

Dr Murphy's July 2007 Healthwatch Patient Newsletter



Suburban
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Suburban Chiropractic Center

Our office and staff are privileged to serve so many wonderful families throughout Morris, Essex, Union, Somerset and the surrounding counties.

Our focus is on improving the quality of life for you and your family. Let us know how we can be of service.



Relieving Back Pain during Pregnancy

Ah, the indescribable joys of pregnancy. The anticipation of new life, the intimate, developing bond between mother and child...and the back pain. More than 50% of women experience back pain during pregnancy, especially in the third trimester, and frequently the pain can be excruciating and debilitating.

A Swedish study involving 258 pregnant women investigated whether water gymnastics could reduce the intensity of back pain and the number of days taken for sick leave. Women were divided equally into two groups: an exercise group that participated in water gymnastics (one hour of relaxation exercises, performed in a swimming pool and accompanied by music) during the second half of their pregnancy; and a control group that did not participate in water gymnastics.

Although back pain intensity increased during the course of pregnancy for both groups, the exercise group reported less pain compared with the control group. The total number of reported days on sick leave was also lower in the exercise group (982 days taken) compared with controls (1,484 days taken).

Many of the joys and frustrations of parenthood will last much longer than nine months, so prepare yourself. But back pain is one frustration that doesn't have to last. If you're expecting a child and are experiencing back pain, talk to your doctor of chiropractic about making your pregnancy as pain-free as possible.

Chiropractic for PMS

No one's completely certain what causes premenstrual syndrome (PMS), but there's no denying the pain and distress millions of women suffer 7-10 days before menstruation every month. Different doctors have different recommendations for treating PMS, and there's one perspective you might be hearing more about soon -- Chiropractic.

A study involving 84 subjects (54 with diagnosed PMS and 30 without) evaluated the potential for chiropractic to help relieve PMS symptoms. Complete chiropractic examinations revealed that the PMS group was more likely to show signs of spinal problems (i.e., spinal tenderness, muscle weakness, neck disability, etc.) than the non-PMS group.

The study authors suggest that chiropractic care to correct these spinal problems may be an effective way to reduce some of the symptoms of PMS. If you're still searching for relief from the pain and frustration of premenstrual syndrome, make an appointment with your local chiropractor. A complete spinal examination could be an important step toward finding a solution.

Reference: Walsh MJ, Polus BI. The frequency of positive common clinical findings in a sample of premenstrual syndrome sufferers. *Journal of Manipulative and Physiological Therapeutics*, May 1999: Vol. 22, No. 4, pp216-220.

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Some Video Games Can Improve Vision

A University of Rochester study found playing action video games sharpens vision -- especially in those with amblyopia, known as "lazy eye." The study in Psychological Science found video action game-players did better on tests of visual acuity that assess the ability to see objects accurately in a cluttered space than their non-playing peers. "Action video game play changes the way our brains process visual information," Daphne Bavelier, professor of brain and cognitive sciences, said in a statement.



"After just 30 hours of training, people who normally don't play video games showed a substantial increase in the spatial resolution of their vision, meaning they could see small, closely packed letters more clearly." However, only certain games, such as first-person action games, are beneficial. Puzzle games have no effect, according to Bavelier.

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Middle-Aged Women Feel Much Younger

A new survey says 49 percent of U.S. women ages 40 to 55 say they feel younger than they actually are -- an average 17 years younger. Moreover, one-third of these women have sex more frequently now than in their 20s, according to the survey conducted by Kelton Research and commissioned by Estroven.

"These results further debunk the myth that menopausal women in their 40s and 50s suffer inordinately from depression and unrest," Dr. Donnica Moore, founder of DrDonnica.com, a women's health information Web site, said in a statement. "Quite the contrary, many women in their 40s and 50s experience what Margaret Mead termed 'postmenopausal zest.' Women are less inclined to accept the notion that middle age and menopause are tantamount to being 'old,' and that's a very refreshing and instructional attitude." When asked about the worst part of dealing with menopause, 24 percent of women ranked either prescription drugs or expensive doctor visits as their top concern.

Young Teens Get Alcohol from Parents

More than one-third of the alcohol consumed by teens 11 to 14 years old came from their parents, friends' parents or guardians, a U.S. study found. Only a small fraction -- 2.4 percent in the 6th grade and 5.6 percent at the end of the 8th grade -- obtain alcohol from commercial venues, according to the study published in the June issue of Preventive Medicine.

