

DID YOU KNOW?

* Herbal remedies are a gentle and excellent alternative to drugstore remedies for common child injuries.

* Matcha, a finely ground, shade-grown type of green tea, is one of the most nutritious drinks one can consume.

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EDUCATING YOURSELF ON WINTER HEALTH

Corey Harmon

With the changing of the seasons, a new set of challenges are presented to Alaskans. We must start preparing our bodies, and our minds, for the decrease in temperature and sunlight. From indoor allergies to the common cold and flu to chronic diseases, it is vital that these upcoming months are spent boosting our immune system and doing what we can to prevent health issues, so that our winter months are filled with health and happiness.

To help in educating you on ways to improve your health, Avante Medical Center is proud to offer our second educational symposium, November 20th in the



Wilda Marston Theater at the Z.J. Loussac Public Library at 6 p.m. Like our spring symposium, this will be a free evening with the providers of Avante in an educational roundtable, discussing various medical topics and new research, and answering questions regarding advancements in the field of integrative medicine. It is the first of its kind in Alaska and we welcome you, your friends and family to this exciting event. Please visit our web site for further details on presenters and topics.

Please enjoy the following issue, which is filled with informative articles by our providers. We hope you find them useful in helping yourself get a head start on your winter health.

ATTACK YOUR TRIGLYCERIDES!

Bethany Buchanan, ANP

Are you at risk for heart disease? It is very important to understand if you are. The combination of high blood pressure, high blood sugar, too much fat around your waist, low HDL cholesterol and high triglycerides (TG) is referred to as "metabolic syndrome" (previously Syndrome X). When your body stops utilizing glucose (dietary sugar) appropriately (from being overweight, not exercising and eating too many starches and sugars), it triggers a cascade of symptoms that can ultimately lead to metabolic syndrome and heart disease. However, this condition is extremely preventable.

In the past few years, more evidence is pointing toward a high triglyceride (TG) level as being a prime indicator of heart disease, especially in women. The double whammy of high TG (>150) and low HDL cholesterol (<40) is an especially ominous sign. Both of these numbers are measured in a "lipid panel," a routine blood test. Most people have been trained to look at the total cholesterol and the LDL (bad) cholesterol, yet a TG level is more informative about the body's metabolism, cellular energy and risk for metabolic syndrome.

The TG level literally measures fats in the bloodstream. The word triglyceride means three chains of fat linked together by glycerin. TGs can also be viewed as an indirect measure of mitochondrial function. Mitochondria are found inside the cells and produce 90 percent of the body's energy. Muscle cells expend a lot of

NEUROTRANSMITTERS: BALANCE YOUR MIND FOR AN ENERGETIC FALL AND WINTER

Jennifer Lush, ND

As we move into the darker seasons in the North, many of us prepare to feel increased fatigue or even symptoms of seasonal depression. We all understand the value of proper nutrition, rest and exercise to keep our systems in check when it is cold and dark outside. There is strong evidence to support that our systems need a more balanced vitamin D level as our heat and sunlight diminishes. Additionally, this is an ideal time of year to make sure our neurotransmitters are firing adequately because they are as important as vitamin D levels in maintaining energy and sound mental health in the dark and cold months.

In fact, vitamin D interacts directly with our neurotransmitters, specifically serotonin, which is vital for energy and upbeat emotional health. Serotonin levels naturally elevate when humans are exposed to bright light, as found in the spring and summer months or with artificial S.A.D. lights. Summer light stimulates the production of cholecalciferol, which the body eventually transforms into vitamin D. The vitamin then helps the body maintain higher levels of serotonin during the winter.

Research has found that blood levels of cholecalciferol naturally peak in the fall months, so getting more exposure to sunlight during the summer may help you build up a store of cholecalciferol that lasts through the fall. All this cholecalciferol apparently spurs your body to produce more vitamin D during the dark winter months, which leads to higher serotonin levels.

