

# THE AVANTE TIMES



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## Inflammation: A Heated Topic

By **Bethany Buchanan, ANP**

In the past year the FDA suspended sales of Vioxx and Bextra, two extremely popular Cox-2 inhibitors. These medicines were painkillers with powerful anti-inflammatory properties with supposed superiority to ibuprofen-like medicines such as Advil and Aleve, but without the risk of stomach ulcers. Any time a new non narcotic pain medicine comes to the market, it is bound to be incredibly popular. Unfortunately, it was discovered that patients taking Vioxx and Bextra suffered from an increased risk of heart attacks and strokes. Other anti-inflammatories, like Naprosyn have come into question as well.

What is a concerned pained and inflamed consumer to do? This issue of the Avante Times will address that very subject. Most important to anyone dealing with pain is to determine the cause, then work to decrease the inflammation. Common causes of inflammation may be underlying viral and bacterial infections, heavy metal overload, or overexposure to toxins or chemicals. Anyone abusing a substance, such as tobacco or alcohol may be overloading the body, causing inflammation. Many people with joint pain have food allergies, which definitely causes inflammation. ELISA blood testing for food allergies can be a step in the right direction to find which foods are culprits. Dairy,

## Allergies and Inflammation

By **Jason Harmon, ND**

This time of year, many of you began to suffer from allergies as our lovely Alaskan skies become filled with pollen and dust. Stated simply, allergies are caused from becoming intolerant to one's environment. The result of this is an inflammatory cascade that results in the symptoms that many of you have grown to despise when summer comes to town. To keep this simple, the agent that leads to many of you experiencing misery is due to the release of histamine. Histamine is released from the mast cell after being triggered by an antigen and is part of the healing process by protecting and stimulating our systems to act. For some, the reaction also leads to itchy eyes, watery nose, sinus congestion, lungs congestion, systemic malaise, achy joints, etc... If your internal or external environment is filled with

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wheat, nuts, soy and some fruits commonly cause inflammation.

Fortunately there are lots of alternatives. There are foods to avoid that have inflammatory effects (fried foods, processed foods) and foods to consume that have anti-inflammatory effects (salmon, nuts, olive oil). There are herbs (boswellia, willow) and even spices (tumeric, curcumin) that have anti-inflammatory effects. There are bioflavonoids (quercetin), homeopathics (arnica and Traumeel cream), enzymes, (bromelain, Wobenzym) minerals (MSM) and vitamins (Vitamin C) with anti-inflammatory effects.

Determining the cause of your inflammation and then consuming a nutritious diet and taking the right supplements are three good steps to help battle inflammation. Perhaps information in this newsletter will get you started in the right direction.

antigens, then your body will be prone to releasing large amounts of histamine, which may make you miserable.

What do we do about it? First, start by seeing the body as a complex system trying to recognize on a continual basis things that are good for us versus things that are a danger to our system. Our body needs to recognize the difference between a virus and our breakfast, pathogenic mold from our lovely cheese, and a tree from some unknown invader set out to destroy us. We can help our systems by greatly reducing our exposure to known agents that cause distress to our immune system. Start with the bedroom. Remove down pillows and comforters (I know this is painful for my fellow Alaskans, but it may only be a "down vacation" during allergy season), cover the mattress pillows with

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## Inflammation and Fish Oils

By Kaycie Rosen, ND

As we come to the end of an Alaskan winter our bodies get ready to rejuvenate and get active again, and it is important to find ways to support the body nutritionally. Fish oils are a great way to achieve that goal. Omega-3 fatty acids found in fish oil promote the formation of a type of prostaglandin that decreases inflammation in the body. The oils in heavy foods eaten throughout the winter such as beef, chicken, and deep fried foods tend to do the opposite. Omega-3 fatty acids decrease the progression of cardiovascular disease and any other chronic inflammatory process that may cause pain in the joints or muscles. Taken daily, these fatty acids are also one of the best ways to heal and soften dry winter skin from the inside out.

In addition to the healthy fats found in fish oils, Vitamins A and D are also naturally present. The Vitamin A in fish oils is one of our body's best tools for healing our skin, mucus membranes and lung tissue. This has been a very severe cold and flu season for



*Alaskan salmon is an anti-inflammatory food packed with omega three fatty acids.*

Alaskans, and Vitamin A can help to recover from infections of the ears, nose, throat, and lungs. The body's primary avenue for obtaining Vitamin D is via the skin's exposure to UV light, but research has shown that it is not possible to have enough sun exposure to make adequate levels of Vitamin D in Alaska. Vitamin D is critical for bone formation and the prevention of osteoporosis. Research has also shown that supplementation with Vitamin D is helpful for treatment of Seasonal Affective Disorder.