Principal investigator Kelli Komro, lead author Mary O. Hearst and colleagues studied 3,709 students, mainly of Hispanic and African-American backgrounds, who were surveyed in 58 Chicago public schools at the beginning and end of the 6th, 7th and 8th grades. The study is unique as no other study has followed young, racially diverse, poor urban youth over a 2 1/2-year period, observing patterns of social and commercial alcohol access, according to the researchers.

The study also found that while 17 percent at the start of the 6th grade drank alcohol, more than twice as many -- 41 percent -- were drinking by the end of the 8th grade.

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Too Much Exercise Can Be Exercise Disorder

If people exercise because they feel compelled to do so, despite injuries, they may be at risk for an exercise disorder, says a U.S. expert. There is no set formula or standard that reveals how much exercising is too much," Theresa Fassihi, a psychologist with the Eating Disorders Program at The Menninger Clinic, says in a statement. "But if exercising is interfering in a person's life, and it is compulsory, then it may be a problem." If people exercise frequently because they enjoy it and they like the health benefits it provides, they may have the right reasons for exercise. But if they run in the morning, train for the next marathon at night despite a nagging injury, and head to the gym to weight train in their free time, they may be at risk for developing an exercise disorder, according to Fassihi. Those with exercise disorders commonly restrict their calories, based on the mistaken belief that they will build a higher proportion of muscle if they restrict their food intake while exercising.

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Study: Teen Weight-Loss Surgery Balloons

Weight loss surgery for teens is still uncommon, but increasing fast, a new U.S. study says. The number of adolescents undergoing bariatric surgery for weight loss more than tripled between 2000-03, but teens still account for less than 1 percent of the procedures, according to an article in the March issue of Archives of Pediatrics and Adolescent Medicine.

The two most common types of the surgery are gastric bypass and gastric banding, both of which lead to weight loss by altering the path food takes through the digestive system. The surgery has become increasingly common for severely obese adults who fear the health effects of being overweight. Using data from a nationwide database of community hospital data, researchers from Robert Wood Johnson medical school determined that only 771 of the 105,473 weight-loss surgeries in 2003 were performed on teenagers. Though younger patients tended to recuperate faster, they suffered many of the same surgical complications as adults, including respiratory problems which affected 84 percent of adolescents versus 67 percent of adults. More research is needed to learn the long-term effects of gastric surgery for younger patients, the authors conclude.

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School-Based Program Cuts Kids' Cavities

A U.S. school-based program that gives children oral-health education, dental exams, cleanings and preventive care reduced cavities by 50 percent. The program, called ForsythKids, resulted in a 50-percent reduction of cavities after one round of treatment in kids who participated. After two rounds, there was virtually no new tooth decay. The findings were presented by Boston-based Forsyth Institute scientists at the 85th General Session of the International Association for Dental Research in New Orleans. "Our initial studies have shown that you can effectively prevent, what is today, the most common childhood disease -- tooth decay," Richard Niederman, director of the Center for Evidence-Based Dentistry at The Forsyth Institute, said in a statement. "Just two weeks ago we saw a terrible tragedy in the national news about a tooth infection that led to the untimely death of a 12-year-old boy, who like thousands of other children, did not have access to dental care."

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Smoking Parents Affect Children's Lungs

Children of smokers who don't show any signs of respiratory problems may still have damaged lung function later in life, according to a Dutch study. "Everyone knows that children of smokers have more respiratory problems -- more puffing, wheezing, cases of pneumonia -- but until now we haven't known if lung function is impaired in children of smokers who don't have any respiratory complaints or diagnosed lung problems," Dr. Bert Arets of the University Medical Center Utrecht in the Netherlands said in a statement.



The study of 244 children ages 4 to 12 without any history of lung or airway disease was divided into four groups according to the smoking pattern of their parents: never smoked, smoked after birth but not during pregnancy, smoked during pregnancy but not after birth, and smoked both before and after birth. The study found that children of smoking parents had significantly reduced lung function, similar to that seen in smokers. Smoking after birth appeared to be more harmful than smoking during pregnancy alone, according to the findings presented at the American Thoracic Society International Conference in San Francisco.

