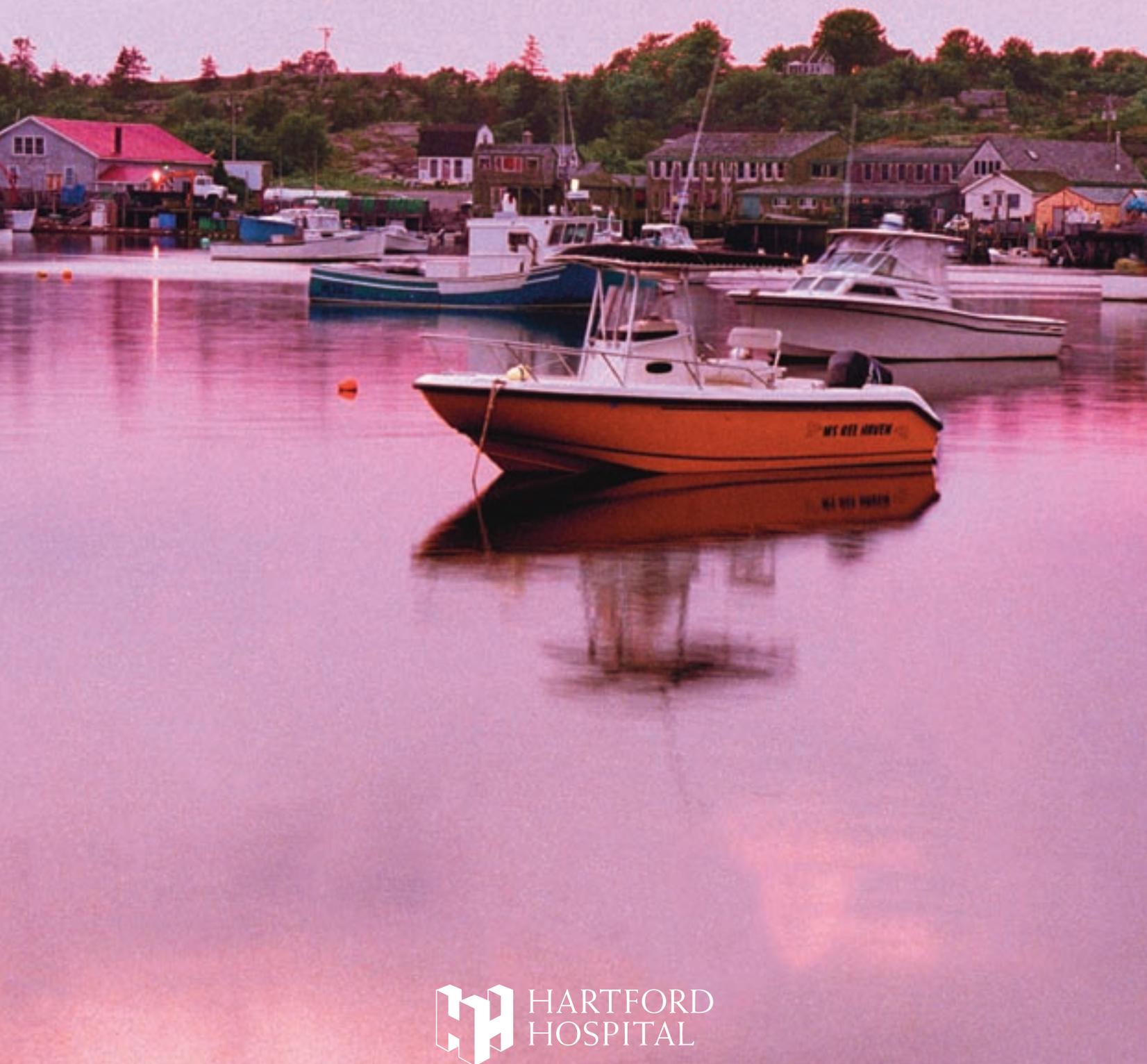


S U M M E R
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ROUNDS

HARTFORD HOSPITAL'S WELLNESS MAGAZINE



West Nile Watch



Since its emergence in New York in 1999, West Nile virus has spread widely across the nation. Though the mosquito-borne illness is rarely fatal in people, its incidence is on the rise in humans, as well as in birds and animals. Last year, 17 individuals across the state were infected with West Nile virus, none of them fatally.