It is important to make sure your fish oils are of the highest quality possible. Finding a brand that is molecularly distilled ensures that there is no mercury, organic pesticides, or other toxins present in the oil. Also, fish oils tend to be unstable and go rancid quickly, so refrigerate it after opening. The oil becomes more "fishy" as it oxidizes, so your nose and taste buds will let you know when the oils are no longer good.

Have a great summer and eat lots of salmon!

## Inflammation and Blood Testing

By Lori Zitzmann, ANP

The body's response to local or systemic inflammation is to produce an increase in plasma proteins generated by the liver. These plasma proteins are easily measured by lab testing of blood samples. Two common lab tests to measure inflammation are ESR and CRP.

ESR, or erythrocyte sedimentation rate, is a frequently ordered test for arthritis. It is considered "non-specific" as it measures many different proteins associated with inflammation and may be elevated in many different diseases. ESR may also be elevated in cancer, infection, or autoimmunity. It does not tell us exactly where the inflammation is coming from, and for this reason, is often used in conjunction with other tests.

A more specific test called measures C-Reactive Protein (CRP). CRP is now thought to be a major marker, if not cause of coronary artery disease or atherosclerosis. Two recent studies involving several thousand people published in New England Journal of Medicine (2005) found that lowering CRP levels was

more effective than lowering cholesterol levels in reversing or slowing the progression of atherosclerosis.

The latest thinking on what causes plaque formation in the arteries is centered on the concept of inflammation. CRP is a measure of the degree of inflammation in the blood vessels. The higher the level of CRP in a person's blood, the greater their theoretical risk for coronary artery disease.

What causes inflammation in the arteries? Many substances are thought to initiate the inflammatory process in the blood vessels and thereby lead to the release of chemicals called cytokines, which can injure the arteries and lead to inflammation and plaque formation. Smoking, excess drinking, toxins, and heavy metals are a few examples.

What to do about high CRP levels? First, removing any of the above potential offending substances from the body will help. Additionally, some health care providers will recommend statin drugs, like Lipitor, which can effectively lower CRP levels. There are also natural substances, which can help in reducing CRP safely. These include fish oils, specific enzyme preparations, Vitamin C, and certain herbs. In proper dosages, these products can have very powerful anti-inflammatory activity.

*"The latest thinking on what causes plaque formation in the arteries is centered on the concept of inflammation."*

## Detoxification and Inflammation

By Jennifer Lush, ND

Are you interested in losing weight, increasing your energy, and generally feeling better? Systemic cleansing of the whole body detoxification is a great way to achieve all of these goals!

Many of us suffer from the effects our toxic world has on our bodies. Fatigue, weight gain, allergies, headaches, irritability, and lack of concentration can all be signs of a heavy toxic burden. Toxicity manifests in many ways; you may get colds more often than you used to, or it may be difficult to get through the workday without that extra latte!

Developed societies have greatly increased their levels of exposure to many compounds that cause a toxic overload to our bodies. Examples include preservatives and additives, heavy metals, air pollution, drugs such as antibiotics, as well as natural and synthetic hormones. We are exposed to many toxins on a daily basis that damage the body in insidious and cumulative ways.

Once the body's detoxification system (primarily the liver, kidneys, and digestive tract) becomes overloaded, toxic metabolites accumulate and the system may become depleted and hypersensitive, or allergic, to common environmental factors and foods. Toxins also adversely affect the lungs, skin and colon. For this reason, an unhealthy diet can lead to such problems as acne, irritable bowel disease and exacerbated asthma.



*It is summer! A great time to eat lots of fruits and berries!*

More specifically, the digestive tract (which includes the stomach, intestines, and colon) is highly involved in the regulation of detoxification and inflammation. Inflammation simply describes the state in which our bodies release inflammatory markers such as white blood cells, histamines, leukotrienes, and prostaglandins in response to triggers, which it feels are harmful.

In a healthy non-toxic state, we ingest foods and environmental factors (chemicals, pollutants, etc), which our bodies are able to clear via enzymes and normal digestive processes. However, when our toxic overload exceeds our body's abilities to process these items, inflammatory markers are released by the digestive system to help the process. Unfortunately, this combination of inflammatory markers and excess toxins can lead to physical breakdown of the tissues in the digestive system. The normal mucosa found in the stomach and intestines will be decreased. The cells lining

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## Treating Sprains and Strains More Naturally

By Judy Hartford, CMTPT

Summer is here and Alaskans are getting outside to bike, hike, walk, run, kayak and climb. With the joy of outside adventures may come a sprained or strained wrist or ankle.