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Exercise Prevents Repetitive Strain Injury

An active lifestyle outside of work may help protect against work-related repetitive strain injury, a Canadian study found. C.R. Ratzlaff of the University of British Columbia in Vancouver analyzed data from the 2003 Canadian Community Health Survey, a population-based national survey that includes data on 58,622 full-time workers between 15 and 74. The study in the April issue of Arthritis Care & Research discovered being physically active over 50 was also protective against repetitive strain injury. Leisure-time physical activity may promote mechanical and metabolic processes in the musculoskeletal system, which counter the repetitive or sedentary effects of many jobs, the study authors said.

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Health Tips: Carpal Tunnel Syndrome:

If you're performing jobs or participating in activities that require repetitive hand movements, you might be at risk for developing carpal tunnel syndrome.



The condition, caused by inflammation and irritation in the narrow groove formed by eight small bones and tissue in the wrist, affects an estimated 3.7 percent of the U.S. population, or some 8.1 million individuals.

Those most susceptible to the potentially debilitating ailment include mechanics, cashiers, carpenters, grocery store checkers, manufacturing or assembly-line workers, violinists, gardeners, golfers and knitters. Heavy computer use and typing also are suspected of bringing on CTS, which is characterized by:

- An ache in the wrist that may move into the hand or forearm;
- Swelling in the wrist and hand;
- Numbness, burning or tingling in the hand and fingers;
- Increased pain when moving the hand or wrist;
- Weakness in the thumb and first three fingers;
- Loss of strength and difficulty gripping objects;
- Pain in the wrist, palm or forearm;
- Pronounced pain and/or numbing during sleep;
- Muscle atrophy.

According to the Department of Health and Human Services, women are three times as likely as men to suffer from CTS, perhaps because their wrist bones tend to be smaller, creating a tighter space through which the nerves and tendons must pass. Their genetic makeup may also increase the likelihood of musculoskeletal injuries, and their hormonal changes during pregnancy and menopause may make them more susceptible.

CTS also can be brought on or exacerbated by a misalignment of the carpal bones and wrist, trauma to the wrist, arthritis, gout, neck and shoulder problems and tumors.

Preventing Carpal Tunnel Syndrome:

Steps to prevent carpal tunnel syndrome, including:

- Change your work environment to lessen the stress and strain on the wrist and hand.
- Make sure the workspace and equipment are at the right height and distance for the hands and wrist. For computer users, the keyboard should be placed high enough to permit the wrist to rest comfortably without bending.
- For most people, the workspace should be some 27 to 29 inches above the floor.
- Keep your elbows close to your sides as you type to reduce the strain on your forearm.
- Maintain good posture and wrist position.
- Take a 10-to-15-minute break every hour to give your hands and wrists time to rest and recover.
- Vary your tasks, avoiding repetitive motions, or at least breaking them up each hour with movements that work different muscles.
- Relax your grip, unwind your muscles and practice gentle, loose hand and wrist motions to avoid stress and tension that can strain and irritate muscle.
- Exercise, flexing and bending the wrists and hands in the opposite direction from the repetitive movement. A sample: after typing, make a tight fist, hold, stretch the fingers, hold, repeat several times.
- Keep your hands warm, even if you have to wear fingerless gloves during work.

Take A Vacation and Take It Easy!

Surveys show more than one-third of Americans do not use all of their allotted vacation time -- but they should, says a U.S. expert.

"Taking a vacation helps rest your mind and body so that you are more flexible and you have a better perspective when you come back," says Jon Allen, a senior staff psychologist with The Menninger Clinic in Houston.



However, experts at The Menninger Clinic also realize vacations can also cause stress, and they suggest:

- Allow time for departure and return. Build in some extra time for travel in vacation plans in case of glitches like a flight delay or snarled traffic.
- Be prepared for cries of "I want!" from children. Explain to children beforehand that all spending money has been divided and put into an envelope for each child. When a child exclaims "I really, really want it!" take out his or her envelope.
- Take time to unwind. Remember, the purpose of a vacation is to relax -- not to visit every museum and historical monument in the guidebook.

