

and maintain a positive attitude.

Movement activities like yoga or Tai Chi also can relax the mind and body and promote physical health.

Meditate or perform breathing exercises

Breathing and meditation can help alleviate stress, according to the American Heart Association. A quick meditation can provide some perspective. If a situation is stressful, go for a walk or take a few slow, deep breaths until the body relaxes. Meditation can induce a relaxation response, which is an antidote to stress.

Change negatives to positives

Negative self-talk may increase stress, but positive self-talk can help a person calm down. Individuals should practice positive self-talk every day. Instead of saying, "I hate when this happens," say, "I know how to deal with this, I've done it before."

A small amount of periodic stress can be a good thing. However, chronic stress poses a significant threat to individuals' long-term health.



Ring in the New Year with resolutions made to last



The season for New Year's resolutions will soon be upon us, and getting fit and losing weight are the two most common resolutions Americans make.

Between 40 and 45% of American adults make resolutions each year. Resolutions may seem silly to some, but there are several posi-

tive reasons to make them. Resolutions made at the dawn of a new year can provide the motivation and direction people need to make positive changes in their lives.

• **Resolutions provide practice setting goals:** Goal-setting is an important component of life. Goals are key because they

provide general direction in life. A goal is a map that can give you an idea of where you are heading and what path you need to take to get there, according to the self-improvement guide *Success Consciousness*. Resolutions can be fun, low-pressure goals. Think of them as dress rehearsals for bigger life changes.

• **Resolutions offer time for reflection:** Too often people are rushing through daily life without stopping or slowing down to truly assess the impact of their actions. Resolutions help you reflect on the past, present and future, figuring out what has been working and what may need to be changed to provide a boost.

• **Resolutions can serve as a catalyst for positive change:** When something isn't working with your

routine, personal health or relationships, resolutions can serve as the catalyst that ultimately rights the ship.

• **Resolutions can promote self-esteem and empowerment:** Making resolutions and keeping them can provide a sense of accomplishment that comes with goal-setting and following through. Resolving to lose five pounds and then seeing the proof on a scale can be a powerful motivator that compels you to make other self-improvements. Accomplishing small goals also can boost self-esteem.

The year 2024 written in a colorful, bubbly font.

A guide to popular herbal teas

Tea is a healthy beverage. Black, green and oolong teas get their fair share of health-boosting attention, but a grouping of teas, which technically are not true teas at all, also can be a boon to the body.

Consumption of herbal tea predates consumption of Chinese black tea. Since they do not contain leaves of the *camellia sinensis* (tea) plant, herbal teas really aren't tea, but have been given the tea moniker because they are often steeped in a manner similar to tea.

Herbal teas are made from herbs as well as dried fruits, flowers and spices. The health and wellness information site Healthline says that certain herbal teas have health-promoting properties. Herbal teas have been used by various cultures for medicinal purposes for hundreds of years.

Herbal tea can be used to boost the immune system, to relax and unwind, to alleviate pain, or just to warm you up on a chilly day. Herbal teas can be part of a health plan that



involves all-natural remedies for common ailments.

Even though herbal teas may seem all-natural, it is wise to check with a doctor before including them as part of a health-boosting regimen to confirm that they won't produce any adverse reactions with medications. That's especially important for women who are pregnant or planning to become pregnant.

Herbal teas come in various flavors.



The following are some of the more popular herbal teas and their potential health benefits.

Chamomile tea

Chamomile is best known for its calming effects, and it is sometimes used as a mild sleep-inducer. A study of 34 patients with insomnia found marginal improvements in waking up during the night, time to falling asleep and daytime functioning after taking chamomile extract twice a day. Some studies suggest that chamomile can reduce symptoms of premenstrual syndrome, and it may have anti-inflammatory and antibacterial properties as well.

Peppermint tea

Those who enjoy peppermint tea often do so to soothe an upset

stomach. Peppermint tea also can promote weight loss and reduce heartburn and may help people relax.

Turmeric tea

Turmeric tea has anti-inflammatory properties that may be beneficial for anyone who has an autoimmune disease like arthritis and fibromyalgia. The anti-inflammatory properties also can help with symptoms of migraines and other minor aches and pains.

Ginger tea

A study that examined 10 overweight men found that drinking hot ginger tea increased the men's feelings of fullness and reduced hunger. Ginger also may improve blood sugar control for people with type 2 diabetes.



Did you know?

Hot tea is widely consumed across the globe, and that could be paying healthy dividends for the billions of people who look forward to their daily cup each day.

A small study published in the *Journal of Hypertension* found that drinking black tea could improve cardiovascular function. A separate study also found that drinking black tea and green tea could decrease risk of stroke and coronary heart disease.

Black tea drinkers should keep in mind that, unlike most teas, black tea is caffeinated, so moderation is best to ensure the benefits of black tea are not offset by the overconsumption of caffeine.

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Empower discovery in our lives

By Dr. Michael Hogan

Blue Mountain Chiropractic Center

It is such a paradox that in order to really live we must feel discomfort. Research shows that in order to maintain a healthy brain we must challenge ourselves to experience new and different environments.

