



Pain, Posture and Fall Prevention

Issue 7

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Signs and Symptoms:

Chronic Pain:

- Pain lasting 6 months after an injury
- Pain that occurs from stimuli that are not normally painful
- Pain that occurs in places other than the stimulated area
- Increased sensations of pain—being overly sensitive to pain

Depression:

- Extensive feeling of sadness, hopelessness, irritability
- Changes in appetite, weight, or sleep
- Poor concentration
- Poor memory
- Feeling restless
- Feeling fatigued (tired)
- Loss of interest in pleasurable activities
- Feelings of worthlessness and/or guilt

On the other side:

Fall Prevention

News and Upcoming Events

Chronic Pain and Depression

Depression is a common emotion associated with chronic pain. Approximately 30-80% of people with chronic pain suffer from depression, thus creating a greater disability for the sufferer.

Chronic pain can be caused by any number of conditions. Common conditions include headaches, low back pain, neck pain, and arthritis. One of the most unfortunate problems associated with these pain conditions is that there is very little objective evidence into the pain, the patient experiences the pain but the clinician has difficulty finding the cause of the pain. This can lead

to great amounts of frustration and even more depression.

Chronic pain can limit one's ability to function at home and at work. These sufferers also have difficulties enjoying leisure and recreational activities. These limitations can also lead to more depression, anger, and resentment for both the pain sufferer and the family.

Chronic pain sufferers who experience depression often have difficulty sleeping, are agitated quite easily, can not perform their simple and routine activities of daily living, and have problems concentrating.

The treatment for chronic pain and depression is not simple. The first step is to identify the cause of the pain—if this is even possible. Once the cause is determined, treatment can be aimed at removing that cause. Other options include: staying as active as possible, relaxation, hypnosis, distraction, and family involvement. Other non-medical treatments can include chiropractic care, acupuncture, massage therapy, and Reiki.

Please discuss any chronic pain issues with Dr. Howard so that she can attempt to find the cause and then help with the treatment.

Posture

Maintaining good posture is important in helping keep your bones and joints in proper alignment. With this proper alignment, the ligaments do not have to endure an over abundance of stress and this reduces the chance of injury. Also, muscles work more efficiently, thus reducing muscle fatigue and strain.

Poor posture causes increased strain on the postural muscles. These

muscles include the hamstrings and the large muscles of the back. This increased strain can lead to increased fatigue and injury.

Most people have poor posture due to stress, obesity, pregnancy, weak postural muscles, tight muscles, and wearing high-heeled shoes. Also, decreased flexibility and poor working environments lead to poor posture.

Correcting poor posture is possible, but it can take quite some time to re-train the large (and small) muscle groups to function properly. Conscious effort is required to change poor postural habits. For example, no crossing of the legs during sitting, pulling the shoulders back, tucking the stomach in, and keeping your head level above the shoulders are a few ways to help maintain and correct posture.

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Website:
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Office Hours:

Monday:
7:30-4:00

Tuesday:
8:00-6:00

Wednesday:
9:00-3:00

Thursday:
8:00-6:00

Friday:
9:00-5:00

Closed from
11:00-12:00 for
lunch

News and upcoming events:

Dr. Julie Howard completed the 100-hour acupuncture certification course through Cleveland College of Chiropractic. This course is not required for Nebraska doctors, but it is required in many other states. Dr. Howard felt that she wanted to further her education into acupuncture and thus took and completed the course.

Acupuncture is offered at the office, more information can be found on the website at lifearts.8k.com.

September 18th:
Angie Neumiller and All About U Massage & Day Spa is hosting Dr. Julie Howard for a presentation and demonstration about meridian therapy and acupuncture. Seating will be limited and reservations are being taken at All About U. Call 296-4040 to reserve your spot today!

October is National Chiropractic Month - Look for further information on the website and at the clinic!

Hugs are wonderful therapy for almost everything!



Healthy Aging and Fall Prevention

September is designated "Healthy Aging Month" with the week of September 10-16th as "National Assisted Living Week." Many of our nation's seniors live healthy, active lives, however, many have to rely on others for many of their daily needs. Although there are differences in each and every person, one fear is common among the senior citizen population—the fear of falling.

Independence is an important ideal for people, and losing this independence is a very frightening thought. One way that many seniors lose their independence is by falling. Injuries from a fall can be debilitating, especially with

underlying diseases such as diabetes, heart disease, and osteoporosis that can significantly complicate the healing process.

In 2003, more than 1.8 million seniors were treated in hospitals for fall-related injuries. Of these 1.8 million, 421,000 were hospitalized. Risk factors that can contribute to the likelihood of a fall include: side effects from medications, numbness in arms / legs, poor eyesight, lack of regular physical activity, and tripping hazards in the home.

A few suggestions to help prevent falls:

Review medications for side effects, and discuss these concerns with your medical doctor.

Especially if you are experiencing dizziness, lightheadedness, numbness, vision changes, etc.

Regular eye exams will also help with fall prevention.

Regular exercise and activity will help reduce the risk of falling. Keeping active helps keeps muscles and bones strong, as well as keep our "balance receptors" stimulated. Gentle exercise such as walking, water aerobics, or bicycle riding can be very beneficial.

Home safety checks should be performed as we age, and should be done for those already in the senior age group. These checks can be very helpful in preventing falls and injury.

Home Safety Checklist:

- Remove throw rugs
- Secure carpet edges
- Remove cords & wires on the floor
- Install handrails on stairs
- Be sure that the telephone can be reached from the floor
- Remove chairs that are too low and difficult to get out of
- Do not wax floors
- Have adequate lighting in the house – especially at night along the trip to the bathroom
- Install bars in the shower / bathtub and around the toilet
- Use a raised toilet seat
- Put rubber mats in the bathtub / shower
- Be sure that shrubbery is trimmed around the sidewalks
- Have sidewalk cracks repaired
- Be sure there is adequate lighting between the car and house