



Osteoarthritis

Osteoarthritis (OA) is a degenerative disease that results in changes to the joint. In some people, a traumatic joint injury can lead to OA, while in others genetics may play a role. The disease usually begins with a single large joint, such as a hip or knee. But it is not uncommon for a smaller joint, such as an ankle, to be affected initially, particularly if that joint has had a significant injury, such as a sprain or cartilage tear.

While OA can be limited to a single joint, in many cases it progresses to involve other joints, often in a sequential fashion. In some cases, pain from OA in one joint can prompt you to walk, stand or move differently, which can, in turn, force other joints out of alignment and predispose them to OA as well.

Unfortunately, we don't fully understand the reasons OA progresses and we don't have therapies to effectively stop the progression. For OA in general, the most helpful advice is to maintain an ideal weight, avoid overusing joints that are damaged and follow a plan of exercise that strengthens the muscles supporting the joint. Aquatic exercise can be especially beneficial for those with OA as the buoyancy of the water helps reduce the impact on weight-bearing joints.

Bodies in Motion

The Wellness Department is still looking to fill the Aquatics Instructor position in order to offer this class again. Two instructors were brought in from the outside but there was not enough resident interest to hold classes on a permanent basis. We will keep searching in hopes that we have an instructor soon.



Worth Passing On to the Children and Grandchildren

In a recent study of 2,800 older adults, those who were overweight or obese from their 20s through their 70s were 1.6-3 times as likely to have mobility limitations as older adults. Mobility limitations also occurred in individuals who had been overweight or obese earlier in life but were no longer heavy as older adults.

“Over the past couple of decades there has been a trend towards declining rates of physical disability in older adults,” said lead investigator Denise Houston, PhD, RD. “However, the dramatic increase in overweight and obesity in the United States may reverse these declines and may lead to an increase in physical disability among future generations of older adults. The data suggest that interventions to prevent overweight and obesity in young and middle-aged adults may be useful in preventing or delaying the onset of mobility limitations later in life.”

Volunteers May Live Longer



Among people over 65 years of age who were retired, 1,766 people said they had volunteered during the prior year, and 4,594 people said they did not volunteer. Approximately four years later, 12% of volunteers had died compared to 26% of non-volunteers, even after taking into account chronic illness, socioeconomic status and level of function. Interested in volunteering? Contact Allyson Palma, Volunteer Director, at extension 370.

Because Humor is Good for Wellness...



THE WASHINGTON POST has published the winning submissions to its yearly Neologism contest in which readers are asked to supply alternate meanings for common words. Here are some of the winners:

Coffee (n.), the person upon whom one coughs.

Flabbergasted (adj.), appalled over how much weight you have gained.

Abdicate (v.) to give up all hope of ever having a flat stomach.

Negligent (adj.), describes a condition in which you absentmindedly answer the door in your nightgown.

Lymph (v.), to walk with a lisp.

Gargoyle (n.), olive-flavored mouthwash.

Balderdash (n.), a rapidly receding hairline.

Flatulence (n.) emergency vehicle that picks you up after you are run over by a steamroller.

Radiation in Medicine

Ever wonder how much radiation is good and how much is bad? Radiation offers benefits for the diagnosis of several diseases and ailments, from broken bones to heart disease. It is also used to treat some forms of cancer. Yet exposure can damage cell DNA and cause uncontrolled cell division, the hallmark of cancer. The balance between benefit and risk needs to be weighed when using radiation to diagnose and treat disease.

Background radiation which is radiation from cosmic rays, radon gas and substances in the Earth exposes each person to 3mSv (millisieverts) per year. Medical use of radiation has exploded in the past 20 years due to the increased use of CT scans, angiograms, nuclear stress tests and angioplasty, adding an average of 3mSv per person each year. The amount of radiation you might receive from medical tests varies from 0.02mSv for a chest x-ray to 0.7mSv for a mammogram to as high as 57mSv for angioplasty.

In general, the risk of getting cancer from a single medical test or procedure using radiation is low. The older you are, the lower the chances that radiation will cause problems as it usually takes one to two decades before damaged DNA leads to cancer. Most medical tests are important and the benefit of radiation exposure outweighs the risk. However, it is always a good idea to be aware of the amount of exposure and to discuss it with your physician if you are concerned.

From *The Harvard Heart Letter* (April)

Keiser Chip System

The Chip system is now available to residents who use the strength equipment. The Chip is an electronic device the size of a soda can tab that is used in the digital display to track the amount of weight used and your settings for each piece of equipment. The purpose of the Chip is to eliminate the use of paper and pencil to track your workout. The cost is \$15 for the Chip. If you are interested, please see Barb or Kim.

SAVE THE DATE Chair Massage

Tuesday, June 2nd
9:30am-12:30pm
Wellness Center

Massage Therapist, Alison Scannell, will be available for residents to sample chair massage. This is a great way to try massage and experience the benefits. First come, first served, but a sign up will be available that day to avoid long waits.