However, serotonin and vitamin D are not the only factors involved in energy and happy mental health. Other neurotransmitters such as dopamine, norepinephrine, and epinephrine may be adversely affected by lack of light and activity as well. If you are a patient at Avante, you have most likely had a conversation about your adrenal glands. These are very important, but often overlooked. Adrenal glands are major players in the production of neurotransmitters, which interact with the brain. Activated vitamin D in the adrenal gland regulates an enzyme called tyrosine hydroxylase, which is necessary for the production of dopamine, epinephrine and norepinephrine. These three neurotransmitters are often decreased in the darker months, likely as a result of lesser amounts of vitamin D in our systems. Many other factors, such as daily mental and emotional stressors, and major life changes, also take their toll on the adrenal glands and can lead to depressed neurotransmitter production.

The message here is that to avoid feeling fatigued and depressed in the wintertime, you have some steps you should take prior to the season. In addition to maintaining a healthy, whole-foods diet and exercising frequently, you should try to be exposed to ample sunlight during the summer, have your vitamin D levels balanced, and consider testing your neurotransmitter levels. Neurotransmitter testing is a simple urine test that is reasonably priced and often covered by insurance. There are several panels, so it is important to work with your health care practitioner to match your individual symptoms and needs to the most appropriate panel for you.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

FREE Avante Times for the Office or Friends

If you would like to receive additional copies of Avante Times for your business or have copies sent to friends, please email avantemedicalcenter@gmail.com with the quantity and address they can be sent to for FREE.

www.avantemedical.com



CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Bones for Life Postural Healing with Grant Gibbs

Bones for Life is a program for stimulating bone strength through natural movement and weight-bearing posture.

Where: Avante Medical Center

When: Every Wednesday from Oct. 22nd-Dec 19th

Time: 6:30 to 8 p.m.

Cost: \$25 per class or \$90 for four classes

Register: Please contact Grant Gibbs at 278-8811

Natural Pantry Walk-Through with Tina Harmon, L.Ac.

Join licensed acupuncturist and oriental medicine specialist, Tina Harmon, as she guides you through the Natural Pantry, helping you learn how to read labels and what those long, confusing words really mean for your health.

Monday October 27th, 6 p.m.

Monday November 27th, 6 p.m.

Monday December 15th, 6 p.m.

Avante Book Club

This monthly book club, moderated by Christine Sagan, ANP, is welcoming new participants. This is a great way to investigate new ideas about your health in a low-key, peer-oriented setting. Meetings are typically the first Tuesday of each month but please check the website for exact dates and the latest literary pick.

Fall Educational Symposium

Join the providers at Avante for a roundtable discussion on current health research, common issues effecting Alaskan's well-being and alternative medicine approaches to commonly dealt with conditions. There will be a Q&A period for you to interact with our wonderful providers.

When: Thursday, Nov. 20, 2008 from 6 to 8 p.m.

Where: Wilda Marston Theater in the ZJ Loussac Library

Free to the public

For more information, class updates, additions or reschedules, please visit our website at

www.avantemedical.com

TRIGLYCERIDES (CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1)

energy, and therefore have the most mitochondria. We want as much mitochondria as possible to be working at a peak performance to burn body fat.

Modern daily living is tough on mitochondria. Low levels of essential fatty acids, such as omega-3 fish oils, lead to poor construction of mitochondrial membranes. Some mitochondria get knocked out by acidity (high pH), hit by toxins and chemicals, or shriveled by dehydration. The remaining mitochondria need to work very hard to convert fat to energy. If muscle mitochondria is not working to capacity, fat is slow to convert to fuel. Ultimately the body's ability to use fatty acids as an energy source becomes impaired, and this leads to a backlog of fat. The unused fatty acids will be measured as high triglycerides, or you could say a TG level can help determine if your cell's energy is working efficiently.

It is important to note that certain medications can also increase TGs (diuretics, estrogens, beta blockers, steroids), as can some diseases (hypothyroidism, kidney disease, liver disease). Rarely, TG levels over 1000 are caused by a genetic family history.