"The viral infection tends to occur in late summer, with peak incidence in the August-September timeframe," explains Brian Cooper, M.D., director of Hartford Hospital's Infectious Disease Division. "There is no current vaccine, although candidate vaccines are undergoing clinical trials."

ROUNDS

Hartford Hospital's Wellness Magazine

Hartford Hospital
80 Seymour Street
Hartford, CT 06102-5037
(860) 545-5000
Health Referral Service
(860) 545-1888 or (800) 545-7664
www.harthosp.org

Rounds Medical Advisory Board:

Adrienne Bentman, M.D.
David Crombie, M.D.
Joseph Klimek, M.D.
Andrew Salner, M.D.
Linda Taylor, M.D.

Editor: Lee Monroe
Director of Public Relations

Designer: Clare Philips

Writer: Jane Bradley

Cover

Photograph: Ronald H. Pariser, M.D., FACC
Board Certified Cardiologist at Cardiac Care Associates

Photography: Pages 3, 4-5: Joy Miller

Calendar

Coordinator: Luisa Machado

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, pesticide spraying is usually the least effective mosquito control technique. The safer biological larvicide BTI, available in hardware stores, can be used to treat very wet areas. Wear protective clothing and avoid hiking when mosquitoes are most active, use insect repellent and minimize time spent outdoors between dusk and dawn. Eliminate places where mosquitoes breed, such as water gardens and birdbaths, reduce standing water sources around the yard and maintain window screens in good repair.

HEALTH TIPS



Webwise Wellness

While the worldwide web brings a wealth of health-related data to your computer with the click of a mouse, trust only reputable sites for accurate advice and information. Remember that no website can substitute for your own doctor's care.

Visit Hartford Hospital's site at www.harthosp.org, where you can search by subject or physician's name, or choose our doctor referral service for a primary care physician.

Among the most helpful and accurate sites: www.WebMD.com; www.mayoclinic.com; www.cancer.org (American Cancer Society); www.americanheart.org (American Heart Association); www.medscape.com; www.virtualhospital.com; and the aol website (keyword health). Key governmental health-related sites: www.cdc.gov (Centers for Disease Control); www.nih.gov (National Institutes of Health).

If you don't have time to do your own research, some sites will scour the web for you. Beware of for-profit sites that offer advice from unqualified "experts" who have no medical background. Doctors worry that patients may waste valuable time chasing remedies that the National Institutes of Health consider unproven or even risky.

PHYSICIAN PROFILE

Vicente Cortes, M.D., FACS, Assistant Director of the Trauma Program at Hartford Hospital, is a general surgeon with specialized training in trauma and surgical critical care. He is an assistant professor of surgery, traumatology and emergency medicine at the University of Connecticut School of Medicine.

He attended the National University of Colombia School of Medicine in his native Bogota, and served one year of community rural service in the Amazon basin in Colombia before coming to the United States for specialty training. He completed a surgical internship at Lutheran Medical Center in New York, followed by general surgery residency and additional fellowship training in surgical critical care and trauma surgery for seven years at the University of Miami School of Medicine. For the next three years he divided his time between a V.A. hospital and an academic appointment at the University Hospital in Morgantown in rural West Virginia. In 1994, he joined the Trauma Program at Hartford Hospital.

He is married to his high school sweetheart. The couple came to United States in 1982. Dr. Cortes is pictured with their two dogs, a cocker spaniel named Kikis and a beagle named Leonardo.



Vital Signs: Trauma and Emergency Care

Trauma, the leading cause of death and disability in young people, requires immediate decisive response and coordinated action. Gravely injured, bleeding and often unconscious, trauma victims are transported to the hospital as rapidly as possible for life-saving treatment.

When someone is injured in a devastating highway crash, Hartford Hospital's LIFESTAR helicopter is often called to the scene to airlift out survivors. LIFESTAR's onboard advanced life support team provides sophisticated resuscitation and critical care at the accident scene and during transport. Hartford Hospital is the city's only Level I regional tertiary trauma center, which means that an experienced team of surgeons, emergency physicians, radiologists, nurses, respiratory therapists, radiology technologists, blood bank technicians, operating room and critical care staff is always on call.

"The typical victim has injuries to multiple organs, systems and body parts," says Vicente Cortes, M.D., assistant director of Hartford Hospital's Trauma Program. "Often, the patient has brain and spinal cord, facial, thoracic, abdominal and skeletal injuries. Treatment requires a team approach with multiple different disciplines and specialists involved, all coordinated by a captain of the team, the trauma surgeon."