Yet, it seems as time passes (a.k.a. we get older), the less likely we are to do new things or meet new people. We become so comfortable and complacent.

With the mass numbers of dementia on the rise in the US, it is more apparent that taking care of our brains is essential to long term well being. And, it seems even when we are young we are wired to avoid changes in routine, such as a new classroom, or meeting new people or having any new experience. Such things bring a little fear.

It's a strange life that requires us to face a little fear, or experience a little pain to be well. In order to lower blood pressure, we must raise it through short durations of exercise. In order to balance our mental health, we must have more diverse social situations. In order to have healthy blood markers, we must avoid white sugar.

As a side note, it's amazing how excess blood sugar is truly poisonous, and can even destroy nerve cells leading to neuropathy. Is it so painful to eat vegetables? We all know these things, yet there seems to be a growing air of indifference. Life is short, does it really matter?

A year ago, I had a patient who was experiencing debilitating arm and leg sensation and changes in motor control. The doctors told

him they did not know what was going on, there is nothing to be done and it is likely to progress. This is a condition that you will have to live with for the rest of your life.

He came to me with chronic back pain. After chiropractic care, his back pain was significantly improved and the patient left and we did not see each other for a year. When he came back, he was once again having back pain, work related, but his condition that he was going to live with had mysteriously resolved. In fact, he had forgotten he had it.

Causation or correlation, we do not know. The body has amazing innate healing capabilities. You do not know the limits of your healing capabilities, and neither does your doctor.

If a doctor does not know what is wrong with you, then you must not accept any prognosis that implies it will not improve. It only means it will not improve under their methods.

Look for another doctor, a chiropractor, an acupuncturist, a naturopath or an ayurvedic specialist. The modes of healing are in the thousands; do not limit your healthcare to that of Western medicine. Western medicine is amazing at acute care, but not so advanced in chronic and wellness care.

In the 1700s, there were two friends, George and Ben. George turned out to be the first president of the U.S. He and Ben were out for wine one night, and while George was lighting extra candles, Ben said, "One day we will not need candles." George said, "You're crazy, Ben, we need light." Ben replied, "I have caught light-



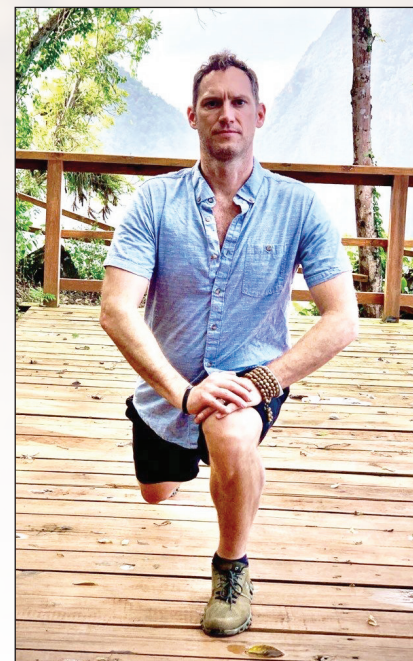
ning in a bottle and we will soon have electricity."

It was not for 100 years before the first street lights were in America.

Is it a paradox when some ancient wisdom may help heal you, yet you still do not know the power of these technologies. Had George been aware of some different healing modalities, then our beloved would not have been bled out by leeches.

Empower yourself to explore the depths of your healing powers by embracing natural alternatives to your health and well being.

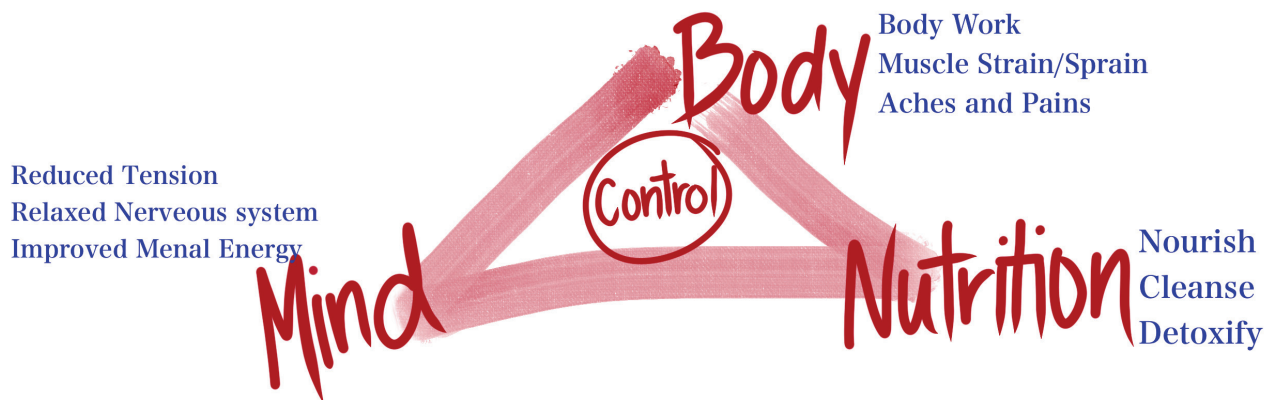
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