Here is a guide to interpreting your own TG level. If your TG level is 50-100, there is not a backlog of fuel. The mitochondria are able to convert fat to usable energy. A TG of 100-150 means it is more difficult for the body to burn fat. A TG over 150 means a large backlog of fat waiting to be used for fuel is costly for your health. It is hard to burn fat, and fat starts to deposit in the liver and heart as well as your abdomen.

In addition to exercise, diet is the most effective way to lower your triglycerides. It would seem logical to eat less fat, but it doesn't work that way. The fat that is backlogged in the blood is fat from carbohydrates. The absolute best way is to cut out simple refined carbohydrates (white rice, bread, pasta), sugary foods, sweetened beverage drinks and minimize or eliminate alcohol. Consuming less of these lowers your TG level and helps prevent diabetes, weight gain and heart disease. The addition of more high-quality fats (olive oil, salmon, nuts) to the diet, plus reading labels to avoid hydrogenated or partially hydrogenated oils will also help tremendously. Supplements that can be supportive include fish oil, niacin and carnitine. See your provider for more information, and eat well!

HALT COMMON AILMENTS WITH GLUTEN/CASEIN-FREE DIET

Christine Sagan, ANP

More and more people are advised to go on a gluten-free, casein-free diet, but few understand why.

In addition to being a popular intervention for ADHD, autism, allergies, asthma and other inflammatory and autoimmune diseases, people who stick to a gluten/casein-free diet tend to feel better, lose weight, and improve their moods, bowels, skin, fatigue, insomnia, and cognition.

Gluten and casein are two proteins that go hand-in-hand and show up in many of our nation's favorite food staples -- pizza, macaroni and cheese, quesadillas, grilled cheese and ice cream on a cone.

Gluten is a protein found in wheat, rye, barley and oats (to a lesser extent). It is the gluey texture that allows wheat to bake properly. Casein and whey are the proteins in dairy products. Casein is found in cheese, cream and butter, and it is the hardest protein to break down.

Partial breakdown of casein can create caseomorphins that cause intoxication, contentment and pleasure. This results in cravings and strong attachment to milk.

Large portions of the American population have a deficiency in the DPP4 enzymes that breaks down gluten and milk products. When the enzyme cannot break down these proteins, partial proteins are created. These chemicals mimic opiates and thus the feelings of spaciness after ingesting the midday meal. Kids can feel "intoxicated," which leads to their later cravings as well as withdrawal symptoms.

Withdrawal symptoms do occur and can get worse at first. Symptoms of withdrawal include insomnia, anger, anxiety, fatigue, hyperactive, constipation and upset stomach, most of which typically resolve within 48 hours.

Partially digested proteins wreck havoc on bodies by damaging the biochemical process of methylation. Methylation is critical in the removal of toxins. It also helps maintain proper levels of neurotransmitters such as dopamine. Dopamine is the neurotransmitter implicated in ADHD and obesity. Many people lose weight when they stop ingesting gluten.

The extreme form of gluten intolerance is celiac disease, which occurs in 1 of 133 people – but fewer are diagnosed. Symptoms of celiac disease can mimic autism or ADHD symptoms. However, gluten sensitivity without celiac disease can affect the body adversely as well.

Gluten intolerance is more common, with one theory suggesting it is because wheat was introduced into the food supply late in human evolution. It is also overconsumed. Lactose intolerance is not the same as insufficient DPP4 enzyme. One cannot bolster this enzyme.

The solution? Learn to vary your diet. Discover gluten-free and casein-free foods. Attend a Natural Pantry walk-through or a food-allergy class at Avante. Request that your provider test for these allergens or simply stop them for a few weeks and evaluate if you feel better. If you are reactive, restrict them and allow your gut to heal. Positive response to a casein-free diet can be noticed within three days to three weeks, while gluten avoidance takes longer, sometimes up to three months.

