In this Newsletter I include recent research on the treatment of every type of medical condition imaginable. So, whatever your health concern might be, one of my Newsletters will contain the vital information you have been seeking.

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SHARP RISE IN GOUT SEEN

Rates of gout have skyrocketed in the UK, rising 64 percent between 1997 and 2012. Gout now affects one in 40 people in the UK. High levels of uric acid are associated with gout, and one of the primary ways that uric acid levels are increased is by eating too much fructose. If you struggle with gout, eliminating or strictly limiting fructose is an important step to recovery. First, cut out soda, fruit drinks, and other sweetened beverages, as these types of drinks are a primary source of excessive fructose.
Also avoid beer, tart cherries, soy milk and too much fructose including too much fruit. Certain herbs and spices including ashwaganda, ginger, and cinnamon, have been shown to potentially help relieve gout symptoms and its associated inflammation. Eat more potassium-rich foods including Swiss chard, avocado, spinach, broccoli, Brussels sprouts, celery and Romaine lettuce.

**APPROPRIATE EXERCISE MAY BE ESSENTIAL FOR TREATMENT OF BACK PAIN**

Back pain accounts for an estimated 10 percent of all primary care doctors visits each year, costing Americans as much as $86 billion annually. Back pain is increasingly being treated with addictive drugs and diagnostic exams that expose patients to potentially unnecessary and dangerous levels of radiation. Back pain is frequently the gateway that leads people down a path of drug addiction and lifelong disability. Poor posture and/or improper movement is responsible for the vast majority of back pain. Proper alignment of the bones and joints in your body during movement is critical for remaining pain free. Foundation Training and postural training such as that taught by Esther Gokhale are highly useful, both for the prevention and treatment of back pain (as well as other bodily pains).

"Dr. Richard Deyo... is an authority on evidence-based medicine at Oregon Health Sciences University who has studied treatment of back pain. One reason invasive treatments for back pain have been rising in recent years, Deyo says, is the ready availability of MRI scans. These detailed, color-coded pictures that can show a cross-section of the spine is a technological tour de force. But they can be dangerously misleading. 'Seeing is believing,' Deyo says. 'And gosh! We can actually see degenerated discs, we can see bulging discs. We can see all kinds of things that are alarming.'

That is, they look alarming. But they’re most likely not the cause of the pain. Lots of people who are pain-free actually have terrible-looking MRIs. And among those who have MRI abnormalities and pain, many specialists question whether the abnormality is really the cause of the pain, and whether fixing it can make the pain go away."

There are of course instances where surgery may be warranted, although this is without a doubt the rare exception. Some studies have indicated that less than five percent of patients are good candidates for surgery. I would put that number at far under one percent. Surgery may be indicated for conditions like:

- Severe spinal stenosis,
- Herniated discs,
- Tumors,
- Trauma,
- Scoliosis and other spinal deformities.

Surgery should be your absolute last resort. Remember you simply can never undo a surgical intervention and the multitude of repercussions that surgery introduces. Surgery is an injury...extreme injury, even though controlled. If it is not addressing the foundational cause of your problem. It could make your current pain seem like a walk in the park that you would long for. For many it is like going from the frying pan into the fire. It is absolutely crucial to exhaust every single possible non-surgical option before you submit to surgery. I would also include steroid shots in the surgical camp as they are nearly as bad, cause enormous side effects and simply do not address the cause of the problem. [http://tiny.cc/ksi4cbx]

**YET ANOTHER STUDY FINDS ARTHROSCOPIC KNEE SURGERY NO BETTER THAN SHAM SURGERY**

A recent study found arthroscopic knee surgery for degenerative meniscal tears had no more benefit than “sham surgery”. Four studies over the last decade cast doubt on whether arthroscopic knee surgery is offering any real benefits to knee pain sufferers. Harnessing the power of placebo, along with adopting a disease-preventing lifestyle, is a more effective approach to treating common knee pain. Appropriate exercise is key to preventing and relieving most knee pain by strengthening your joint and its supportive structures, improving flexibility, and helping to optimize body weight. A number of supplements are particularly helpful, such as vitamin D, MSM, astaxanthin, turmeric, eggshell membrane, hyaluronic acid (HA), Boswellia and animal-based omega-3 fats (krill oil). [http://tiny.cc/qs4cbx]