The trauma team rushes into action to stabilize and restore vital functions, while simultaneously determining all injuries and appropriate treatment, operative or non-operative. Many times the patient is in shock, either from blood loss or massive tissue damage. Brain swelling and hemorrhage are potential killers soon after the crash, while later threats include infectious complications, failure of multiple organs or body systems or even blockage of the lung circulation caused by blood clots that have formed in the veins of the legs and pelvis (see article on page 5).

"It's challenging," says Dr. Cortes. "We're not just looking after a collection of organs or systems, but after the patient as a whole. Even when bleeding is controlled and the damaged internal organs and broken bones are repaired, some of these patients may succumb to the late effects of the initial injury, irreparable damage at the cellular level. Coordination of care is important even after discharge to make sure that there are no loose ends."

Families are an important factor in critical care. "Many times patients are in the ICU, sedated, intubated, on respirators and life-support machines," says Dr. Cortes. "They can't communicate and are unaware of what is going on. They remember very little of what happens during the worst of their illness. When a patient's survival is in question, you can never give definitive answers. The trauma surgeon keeps the family informed constantly so that they have an idea of what is going on, what is to come and what the outcome is likely to be. My job is to support the family—as well as the patient—throughout the course of treatment."



Heart Attack: Timing is Everything

Each year a million Americans experience a heart attack, or myocardial infarction, and nearly half of them die. Rapid intervention is critical when a blood clot blocks the flow of blood through a coronary artery, a blood vessel that feeds blood to the heart muscle.

Experts are calling for earlier and more aggressive treatment of a heart attack to prevent damage to heart muscle. "We want to educate the public about the need to seek medical care quickly in the event of a heart attack," says Raymond McKay, M.D., one of a team of seven interventional cardiologists on call around the clock at Hartford Hospital. "Heart attacks are the main reason people die in this country."

Prompt intervention with a combination of clot-busting drugs and balloon angioplasty has been shown to be the optimum emergency care for heart attack victims, ideally within one or two hours after the onset of symptoms. Overwhelming medical evidence has demonstrated the life-saving benefits of emergency cardiac catheterization that opens the blocked cardiac vessel using balloon angioplasty and intracoronary stenting.

"Early intervention reduces the overall level of heart damage and is associated with a lower risk of having a second heart attack," says Dr. McKay.

The LIFESTAR helicopter can be quickly called into action to transport heart attack victims in need of emergency angioplasty. "LIFESTAR is the central link in connecting Connecticut residents to quick and lifesaving catheter-based therapy," explains Kenneth Robinson, M.D., LIFESTAR's medical director. Hartford Hospital is the first heart center in Southern New England to create a network that integrates local community hospitals into an organized "hub-and-

spoke" system. Patients anywhere in the state would receive drug therapy within minutes, and then be transported directly to Hartford Hospital's catheterization laboratory.

"Each year, thousands of heart attack patients suffer needlessly from delays in diagnosis and treatment," says Director of Cardiology William Boden, M.D. "Over 80 percent of heart attack patients in the United States receive cardiac catheterization later than the 120 minute time period recommended by the American Heart Association and the American College of Cardiology. If a patient languishes for hours in an emergency room, it may be too late."

More than half of patients who die from heart attacks do so within the first hour after the onset of symptoms. Today, thanks to Hartford Hospital's innovative network, the majority of people who have a heart attack will survive.



Left to right: Dr. William Boden, Dr. Kenneth Robinson and Dr. Raymond McKay

WHAT'S GOING AROUND...News & Breakthroughs

Spice of Life

Turmeric, found in yellow curry and mustard, has been shown to have antioxidant and anti-inflammatory properties that can heal wounds and possibly fight Alzheimer's disease, cystic fibrosis and multiple sclerosis. The journal *Cancer* reported that the ingredient *curcumin* stopped tumor growth, while University of Texas researchers say it can suppress and destroy the blood cancer multiple myeloma.

Hormone Advisory

Before considering hormone therapy, women should be asked about prior exposure to EGME, a common industrial solvent, or the anticonvulsant valproic acid (Depakote), among the top 100 drugs prescribed in the United States. Both mimic estrogen, say Duke University researchers, and may boost hormone activity in women on hormone replacement therapy or oral contraceptives.