**Taking out
gluten and
casein foods
can help
with ADHD,
autism and
asthma...just
to name a
few.**

CHILDREN'S FIRST AID KIT

Liane Erickson, ND

Bumps, bruises, scrapes, insect bites. They are a reality for all children and as a parent you are expected to provide some relief from the discomfort. Although there are several drugstore products to deal with these injuries, many are filled with chemicals that are too strong and unnecessary for your young one. Herbal and homeopathic remedies are gentle, excellent alternatives for children. The following is a list that I use for my family's first aid kit and what I suggest for many of my patients.

Begin with a plastic case, sewing kit or fishing tackle. Remember to label everything in your kit with dosages and administration instructions so your kids or others can work with your first aid kit if you are not on hand. Many of these remedies can be purchased at your local health food stores.

Rescue Remedy:

Bach Flower Remedies are extracts of plants, flowers and herbs which are useful for trauma, shock, burns, accidents, and emotional upsets. Rescue Remedy is a combination of five of these remedies (star of Bethlehem, rock rose, impatiens, cherry plum and clematis). Use Rescue Remedy for burns, stings, cuts, bumps, falls, broken bones, bad news, first-day-of-school jitters, presurgery and fever. Give five (5) drops on the tongue or sipped in water as needed.

Homeopathy:

Homeopathic remedies are minute dosages of plants, minerals and animal extracts. The remedies are grafted onto small lactose pellets and should be placed under a child's tongue or between their gum and lower lip. Try to give 20 minutes away from all food or drink and do not touch remedies with your fingers.

Apis 6c: Great for bee stings, bug bites and allergic reactions of the skin and respiratory system. Give two (2) pellets under tongue and repeat every 15 minutes. Then give 2-3 doses for two days if the bite is severe.

Arnica 6c: Use for all shock and injuries – it should be the first remedy given. Use for pain, bleeding, or swelling caused by injury. Give 3-4 pellets, 3-5 times/day.

Belladonna 6c: Keep on hand for fevers that come on suddenly with reddening face, glassy eyes and lots of heat radiating from the skin. Give four (4) pellets, repeat every 15-30 minutes.

Cantharis 6c: Use immediately after a burn to lessen the severity and to help in healing. Give 3-4 pellets every few hours after the burn and 3x/day for a few days following.

Chamomilla 6c: Keep on hand for teething babies, fever and irritability, with one cheek reddened or for a child who won't be comforted. Give two (2) pellets every 30 minutes in acute episodes or 3x/day with milder symptoms.

Herbal Medicine:

Herbs are another wonderful way to ease a child's discomfort. I often suggest loose herbs made into teas and sipped with juice, honey or frozen into popsicles. You can also add herbs to a bath for absorption through the skin. The following are tincture combinations I recommend along with suggestions for loose teas.

Elderberry/Echinacea: A comforting formula which can be added to warm water and sipped for fevers, stomach upset and colds. Elderberry and echinacea have both been shown to stimulate immune function with viral infections.

Ear oil: Great for ear infections and irritations. Willow, garlic, calendula, usnea, vitamin E. Warm three (3) drops and place in the ear as needed.

Ginger Drops: For nausea, motion sickness, or indigestion. Mint, ginger, fennel, chamomile and papaya are all excellent digestive aid choices when looking for a combination. Use as directed.

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STAY STEADY, WALK TALL WITH BONES FOR LIFE®

Grant Gibbs, CMTPT

I liked one of the key points Dr. Torrey Smith made during his recent presentation on osteoporosis at Avante's first Education Symposium. He said that good balance, also known as "not falling down," is an important component of dealing with the dangers of bone-strength loss.

If we don't fall, even weakened bones tend to stay intact. A real concern with osteoporosis is a fall that fractures and spirals us into an even less active lifestyle and less health. How can we improve our balance and become better movers without creating more risk of falling? Bones for Life® is Ruthy Alon's series of movement processes that gently create better balance, a lighter, springy walk and healthier posture.