**GADOLINIUM-BASED CONTRAST AGENTS ALSO LINKED TO LIFE-THREATENING SKIN THICKENING**

Among patients with severe kidney disease, the use of gadolinium-based contrast agents is linked to the
development of Nephrogenic Systemic Fibrosis, or NSF. NSF was first identified in 1997 and while its cause is unknown, it’s only been reported in those with kidney disease. NSF causes skin thickening that can prevent bending and extending your joints. It can also develop in your diaphragm, thigh muscles, lung vessels, and lower abdomen. Along with causing decreased mobility of joints, NSF can be fatal.

Because of this connection, the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) requested that the manufacturers of all five gadolinium-based contrast agents (Magnevist, MultiHance, Omniscan, OptiMARK, and ProHance) add a boxed warning and a new Warnings section to their labels to describe the risk of developing NSF. I recommend that everyone use caution with gadolinium-based contrast agents and only use them when absolutely essential. Even if you’re healthy, these contrast agents may cause side effects like life-threatening allergic reaction, blood clots, blood vessel irritation and skin reactions, including hives, itching, and facial swelling. However, if you have kidney disease, using caution is particularly important. Often the use of contrast agents is optional and an acceptable MRI can be conducted without the use of a contrast. http://tiny.cc/nmi99w

DOCTORS PRESCRIBE EXERCISE AS “BEST PREVENTIVE DRUG”

Exercise helps normalize your glucose, insulin, and leptin levels by optimizing their receptor sensitivity. This is one of the most important factors for optimizing your overall health. Compelling evidence also suggests that even if you exercise regularly, prolonged sitting is itself a risk factor for chronic disease and reduced lifespan. Standing up at regular intervals throughout the day can effectively counteract such ill effects. Researchers have stated that exercise is the “best preventive drug” known. One recent meta-analysis found no statistically detectable differences between exercise and medications for prediabetes and heart disease. Exercise affects your entire body—from head to toe—in beneficial ways. This includes changes in your muscles, lungs, heart, joints, bones, and brain. http://tiny.cc/xvi99w

PREGNANT NURSE FIRED FOR REFUSING FLU SHOT

A pregnant nurse was recently fired from her position in Pennsylvania after refusing the flu shot for fear it might harm her unborn baby. It is unknown whether the flu vaccine can cause fetal harm or affect your reproduction capacity, which is why the drug insert states that the influenza vaccine should only be given to a pregnant woman if it’s “clearly needed”. Three recent European studies challenge the claim that the influenza vaccine will protect you against influenza. One study found that overall vaccine effectiveness against influenza A/H3N2 in the first months of the season was 38 percent. After mid-February, effectiveness dropped to -1 percent. An earlier meta-analysis concluded that there’s “no credible evidence” that vaccinating health care workers working with the elderly affects influenza complications in their patients. http://tiny.cc/yxi99w

A PSYCHIATRIST’S PERSPECTIVE ON USING DRUGS

Contrary to popular belief, depression is not typically the result of ‘low serotonin’ levels, nor is it an imbalance that needs to be fixed with antidepressant drugs. Eleven billion dollars are spent each year on antidepressant medications. Pharmaceutical companies have 625 lobbyists, and they underwrite more than 70% of FDA trials. There are no studies that show a better outcome in those prescribed antidepressants long term, while side effects are well documented; long-term antidepressant treatment even compromises the known benefits of exercise.

Prior to the widespread use of antidepressants, the National Institute of Mental Health told the public that people regularly recovered from a depressive episode, and often never experienced a second episode. We need to identify vulnerabilities, modifiable exposures, and support basic cellular function, detox, and immune response to effectively treat depression.

Similarly conclusive is a New England Journal of Medicine review on Major Depression, (N Engl J Med 2008; 358:55-68) which stated: "... numerous studies of norepinephrine and serotonin metabolites in plasma, urine, and cerebrospinal fluid as well as postmortem studies of the brains of patients with depression, have yet to identify the purported deficiency reliably."