Cholesterol Cut

Adults with type 2 diabetes who have an additional risk factor for cardiovascular disease should take medication to lower their cholesterol levels, says the American College of Physicians. The results of lipid-lowering studies indicated that so-called statin drugs (Lipitor, Zocor or Crestor) reduced heart-related problems in diabetic patients by more than 20 percent.

Strange Fruit

Pricing codes speed grocery check-out, says the Produce Electronic Identification Board, an affiliate of the Produce Marketing Association, but those annoying little stickers on fruit also contain a secret code. Conventionally grown, non-organic fruit has a sticker with only four numbers, while organically grown fruit has a five-numeral code that begins with the number 9. Genetically modified fruits have stickers with five digits that begin with the number 8.

Filtering Out Blood Clots

As an accident victim lies injured and immobile, Hartford Hospital's trauma team may opt to implant an inferior vena cava (IVC) filtering device to prevent life-threatening blood clots from traveling up through the abdomen's major vein to the lungs. If a clot, or deep vein thrombosis, breaks loose and lodges in the lungs, the patient is at risk for a potentially fatal pulmonary embolism. The device is particularly useful for patients who can't use anticoagulant drugs, commonly called blood thinners, because of surgical risk or bleeding disorders.

For young trauma patients, the placement of a permanent IVC filter is especially undesirable. For example, when Liz Borkowski suffered a severe head injury in a car accident last December, the trauma team worried that at age 17, she would be at risk for later complications from a permanently implanted filter, including recurrent blood clots. "Her dad, a physician, worried that poor circulation might cause her to develop 'tree trunk' legs later in life," explains her mother, Susan Smith.

Trauma surgeon George Perdrizet, M.D., had read about a new removable device called a "recovery filter" that could be retrieved safely up to six months later, making it particularly appropriate for a teenager. He found a willing ally in Hartford Hospital's head of interventional radiology, Domenic A. Zambuto, M.D., who became the first physician in the state to successfully retrieve an IVC filter.

With only a small nick in the skin over the femoral vein at the groin, Dr. Zambuto uses X-ray guidance to deliver the collapsible filter up into the inferior vena cava—the largest



Dr. Domenic Zambuto

vein in the body—about as big around as a broom handle. The device unfolds like a spider web to trap clots but allow blood to flow freely. When the filter is ready to be removed, the interventional radiologist uses imaging techniques to retrieve it with a "recovery cone" threaded down through the jugular vein in the neck.

As for Liz, she's out of the hospital and has completed a rehabilitation program, and can't wait to drive again. "In such a young person, the filter offered temporary protection without the potential burden of complications for the rest of her life," says Dr. Zambuto. "The technique can also be used for pregnant women or anyone at risk for blood clots who isn't a good candidate for anticoagulant drugs."

Folate Facts

The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has noted a marked decrease in prenatal neural tube defects since the government began requiring manufacturers to fortify bread and cereal with the vitamin folate (folic acid). All women should take folic acid supplements during pregnancy and for three months prior to conceiving. Now, a report in the *New England Journal of Medicine* suggests that folate and other B vitamins may help reduce the risk of bone fractures from osteoporosis.

Summer Strokes

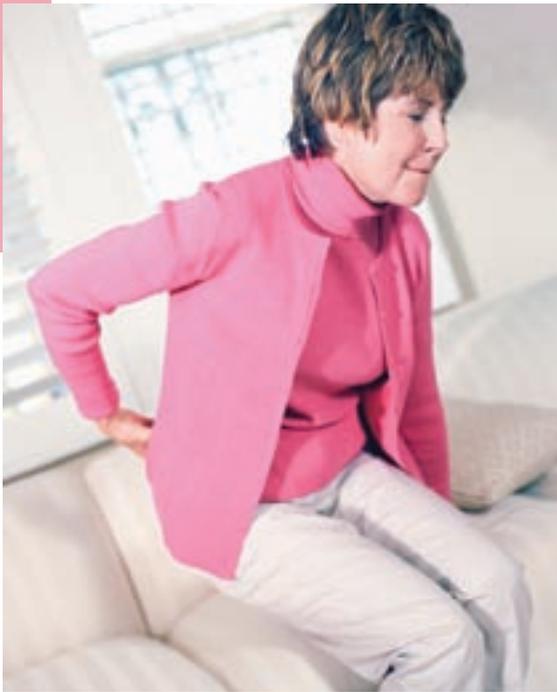
Before exercising or playing sports outdoors, reduce your heat stroke risk by giving yourself a chance to adjust to rising temperatures and humidity, say experts at the American College of Sports Medicine. Slowly becoming acclimated to exercise during hot and humid weather will prevent the muscle cramps, disorientation and exhaustion associated with exertional heat stroke.

