



This newsletter will offer some helpful tips to those of us who need some help dealing with Christmas stress and the winter blahs. You will learn about vitamin D. We will answer some questions about massage therapy and tell you about the benefits of seeing a pedorthist. We have also included a great recipe for holiday entertaining



Naturopathic &
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Centre

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Seasons Greetings

From everyone at the Naturopathic and Complementary Care Centre. We wish you all the best during this holiday season.

Are you having problems coming up with a great gift idea? What about giving the gift of health by giving a gift certificate for a naturopathic medical consultation or supplements? Does one of your loved one have back pain or headaches? Consider a therapeutic massage. Is there someone you would like to pamper? Consider a relaxation massage for your special someone. Gift certificates in many denominations are available so please call us for information at (519) 271-2440.

Holiday Hours:

The office of Carrie Meszaros ND will be closed from Wednesday December 24, 2008 until Monday, January 5, 2009.

Our office co-ordinator, Rhea, will be in the office on Tuesday, December 30, 2008 from 9 am until 2 pm. During this time Rhea will be available to fill your supplement orders, return messages, book/change appointments. Please call and leave a message so she can get your supplements together and they will be ready for you to pick up on the 30th.

The dispensary is CLOSED over the holidays other than December 30th, 9 am – 2 pm. Please check your supplies and stock up on any supplements you may need before the holidays begin.

Jenn Fetter, Registered Massage Therapist. If you would like to contact Jenn over the holidays to set up an appointment you could call the office or for appointment inquires only you can email her at jennfetterRMT@sympatico.ca

Lyndsey Stewart, Pedorthist. If you would like to set up an appointment over the holidays with Lyndsey for Saturday, January 3, 2009 you can email her at lyndseystewart@hotmail.com

We will all be back to our regular hours Monday, January 5th, 2008.



Vitamin D: The Sunshine Vitamin

By: Carrie Meszaros ND

I decided to write about Vitamin D in this newsletter for several reasons. It's a very timely topic right now, both because it's winter and because of the amazing amount of research going on right now about Vitamin D. I've been studying and practicing naturopathic medicine for more than 10 years and of all the vitamins and supplements that I learned about during school, the information has changed most about vitamin D. When I was in school everyone was under the impression that 400 IU of vitamin D was all that people needed and that it was helpful for bone health and prevented rickets in children. That's about all I remember learning about vitamin D.

It is amazing how much things have changed in the last few years. In recent years, many mainstream medical journals have published papers on vitamin D. In 2008, there was a large study in the Archives of Internal Medicine that brought vitamin D to the forefront for many doctors (and naturopathic doctors). It showed an increase in deaths due to cardiovascular problems (heart attacks and strokes)¹ in people with low vitamin D levels in their blood. This study also found that people with low vitamin D levels in their bodies had an increased risk of dying from ALL CAUSES¹. This means that when people with low vitamin D levels in their blood were compared to people with higher vitamin D levels in their blood, when all the other factors were looked at, the death rates for the men and women with higher vitamin D were lower.

There are many, many studies showing that low vitamin D levels are associated with osteoporosis and bone loss. It has been widely known that vitamin D is important to the develop of healthy bones in children which is the reason behind supplementing breastfed babies and why milk products have vitamin D added to them.

There have also been studies showing an association between low vitamin D levels and higher incidences PMS, seasonal affective disorder and major depressive disorder. There are also many studies that show a high rate of vitamin D deficiency in patients who have autoimmune disorders such as rheumatoid arthritis, diabetes, multiple sclerosis (MS), lupus and autoimmune thyroid problems. There has been recent research showing that low vitamin D levels are associated with increased incidence of falls in the elderly^{2,3}.

Many factors have contributed to the rising vitamin D deficiency in North American populations. Many of us work indoors and have limited sun exposure especially in the winter. Canada is a northern country and as a result we get less sun exposure than many countries that are further south. It has been shown that above 35° north latitude (Atlanta), little or no vitamin D₃ can be produced from November to February⁴. Many people because of concerns about UV exposure are wearing sunscreen to protect their skin. While sunscreen does limit the harmful UV rays, which can lead to sun damage and increase risk of skin cancer, applying sunscreen with an SPF factor of 8 reduces production of vitamin D by 95%. Applying sunscreen with higher SPF reduces vitamin D production even

Soup's On is coming up! Soup's On is a wonderful fundraiser for The Alzheimer Society of Perth County. The Naturopathic & Complementary Care Centre has Soup'er Raffle Tickets available in our office. 1st Prize is \$1,000, 2nd Prize is \$750.00 and 3rd Prize is \$250.00. The tickets are \$5.00 each. The draw will be made January 17, 2009 at 2pm at the Stratford Rotary Complex during Soup's On. Show your support for a wonderful cause, come buy a raffle ticket or come to the event!