Benefits of Leisure -

No matter what form a summer break takes, the benefits of leisure time can be powerful. Leisure doesn't have to cost money or involve major consumption, according to Yoshi Iwasaki, professor of therapeutic recreation at Temple University in Philadelphia. "Focus on the quality of the experience instead of the actual activities," explains Iwasaki. "People value enjoyable and expressive activities in all cultures and if they can find meanings of life from these activities, the quality of life can be enhanced." Iwasaki compared Western leisure to non-Western leisure and found that meaningful leisure contributed significantly to quality of life. Leisure activities include: dance, music, sewing, craft circles, storytelling, painting, spirituality, and humor as well as just having a safe place for a group to get together to talk, eat and take care of their children. Iwasaki found that cross-culturally enjoyable and expressive activities provide:

- Positive emotions and well-being.
- Positive identities and self-esteem.
- Social and cultural connections.
- Enhanced learning and development as well as human strength and resilience.

Dealing with work while on vacation -

Vacation-time is not always work-free. Twenty percent of workers say they plan to stay in touch with their workplace while on vacation, according to CareerBuilder.com's annual vacation survey. However, only 9 percent say their employers expect them to check-in. "There are a host of reasons why employees feel compelled to forgo a vacation or obsessively check in," says Rosemary Haefner, vice president of Human Resources at CareerBuilder.com. "Some may fear if they are gone and things go smoothly, it will send a message that they aren't needed; however, the opposite can actually be true." If employees prepare in advance and anticipate issues, it can positively reflect on the worker's management and organization skills, according to Haefner. She recommends:

- Several weeks before vacation compile important information, key contacts and a list of any deadlines to give to co-workers.
- Instead of having co-workers call you, tell them when you are going to check in, so you can control the time allotted.
- If a big project and a great vacation are planned for the same week, expect one of the two to give. Schedule time off before and after the big project.

Avoiding 'post-vacation syndrome -

The general feeling of discomfort caused by a person's inability to adapt to work after finishing the vacation has a name: "post-vacation syndrome." Humbelina Robles Ortega, a researcher at the University of Granada, in Spain, estimates 35 percent of workers in Spain between the ages of 25 and 40 will experience post-vacation syndrome. Robles Ortega notes that getting back to a routine can cause both physical symptoms including: tiredness, lack of appetite, lack of concentration, drowsiness or sleeplessness, abnormally rapid heartbeat and muscular ache. Psychological symptoms include: irritability, anxiety, sadness, couldn't-care-less attitude and a deep feeling of emptiness. To help minimize post-holiday syndrome, Robles Ortega advises:

- Divide the holiday time off into several periods. For instance, two 15-day holidays are preferable to one 30 days long.
- Get home a few days earlier to re-adapt from vacation habits like sleeping late.
- Plan trips and other pleasant activities all year, instead of only during summer.

Mouth Guards Should Be Part of Summer Fun

California dental hygienists want mouth guards to be as much a part of child summer activities as suntan lotion, bikes and a water bottle.

The California Dental Hygienists Association says using a mouth guard can prevent a traumatic accident for children and costly bills for parents.

Soccer, surfing, football, water polo, baseball, basketball and countless other activities all present potential situations for accidents and mouth injuries, according to the CDHA.

"With so many things to worry about, parents too frequently forget about mouth protection for their children," Susan McLearn, CDHA's president, said in a statement.

"As professionals concerned with improving oral health, we are kicking off summer by reminding parents to incorporate mouth guards into their daily checklist." Mouth guards absorb the energy of a blow and can prevent fractured teeth and other injuries.

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Small Children at Risk in Elevators

Parents holding children often do not realize that elevator doors can injure children held in their arms or in a stroller, a U.S. study found. Researchers at the Indiana University School of Medicine and a colleague from Ohio State University used U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission data and found that an estimated 29,030 elevator-related injuries in children required a visit to the emergency department of a hospital between 1990 and 2000.

The most frequent cause of injury was the elevator door closing on a body part, and the most frequently injured body region was the upper extremity. Many of these injuries were caused when a limb was purposely used in an attempt to stop elevator doors from closing, according to the study published in *Clinical Pediatrics*. "What really surprised us was the number of infants with head injuries in our study," study leader Dr. Joseph O'Neil, of the Indiana University School of Medicine, said in a statement.

"As the elevator doors closed mothers may not realize the vulnerability of babies in strollers or in their arms."

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Calcium from Food Better for Women's Bones

Women who get most of their calcium from food have healthier bones than women whose calcium comes mainly from supplemental tablets. Washington University School of Medicine researchers say adequate calcium is important to prevent osteoporosis, which affects an estimated 8 million American women and 2 million American men.