Aspirin Absolved

Taking aspirin is unrelated to the risk of dying from pancreatic cancer, says the American Cancer Society. A recent study found no relationship between the common painkiller and pancreatic cancer, the fourth leading cause of cancer death in the U.S. Millions of Americans take aspirin daily because it has been shown to reduce the risk of recurrent heart attack or stroke.

Tanning Ban?

Sunlamps and tanning beds have been linked to two common forms of skin cancer. Researchers at Dartmouth Medical School found that tanning lamp users had 2.5 times the risk of squamous cell carcinoma and 1.5 times the risk of basal cell carcinoma. Women who visit tanning salons also have higher rates of melanoma, the deadliest skin cancer.



Posterior Pain?

An inflamed piriformis muscle is a pain in the butt—often running all the way down your leg. When you rotate your hip and leg outward—getting out of a car, for instance—the piriformis muscle stabilizes the pelvis and aligns the knee. An inflamed muscle irritates the sciatic nerve, causing spasms, shooting pain and tingling, especially at night.

“In about 10 percent of the population, the nerve goes through the muscle instead of under it,” explains Pietro Memmo, M.D., a physiatrist with Orthopedic Associates of Hartford, who specializes in non-

operative treatments for the back and spine. “Piriformis syndrome can also be caused by irritation of the sciatic nerve from trauma, overuse or leg length discrepancy. Injury to the muscle may result from a fall or even improper workouts that bulk up muscles unevenly.”

As in carpal tunnel syndrome, which entraps a nerve in the wrist, piriformis syndrome may cause compression of the sciatic nerve and trigger painful spasms and numbness. Surgery is usually unnecessary to treat an inflamed piriformis muscle, since exercise—combined with anti-inflammatory drugs, physical therapy, deep tissue massage, electrotherapy or cortisone shots—nearly always relieves symptoms. In severe cases, a minimally invasive technique involving injection of a medication into the “epidural space” of the spine can relieve inflammation and pain.

Telltale signs of the syndrome include a shortened stride that causes your foot to turn outward, deep pain on palpation and difficulty in stretching or rotating the hip. Diagnosis usually involves a clinical exam, along with MRI or other tests to rule out joint dysfunction, arthritis, spinal stenosis or disc problems.

| in the DOCTOR'S OFFICE |

Exercise: The Piriformis Stretch.

Lie on your back and flex (bend) the right hip and knee. While grasping the right knee with your left hand, pull the knee toward your left shoulder. (This adducts and flexes the hip.) In this position, grasp your leg just above the right ankle with your right hand and rotate your ankle outwards.



Targeting Inflammation: Your Body's Silent Signal

What is inflammation?

“Inflammation is the body's response to an insult or injury,” says Mark Ruderman, M.D., a rheumatologist at Hartford Hospital. “The clinical signs of inflammation include redness, swelling, heat and pain. If any part of your body is swollen, warm, painful to the touch or hurts when you move it, you may have inflammation.”

Chronic pain and tenderness—especially in your fingers, knees or hips—may be warning signs of osteoarthritis, which afflicts more than half the population age 65 and older. Men most often develop symptoms in their hips, knees or spine, while women are more likely to be affected in their hands and knees. New research indicates that osteoarthritis may result from a destructive cellular process within the cartilage, rather than simply mechanical “wear and tear.”

Rheumatoid arthritis, an inflammatory disease of the joint lining, causes pain, stiffness, swelling, joint damage and loss of function in the neck, shoulders, elbows, internal organs, hips, knees, ankles, and feet, usually on both sides of the body. “See your doctor right away if you have tender, warm or swollen joints that may indicate rheumatoid arthritis,” says Dr. Ruderman. “New biologic treatments are most effective when the disease is caught reasonably early.”

DETOX at Home



Does the thought of alcoholic “detox” conjure up a nightmare vision of *Lost Weekend*, the Oscar-winning 1940s movie in which actor Ray Milland wakes up to find himself confined in New York’s Bellevue Hospital, moaning, hallucinating and shaking with old-fashioned *delirium tremens*?