Six decades of subsequent studies in never-medicated depressed patients have been conflicting, confusing, and inconclusive, and a critical review of the hypothesis concludes: "... there is no direct evidence of serotonin or norepinephrine deficiency despite thousands of studies that have attempted to validate this notion." http://tiny.cc/vzi99w

HOW PROBIOTICS MAY AID YOUR WEIGHT MANAGEMENT

Your intestinal bacteria are part of your immune system, and researchers are discovering that microbes play instrumental roles in countless areas of your health, including your weight. Researchers have discovered a difference in gut bacteria between the
overweight and those of normal weight. A strain of beneficial bacteria called Lactobacillus rhamnosus also appears helpful for weight loss in women.

Research suggests there’s a positive-feedback loop between the foods you crave and the composition of the microbiota in your gut that depend on those nutrients for their survival. Bacterial imbalance in your gut can be worsened by processed and pasteurized foods. Sugar also promotes the growth of disease-causing yeasts and fungi in your gut. A gut-healthy diet is one that is rich in whole, unprocessed, unsweetened foods, along with traditionally fermented or cultured foods.

According to the most recent study, a strain of friendly bacteria called Lactobacillus rhamnosus also appears to be quite helpful for weight loss in women. As reported in the featured article: “The controlled clinical trial was set up so that the first 12 weeks women were guided to eat less food and some were additionally given the Lactobacillus rhamnosus. After 12 weeks the amount of weight loss was greater in the group receiving the friendly flora supplement.

Over the next 12 weeks the dietary restrictions were lifted, and the friendly flora was continued. Those women not taking Lactobacillus rhamnosus now gained weight, whereas the friendly flora group continued to lose weight. The weight loss benefit was linked to measurements of the bacterial profile of the digestive tract. This study is the latest to show that the balance of power in the digestive tract is a metabolic variable of high importance and nothing to ignore as part of a long-term successful weight loss plan.”

http://tiny.cc/w3i99w

AGE-RELATED WEIGHT GAIN IS DUE TO BROWN-FAT FAILURE

Have you ever wondered why you have to exercise more as you age, just to fit in the clothes that were loose last year? As you get older, the activity of heat-generating, calorie-burning brown fat is reduced. This “failing” of brown fat is likely a key reason why there’s a tendency to gain weight with age.

Slender people tend to have more brown fat than obese people, and young people have more than the elderly. Exposure to cold temperatures and exercise can help you to increase your body’s activation of brown fat and may even turn “bad” white fat into beneficial brown fat. Here were some recent research findings for the bold f heart to try:

- Place an ice pack on your upper back and upper chest for 30 minutes per day (you can do this while relaxing in front of the TV for example).
- Drinking about 500 mL of ice water each morning.
- Take cold showers.
- Immersing yourself in ice water up to your waist for 10 minutes, three times per week. (Simply fill your tub with cold water and ice cubes).

From the TCM point of view I strongly advise against the second option, as that could damage the Stomach function. http://tiny.cc/48i99w

SLEEP PROBLEMS? - HOW THE CYCLES OF LIGHT AND DARKNESS AFFECT YOUR HEALTH AND WELLBEING

If you don’t sleep well, you’re not going to be optimally healthy no matter how good your diet and exercise are. Maintaining a natural rhythm of exposure to daylight, and darkness at night, is an essential component of sleeping well. Light is important because it serves as the major synchronizer of something called your master clock. Other biological clocks throughout your body in turn synchronize to your master clock. To maintain and “anchor” your master clock, you want to get bright outdoor light exposure for 30-60 minutes a day, ideally at solar noon. Sleep in maximal darkness. Blackout shades or a sleep mask is recommended. In the evening, avoid the blue light wavelength. This can be done by using blue-blocking light bulbs, dimming your lights, and if using a computer, installing blue light-blocking software.

http://tiny.cc/2aj99w

For more information on Acupuncture or Earthing™, or to make an acupuncture appointment give us a call on 4636 6100.

The Clinic is located at 216 Ramsay Street, Middle Ridge, 5 houses south of Kate’s Place, directly opposite the Blue Care Nursing entrance, and beside the Story Farm Park. Parking signage is present. Follow the pavers to the Clinic at the rear of the house.

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“I aim to get my patients as WELL as possible, as quickly as possible, and then keep them WELL”.