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Common indoor houseplants may provide a valuable weapon in the fight against rising levels of indoor air pollution. The plants in your office or home are not only decorative, but NASA scientists are finding them surprisingly useful in absorbing potentially harmful gases and cleaning the air inside modern buildings



Philodendron, spider plant and the golden pothos were labeled the most effective in removing formaldehyde molecules. Flowering plants such as gerbera daisy and chrysanthemums were rated superior in removing benzene from the chamber atmosphere. "Plants take substances out of the air through the tiny openings in their leaves," *Wolverton said*. "But research in our laboratories has determined that plant leaves, roots and soil bacteria are all important in removing trace levels of toxic vapors".



more. Vitamin D levels are also lower in people with darker complexions as their skin doesn't make vitamin D as readily as people with paler skin. People who for personal or cultural reasons cover up the vast majority of their skin year round are also at risk for vitamin D deficiency because their skin isn't exposed to the sun and can't create vitamin D. Vitamin D levels are often extremely low in populations who don't go outside including institutionalized elderly. Vitamin D levels are also decreased in patients who have bowel issues that lead to decreased absorption of their vitamins such as inflammatory bowel disease and celiac disease.

Even in patients who live in sunny places such as Hawaii and Florida are more frequently than expected having low blood levels of vitamin D. As a result of all of this information many doctors and naturopathic doctors are beginning to recommend vitamin D blood testing to many of their patients to find out their levels. Many patients are curious after hearing about the large studies that are coming out and in patients at higher risk for vitamin D deficiency a blood test is a good way to assess actual levels. The best test for vitamin D levels is the 25-hydroxyvitamin D (25(OH) D). Any naturopathic doctor can run this test and some medical doctors are also running the test on their patients. Testing is available at our clinic for any patients who wish to know their vitamin D status. I've found in practice that in patients who have low vitamin D blood levels that supplementing vitamin D improves their mood, energy and often many of their aches and pains.

In the last couple of years the recommended amount of vitamin D has changed to 1000 IU for the average healthy patient (all ages). Even with 1000 IU/day of vitamin D I recommend trying to get 15-20 minutes of sun exposure without sunscreen per day. I do recommend sunscreen for people when they are going to be outside for longer periods of time, especially in the summer when the sun is stronger. For some patients in high risk groups for vitamin D deficiency, 2000 IU/day may be a more suitable dosage, this would include some patients with autoimmune disorders, osteoporosis, elderly who don't go outside and many others. Pregnant and lactating women, need 1000-2000 IU/day. In many patients I recommend doing higher dosages in the winter than in the summer if people are able to get outside more in the summertime. In some cases, when a patient's blood levels of vitamin D are low it may take up to 5000 IU or more to raise blood levels to the desired levels. Recent research seems to show that in most cases people would have to take well over 10,000 IU/day for several months before toxicity symptoms would begin to show. I recommend anyone who is taking more than 2000-3000 IU of vitamin D over an extended time period consider having their blood levels checked to ensure they are not taking more than they need.

1. Dobnig H, Pilz S, Scharnagl H, et al. Independent association of low serum 25-hydroxyvitamin D and 1,25-dihydroxyvitamin D levels with all-cause and cardiovascular mortality. *Arch Intern Med* 2008; 168:1340-1349.
2. Pfeifer M, Bergerow B, Minne HW et al. Effects of a short term vitamin D and calcium supplementation on body sway and secondary hyperparathyroidism in elderly women. *J Bone Miner Res* 2000;15: 1113-8.
3. Broe KE, Chen TC, Weinberg J, et al. A higher dose of vitamin D reduces the risk of falls in nursing home residents: a randomized, multiple dose study. *J Am Geriatr Soc.* 2007;55:234-239.
4. Glerup H, Mikkelsen K, Poulsen L, et al. Commonly recommended daily intake of vitamin D is not sufficient if sunlight exposure is limited. *J Intern Med.* 2000;247:260-268.

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Saturday Appointments Available with Jenn Fetter, R.M.T.

Is it difficult for
you to get in for a
massage through
the week? Do you
need extra
pampering on the
weekend? Jenn
Fetter is now
available
Saturdays for
massage by
appointment, call
the office to book
your Saturday
appointment now

Common Questions about Massage Therapy

By: Jenn Fetter, R.M.T.

Winter Reminder: Snow Shoveling

Think before you start shoveling that snow. We all know to stretch before exercising, but we forget to stretch before doing household chores. Before you come to us with back pain from shoveling snow, remember the importance of prevention. Start with a light warm-up and some stretching. Bend your knees when you lift and do not try to lift more than you can handle

Why Live With Pain?

Why do we accept and live with muscular pain in our lives? We have high stressed jobs and lifestyles, which sometimes cause physical discomfort and even illness. Many professions and careers in one way or another demand the use of a computer. Sitting for hours a day at a computer forces us into an improper sitting posture, which can cause physical and mental stress.

A great way of managing and/or preventing these pain symptoms is to include massage therapy into your lifestyle. During a massage therapy treatment your therapist will not only massage the tension and knots out of your muscles but he or she will advise you on ways each client can help themselves through active homecare stretches, exercises, subtle changes to their work station, warm epsom salt baths, and many other activities designed to help you to reduce the stresses and symptoms of stress in your daily lives.