If so, you’ll be happy to know that modern pharmacology has revolutionized the once harsh treatment depicted in the film classic. Since alcoholics suffer shakes, sweats and even seizures if they abruptly stop drinking, medications provide a gradual step-down in an outpatient setting. For those addicted to oxycontin, heroin or other opiates, new medications ease the agony of withdrawal.

“Ambulatory detox from substance abuse is effective when people have relief of symptoms,” explains Samuel M. Silverman, M.D., F.A.P.A., Medical Director of Rushford Substance Abuse Services in Middletown, Meriden and Glastonbury. “Patients are seen in a physician’s office or treatment center. They are evaluated and prescribed medications according to their symptoms and return daily until they are symptom-free.”

Alcohol Aversion

Before beginning alcohol detox, patients are evaluated to rule out a history of seizures or any other serious medical problems. Anyone who has suffered seizures in the past must be monitored in an inpatient program. Patients detoxing from alcohol at home normally take a combination of tranquilizers, such as Librium or Valium, combined with an anticonvulsive drug such as Neurontin or Tegretol.

“Someone must be available to drive the individual and provide sober support,” says Dr. Silverman. “The patient needs to be supervised by a responsible adult who can administer medications and take charge if complications arise.”

John (not his real name) remembers helping his mother

stop her destructive drinking some 20 or 30 times before she finally succeeded with the help of at-home detox.

“She attempted to cut down on her drinking by switching to beer and having me dole a six-pack out to her one by one,” he says of her failed attempts to control her appetite for alcohol. “Then she would become angry, begin drinking again and stop eating. She didn’t get sober until she finally detoxed with help from a treatment center and began attending Alcoholics Anonymous.”

Opiate Options

Unfortunately, many in our society wrongly believe that people with opioid dependence can stop taking drugs simply by sheer force of will. Overwhelming scientific evidence shows that drugs like heroin or the painkiller oxycontin have long-term effects on brain activity that turn drug abuse into a chronic, relapsing illness.

Patients in opiate withdrawal become hyperactive, suffering sweats, shakes and chills caused by an outpouring of adrenaline. “Oxycontin is expensive, so many abusers turn to heroin and become addicted to street drugs,” says Dr. Silverman. “Traditional ambulatory detox from opiates combines the medications clonidine and lorazepam. A newer drug called *buprenorphine*—trade name Suboxone—is a mild opiate that effectively manages withdrawal symptoms.”

The Drug Addiction Treatment Act of 2000 opened up new treatment avenues for people seeking freedom from opioid dependence. “Connecticut has a shortage of doctors licensed to prescribe the drug by the federal government,” says Dr. Silverman. “I’m only able to prescribe buprenorphine for 30 patients at any one time; some patients remain on the medication for six months to a year. I could treat many more patients if the law were changed.”

Grilled Peaches on the Half Shell



Summer is the season for ripe, juicy peaches and berries that contain cancer-fighting antioxidants. This recipe originated on the website of the American Institute for Cancer Research, the cancer charity that fosters research on diet and cancer prevention.

"Food and nutrition play a vital role in cancer treatment and care," says dietitian Ann Zogbaum, MS, RD, CDN, who helps patients create individualized diet plans at the Helen and Harry Gray Cancer Center. "The right eating choices can often control, prevent and in some incidences reverse adverse side-effects of your cancer or treatment."

Peaches contain vitamins A and C, calcium, fiber and potassium, while blueberries—the number-one antioxidant fruit—contain vitamins A and C, zinc, potassium, tiny amounts of iron, calcium and magnesium, and are high in fiber and low in calories. Raspberries have cancer-fighting phytochemicals, along with calcium, vitamins A, C and E, fiber and folic acid.

Ingredients

- 1 ripe peach
- fresh or frozen raspberries or blueberries
- 2 tsp. brown sugar
- 1 tsp. lemon juice

Wash and halve peach. Remove pit. Place one peach half, flat side up, in center of square piece of doubled aluminum foil. Fill peach-half cavity with fresh or frozen raspberries or blueberries. Sprinkle brown sugar and lemon juice on top. Wrap tightly in foil. Repeat with other peach half. Grill approximately 15 to 20 minutes over hot flame, turning once.

Nutritional Information (one serving)

Calories: 97
Total Fat: 0 g
Carbohydrate: 25 g
Protein: 1 g
Dietary Fiber: 5 g
Sodium: 3 mg

Recipe analyzed by Ann Zogbaum, RD, CDN.