A sprain is a stretching or tearing of ligaments. A strain is a stretching or tearing of muscle. Either can occur by overdoing it physically. The usual way of treating a sprained ankle is to ice it, elevate it and keep off it until the swelling decreases. There is another way. First have it examined to ensure it is not fractured. If it isn't, gently press and hold for about 6 to 10 seconds on the muscle just below the knee (tibialis anterior), working your way down the muscle line to as close to the ankle as you can tolerate. Do the same for all the muscle lines of the lower leg. Next go to the toes and press and hold on the muscles toward the ankle.

When there is a trauma to the ankle or wrist, the muscles involved with that area are also traumatized and shorten or contract. This impedes the flow of the

circulation to and from the joint. By releasing the tightness in the lower leg or forearm, the circulation is allowed to flow, bringing a fresh supply of nutrients to the area to encourage and speed up the healing process.

After you press on the muscle lines above and below the joint, gently go through range of motion: up, down and side to side. Then have someone hold up their hand and with your foot, press down on it, then tuck your toes under their hand and pull up, the same for side to side. This uses gentle resistance to engage the muscles and force fluids upward, thus reducing the swelling. This procedure can be done several times the first day. Moving through range of motion will encourage a faster recovery by reducing the inflammation and allowing a fresh supply of blood to flow.

Have an active and wonderful summer!

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dust mite covers, remove old carpet from the bedroom and replace with laminate flooring, tile or just paint the plywood until you can afford to do something more permanent. Keep pets out of the room if at all possible, and purchase a good air cleaner that should be off the ground and at head height while sleeping. Reduce mucous stimulating foods during the allergy season. For many of you this may mean switching from dairy to dairy alternatives. Try to reduce the overall “barrel effect” that can form from one to many allergenic substances that result in symptoms from the final allergenic “straw that breaks the camels back”. After creating a pristine environment in your home and body, look to a couple of safe and inexpensive options for preventing the “over” release of histamine. Good ‘ol Vitamin C with bioflavonoids helps to stabilize the mast cells that release the histamine. The stinging nettle

when dried works as a wonderful support for those with asthma during allergy season. N-acetyl cysteine (NAC), the precursor to the antioxidant glutathione, works to break up mucous when congestion forms. There are many options that can help you and your family. The above mentioned interventions can save time and money and make a tremendous difference during our pollen rich summers.

Allergy provocation and neutralization can help those that still need support in treating unresponsive symptoms and are an excellent solution for those suffering from substantial allergenic symptoms. This procedure is done at Avante and is covered by most insurance companies. Be well and enjoy the summer “allergy free”.

## Welcome Dr. Jennifer Lush

Avante is very pleased to announce the addition of Jennifer Lush, ND to our clinic. Dr. Jennifer Lush is a Naturopathic Physician who graduated from Bastyr University. Dr. Lush also holds a bachelor’s degree in psychology and pre-medical sciences from the University of Washington. During her undergraduate studies, Dr. Lush discovered her interest in health care by providing immunizations and HIV/AIDS education to indigenous villagers in rural South America. She is fluent in Spanish and Modern Greek. Additionally, Dr. Lush began her career as a researcher at the University of Washington, with topics ranging from neurology, biopsychology and social behaviorism.

Dr. Lush opened a private practice in the summer of 2001 in the Seattle. Her practice integrated naturopathy, acupuncture, counseling, massage, and chiropractic medicine in a wellness promoting, spa-like atmosphere. Her focus for the past 4 years has been on providing primary care medicine, gynecology, botanical medicine, homeopathy, craniosacral therapy, and functional nutritional medicine. She developed a 3 -week whole body detoxification program to address the many needs of her patients including weight loss, hormone balancing, chronic digestive complaints, and fatigue. Dr. Lush has also continued her research career by working with Dr. Joseph Pizzorno and SaluGenecists, a company focused on bringing research in alternative medicine to the mainstream health care practitioner and general public.

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the intestines (called the brush border) will not function adequately. The normal bacteria found in the intestines will decrease and pathological bacteria such as E.coli or yeast such as Candida will increase, which will continue to decrease the normal functioning of the digestive system. Resultant increased intestinal permeability (meaning undigested food particles and toxins will actually pass from our intestines into our blood stream instead of leaving the body via the colon or urine) will lead to diseases of inflammation such as arthritis, asthma, irritable bowel syndrome, and many more. Food allergy testing can monitor if our bodies have leaked particular food proteins via this mechanism and have developed an actual allergy as a result.

The good news is that undergoing a systemic cleanse and removing food allergens will reverse these damages. After a detox, you will feel refreshed, rejuvenated, and ready to face the challenges of your busy life. There are many ways to detoxify and cleanse your system.

Detox plans vary in duration from five days to three months, but they are typically three weeks long. Diet changes are made, including cutting out foods such as coffee, alcohol and preservatives. Additionally, if you suffer from food allergies, they should be eliminated as well. A detox may or may not include a supported fast and colon hydrotherapy; it depends on the individual needs of your body. Herbal and nutrient formulas can support your body and encourage release of toxins in your tissues. Bodywork such as massage, acupuncture and craniosacral therapy all enhance detoxification as well.