What is Myofascial Release?

Myofascial Release is a very effective hands-on technique that provides sustained pressure into myofascial restrictions to eliminate pain and restore motion. The theory of Myofascial Release requires an understanding of the fascial system (or connective tissue). The fascia is a specialized system of the body that has an appearance similar to a spider's web or a sweater. Myofascial Release is a technique that requires special training above and beyond basic massage and physical therapy curriculums.

How Often Should I Have a Massage?

Most people come for a massage once a month, or whenever they feel stress and tension building. For new massage clients it is often important to have a massage once a week for 3 or 4 or up to 7 or 8 weeks. This is because, for most people, their body has forgotten how to relax. During the massage they gradually begin to relax. This effect often lasts for a day or two, and then gradually evaporates. If they have another massage in within a week (or two at the most) then their body remembers how to relax in this new way and they tend to relax more deeply than the previous week. In this way, a person can gradually learn to become more stress free and elastic in how they deal with stressful events.



Information about Foot Care

By: Lyndsey Steward, C Ped (C)

Metatarsalgia



Metatarsalgia is a foot condition where there is pain under the ball of the foot. Often, it feels like walking on stones.

Metatarsalgia is caused from decreased fat pads under the ball of the foot and poor biomechanics, including a fallen arch at the ball of the foot. When this arch drops, more pressure is taken at the ball of the foot.

Custom orthotics can help decrease this pressure at the ball of the foot by incorporating support to evenly distribute the pressure. Wearing shoes with a thick rockered sole helps avoid pressure on this affected area of the foot by reducing the amount the toes must bend and therefore, adds protection.

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Footwear 101

One of the most important factors for foot comfort is footwear. Often when people have foot or leg pain, they think the answer is a soft flexible shoe, when in fact, a strong supportive shoe is much more beneficial.

When buying shoes, it is important to make sure they fit properly and that they have sufficient support. Do not buy shoes if they are not comfortable. If shoes are uncomfortable in the store, they may take a very long time to break in and may never feel comfortable. If you have orthotics, bring the orthotics with you when you go shoe shopping so that you know how the shoe will fit with the orthotic.



Size – It is always best to go shoe shopping at the end of the day, or after you have been on your feet for a while. As the day goes on and with activity, the feet swell. Always try on both shoes as one foot will be longer and one foot will be wider.

Shoe Length - Stand up while testing the shoe length. There should be 1 cm between the end of the longest toe and the end of the shoe. If you can feel the end of the shoe with your toes, it's too short.



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Shoe Width - Stand up while testing the shoe width. If the shoe has a removable insole, take it out and stand on it. Your entire foot should be contained within the insole of the shoe. Your foot should not be hanging over the edge of the insole.

When wearing the shoe, you should be able to pinch some of the material on the upper of the shoe to make sure that your toes have enough wiggle room.

Support – It is important to look for certain features when purchasing shoes. Often people look for shoes that are very soft and cushiony, but this will not help support the feet. Look for the following features:

Strong Heel Counter - The sides of the heel should be strong enough so that when you squeeze them together, they remain in place and do not move.

Strong Sole - When you flip the shoe over, you should not be able to bend or twist the sole from the heel to the ball of the foot. Normally, the shoe will bend at the ball of the foot.

Removable Insole - If you have or are getting orthotics, the shoe should have a removable insole so that there will be enough room for the orthotic.

If you have any questions about foot pain and/or orthotics, please feel free to email Lyndsey at LyndseySteward@Hotmail.com

Tasty Recipes Inspired by the Season

Pom Pilaf

This is an unexpected mix of flavours and textures but is delicious! It's a very festive dish that works fantastically with any holiday dinner.

Serves 4 to 6

Ingredients:

- 2 tablespoons unsalted butter
- 1 small red onion, cut into 1/4-inch pieces
- 1 cup basmati or jasmine rice
- 1 1/2 cups homemade or low-sodium canned chicken stock
- 1/2 cup chopped dried apricots
- 1/2 cup chopped unsalted pistachios or almonds
- 1/2 cup pomegranate seeds (about 1/2 pomegranate)
- 1 tablespoon chopped fresh thyme leaves
- Coarse salt and freshly ground pepper

Directions

1. Melt butter in a medium saucepan over medium-low heat. Add onion, and cook until softened, about 4 minutes. Add rice; cook, stirring 1 minute to coat. Add chicken stock; bring to a boil. Cover, and reduce heat to low.

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2. Cook until rice has absorbed all liquid, 15 to 20 minutes.
3. Remove from heat, and fluff with a fork. Stir in apricots, nuts, pomegranate seeds, and thyme. Season with salt and pepper, and serve immediately.

This Recipe was originally found on <http://www.marthastewart.com/recipes>

From all of us at the Naturopathic and Complementary Care Centre, we wish you the best for the Holiday Season!!