Ruthy Alon's Bones for Life® is inspired by the learning methods of Moshe' Feldenkrais. Feldenkrais believed that good posture was not an ideal shape or stature as many of us believe. "Sit up straight, pull your shoulders back, or suck your tummy in!" We all know how long that lasts. Feldenkrais believed that posture is a biological function. His definition was that good posture is the ability to move in any of the six cardinal directions; to either side, up or down, forward or backward, without having to re-organize anything. He also believed, and practiced, that it is always possible to improve function.

Ruthy, as one of Moshe's eight original students and a Senior Feldenkrais Trainer, has used his learning methods and applied them to how we stand, walk and run. Currently, many of us have tired and even painful muscles, often from holding ourselves up against gravity all day. We want to exercise and play but find ourselves plagued with injuries, fatigue and various degrees of pain. Is this what we are stuck with? Having to fight gravity all day long at our desks?

A core principal of Bones for Life® is that the more options we explore for organizing our structure, the less work it is to be in gravity (thank goodness). With more variety, we gain a reliable skeleton and our muscles can relax. So what does this mean?

Feldenkrais believed that the purpose of the skeleton is to guide the rebounding pressure from each step into the ground upwards through our bodies to hold us upright and propel us forward. The water carriers of Africa and other cultures demonstrate the use of this idea beautifully. Have you seen them? So elegant and graceful with heavy water on their head and a baby strapped behind walking barefoot for hours a day. They are adept at allowing the pressure from each step to flow up clearly through their skeleton and support their load. Studies show that they can carry up to 20 percent of their body weight without any extra expenditure of muscle energy. They break their hip bone (femoral neck) at a rate of 1 percent as compared to Western women. Yet one study in particular shows that they actually have less dense bones than Western women. What's up with that? They don't fall much. They feed their bodies a wide variety of possibilities for organizing an upright posture while facing the challenge of an extra load, thus stimulating their body's intrinsic ability to be upright.

Ruth Alon has created movement processes that improve the intelligent articulation of our joints so that we can gradually introduce more variety into our posture. Our muscles can relax into a more reliable skeleton and safe, dynamic movement becomes our new habit. We can fall less, avoid fractures and enjoy being the masterful, dynamic movers we are meant to be.

www.Feldenkrais.org
www.bonesforlife.com



GOTCHA MATCHA?

Lori Zitzmann, ANP

I admit to having a passion for whole food sources of super-nutrients. So, I was delighted to discover Matcha on a recent trip to Vancouver, B.C. I was in town for a conference and could not help but notice how this beverage has taken this multicultural city by storm. Establishments serving Matcha have become almost as ubiquitous as coffee houses on every corner.

What is Matcha? Next to pure water, it is one of the most nutritious drinks one can consume. Matcha is a finely ground, shade-grown type of green tea produced only in Japan. From the genus *Camellia Sinesis*, there are over 500 species of tea leaf. Several factors make the taste and health benefits of Matcha far superior to all other green teas.

The leaves are harvested but once a year, in the spring, and then lightly steamed to prevent fermentation and loss of nutrients. The leaves are then finely ground into powder form. This processing method differs from other tea. The powder is then whisked or stirred into hot water and drunk from a small bowl or teacup. It can also be added cold to yogurt or smoothies. Matcha is thought to be one of the healthiest forms of green tea because one consumes the whole tea leaf, rather than just the liquid extracted from the leaves. It has a mildly sweet, astringent, pleasing flavor that I have not found in other green teas. Caffeine content is low at 10 mg per serving.