It is best to undergo cleansing under the supervision of a licensed health care practitioner.

## Accolades to Dr. Harmon!

We want to update you on the recent accolades of Dr. Harmon. Dr. Harmon currently sits as the President for the Alaskan Association of Naturopathic Physicians. Last fall he was voted to the National Board on the Oncology Association of Naturopathic Physicians. He was then appointed to become the National Tumor Board host and moderator. He is responsible for the tumor board, which brings together hundreds of physicians from across the country to discuss cases and therapies each month via teleconference. Dr. Harmon continues to work with local physicians and many abroad to provide patients access to the best integrative oncology care available today. For the remainder of 2005, Dr. Harmon will continue to see other medical conditions that are not cancer related as well.

## Our Mission Statement

*Avante Medical Center is a unique facility established to provide Alaskans with a broad range of integrative and progressive medical services. We provide care to clients with acute and chronic health challenges in a nurturing, warm and beautiful environment. Our goal is to educate, empower, and enrich our clients' health through a caring, professional and personable experience.*

## Who's Who at Avante Medical Center

**Jason Harmon, ND** Co-owner of Avante, Dr. Harmon is a Naturopathic Physician specializing in cancer care.

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

**Lori Zitzmann, ANP** Lori is an Adult Nurse Practitioner who sees men and women for primary care, preventative health issues, chronic illness management, and hormone balancing.

**Kaycie Rosen, ND** Dr. Rosen is a Naturopathic Physician specializing in primary care medicine and infectious disease. She also utilizes botanical medicines and craniosacral therapy, an energetic form of bodywork.

**Liane Erickson, ND** Dr. Erickson is a Naturopathic Physician, specializing in pediatrics, prenatal and family medicine. She is a Doula, qualified to assist in births and also practices Bowen therapy, a gentle form of bodywork.

**Jennifer Lush, ND** Dr. Lush is a Naturopathic Physician recently joining us from her successful clinic in Seattle. She will focus on detoxification as well as primary care.

**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 weakness.

**Jodi Romero, MA** Jodi performs allergy testing and elimination using a provocation and neutralization technique. She also is a certified colon hydrotherapist.

**Cathy Floyd** Cathy is working in our allergy department using a provocation and neutralization technique.

**Julie Tummonds, CCT, LMT** Julie is a massage therapist, specializing in full-body relaxation massage. She also is a certified colon hydrotherapist, focusing on detoxification.

**Patricia Ketz** Pat works using NAET, a noninvasive allergy elimination technique.

# Avante Class and Lecture Schedule

**June 2:** Jason Harmon, ND: **Nutritional Walk-Through.** 5:45 PM. Natural Pantry. Free

**June 8:** Jason Harmon, ND: **Men Against Breast Cancer.** This is a support group for men who have women in their lives affected by breast cancer. 7:00 PM. Avante

**June 9:** Liane Erickson, ND: **Food for Kids Cooking Class.** Call Avante to register, \$50. 6:00 PM

**June 14:** Kaycie Rosen, ND: **Medicinal Plant Walk.** Pottercreek Trailhead. 6:30 PM. Free

**June 22:** Jennifer Lush, ND: **Systemic Detoxification: Increasing your metabolism for weight loss and better health.** 6:00PM, Avante, call Avante to register. Free

**June 30:** Liane Erickson, ND: **Macrobiotic Cooking.** Call Avante to register, \$50, 6:00 PM

**June 30:** Kaycie Rosen, ND: **Summertime Wild Foods Cooking Class.** 6:30 PM at Natural Wonders B & B; 5320 O'Malley Rd. \$50

**July 5:** Kaycie Rosen, ND: **Medicinal Plant Walk.** 6:30. Pottercreek Trailhead. Free

**July 7:** Jason Harmon, ND: **Nutritional Walk-Through.** 5:45 PM. Natural Pantry. Free

**July 13:** Jason Harmon, ND: **Men Against Breast Cancer.** This is a support group for men who have women in their lives affected by breast cancer. 7:00 PM. Avante

**July 21:** Kaycie Rosen, ND: **Gluten Free Cooking Class.** Call Avante to Register. 6:30 PM at Natural Wonders B & B; 5320 O'Malley Rd. \$50.

**August 4:** Jason Harmon, ND: **Nutritional Walk-Through.** 5:45 PM. Natural Pantry. Free

**August 9:** Kaycie Rosen, ND: **Medicinal Plant Walk.** Location TBA. 6:30 PM. Free

**August 15:** Jennifer Lush, ND: **Systemic Detoxification: Increasing your metabolism for weight loss and better health.** 6:00PM, Avante, call Avante to register. Free

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