Clinical trials have determined that Matcha delivers the highest concentration of antioxidants, vitamins, minerals, chlorophyll, fiber, catechins, and L-theanine in comparison with all other green teas. Catechins, which are a category of polyphenol antioxidants, are thought to reduce LDL cholesterol and triglyceride levels. Catechins also suppress chemicals that constrict blood vessels, which can contribute to hypertension. Research has shown that green tea catechins inhibit the growth of various types of cancer cells and have both antibacterial and antiviral properties. Epigallocatechin (EGCG) is the most powerful catechin found in tea. University of Colorado researchers found the concentration of EGCG available from drinking Matcha is 137 times greater than other green teas. Other studies have shown Matcha to have 17 times the antioxidants found in wild blueberries and up to nine times the beta carotene found in spinach. L-theanine is an amino acid that produces a relaxation effect in the brain and can help with mental clarity and concentration. The best source of L-theanine is in the leaves of green tea, where it is found in the highest quantity in its natural state.

Unfortunately, sources of Matcha in Anchorage seem to be limited. Midtown Sagaya's does carry it, and it can also be purchased online. (www.maeda-en.com. www.mercola.com.) For a delicious, health-promoting beverage, why not try some Matcha?

CHILDREN'S FIRST AID (CONTINUED FROM PAGE 5)

Creams/Salves:

Arnica cream can be used for all types of bruising, swelling, sprains and strains. This can be applied topically to the area several times a day. Calendula-comfrey salve makes an excellent all-purpose salve for all types of cuts, scrapes, burns, bites, stings, rashes, sunburn and chapped lips.

Remember to also include sterile gauze pads/rolls, Band-Aids, adhesive tape, small scissors, thermometer, tweezers, matches, cotton balls, cotton swabs, and a penlight. Keep directions on how to use these remedies in your kit for quick reference.

WHO'S WHO AT AVANTE MEDICAL CENTER

Jason Harmon, ND, FABNO—Co-founder of Avante, Dr. Harmon is a Naturopathic Doctor specializing in cancer care. He continues to provide Alaska with primary as well as cancer care, committed to advancing education and world class medical care in the state of Alaska.

Bethany Buchanan, FNP—Co-founder of Avante, Bethany is a Family Nurse Practitioner practicing family medicine and women's health.

Lori Zitzmann, ANP—Lori is an Adult Nurse Practitioner specializing in hormone balancing, thyroid, gastro-intestinal disorders and personalized nutritional counseling.

Liane Erickson, ND—Dr. Erickson is a Naturopathic Doctor specializing in pediatrics and family medicine. She works with fertility and nutritional counseling, and practices Bowen therapy, a gentle form of body work.

Jennifer Lush, ND—Dr. Lush is a Naturopathic Doctor providing comprehensive primary care, specializing in women's health, detoxification and weight management programs.

Chris Kallander, ANP—Chris is an Adult Nurse Practitioner focusing on urgent care, primary care, women's health and hormonal issues. She evaluates the healthcare needs of men, women and adolescents.

Torrey Smith, ND—Dr. Smith is a Naturopathic Doctor practicing full family healthcare utilizing natural medicine and Chinese herbs.

Pat Ketz—Pat specializes in allergy elimination using a technique known as NAETs.

Gary Ferguson, ND—Dr. Ferguson is a Naturopathic Doctor focusing on men's health, diabetes and metabolic syndrome with a specialty in Chinese medicine.

Judy Hartford, CMTPT—Judy is a board certified Myofascial Triggerpoint Therapist, in practice for 21 years. She treats all musculoskeletal and neuromuscular issues, including pain and injuries.

Grant Gibbs, CMTPT—Grant is also a board certified Myofascial Triggerpoint Therapist dealing with all musculoskeletal and neuromuscular issues. Grant also teaches Bones for Life, a program for stimulating bone strength through natural movement and weight-bearing posture.

Cathy Floyd—Cathy works in our allergy department using provocation/neutralization for comprehensive allergy treatment elimination.

Michelle Rogers, ND, MS—Dr. Rogers is a Naturopathic Doctor specializing in integrative oncology, mood disorders such as anxiety and depression, and difficult medical cases, with an emphasis on integrative internal medicine.

Christine Sagan, FNP—Christine is a family nurse practitioner focusing on whole body health for the entire family utilizing both conventional and alternative therapies.

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a center for progressive medicine