The researchers asked 183 postmenopausal women to detail their diet and their calcium supplement intake for a week and tested bone mineral density and urinary concentrations. The "diet group" took in the least calcium, an average of 830 milligrams per day, yet had higher bone density in their spines and hipbones than women in the supplement group, who consumed about 1,030 milligrams per day, according to the study published in the *American Journal of Clinical Nutrition*. Women in the "diet plus supplement group" tended to have the highest bone mineral density as well as the highest calcium intake at 1,620 milligrams/day, the study found. "Only 35% of the calcium in most supplements ends up being absorbed by the body," author Reina Armamento-Villareal said. "Calcium from the diet is generally better absorbed and this could be a reason that women who got a high percentage of calcium in their food had higher bone densities."

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Candy Cigarettes May Make Future Smokers

A U.S. study suggests that children who play with candy cigarettes may become future cigarette smokers. The study, published in the July issue of *Preventive Medicine*, shows that in a nationally representative sample of 25,887 U.S. adults, 22 percent of smokers said they had regularly had candy cigarettes as children, compared with 14 percent of nonsmokers who had eaten the candy cigarettes. Twelve percent of smokers said they had never tried the candy, compared with 22 percent of non-smokers who hadn't, according to study leader Jonathan Klein of the University of Rochester. Candy cigarettes are made of candy or gum, shaped into cylindrical sticks and sold in rectangular boxes roughly the size of cigarette packs. In the United States, candy cigarettes are typically displayed next to the bubble gum and the trading cards commonly sold in supermarkets and convenience stores, according to Klein.

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How You Sleep Affects What You Eat

How you sleep appears to affect what you eat, U.S. researchers said Monday. Researchers suggested that people who don't get enough sleep may be too tired to prepare their own meals at home and tend to eat meals at restaurants where attention to nutrition may be lacking. "Persons with sleep complaints such as insomnia are less likely to eat at home," said Mindy Engle-Friedman, associate professor of psychology at Baruch College of the City University of New York. "These meals outside the home may require less effort and may be less healthful than meals prepared at home." "Over time, persons with sleep complaints may have ... health problems related to their nutrition," she told United Press International at the 21st annual meeting of the Associated Professional Sleep Societies in Minneapolis. She studied the sleep and diet of 21 healthy undergraduates -- 12 men and 9 women -- for seven days. She found that students who were getting less sleep tended to eat more meals outside the home. "There are commuting students so they are either preparing meals at home or are eating meals that are prepared by their parents," Engle-Friedman said at her poster presentation during the meeting attended by more than 5,300 healthcare professionals. "We have found that meals prepared at home are healthier than those in restaurants; the home-cooked meals have less fat and have less salt generally," she said.

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Most Keep Weight Off for Year After Diet

About six out of 10 U.S. adults did not regain weight -- to within 5 percent of their initial weight loss -- one year after dieting, says a government study. Researchers at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in Atlanta analyzed data from the National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey on 1,310 adults ages 20 to 84 who had experienced "substantial" weight loss -- 10 percent of their initial weight. Almost 8 percent of survey participants were still losing weight after one year, while nearly 34 percent regained weight, according to the study published in the July issue of the American Journal of Preventive Medicine. Putting pounds back on was more common in those who lost a greater percentage of weight, said Edward Weiss, a medical epidemiologist with the National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention. "One possible explanation is that those who lost larger percentages of their maximum weight may have had to make greater lifestyle changes that are difficult to incorporate and sustain," the study suggests.

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Exercise Can Trigger New Brain Neurons

Scientists believed older brains could not reverse brain shrinkage, but a U.S. study finds brisk walking can increase production of new brain neurons. Three hours of brisk walking per day can trigger biochemical changes that increase production of new brain neurons, according to researchers at University of Illinois.



Another study shows that a structured exercise program may boost the physical well-being of sedentary seniors who are at risk of losing independent functioning, according to the Lifestyle Interventions and Independence for Elders pilot study. The findings are published in The Journal of Gerontology: Medical Sciences.

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Pregnant Women Safe to Lose Weight

Obese moms-to-be can safely exercise and diet to lose weight during pregnancy, found a small pilot study by Saint Louis University researchers. "Doctors hadn't encouraged pregnant women who were obese to limit their weight gain or have them lose weight because they were afraid it would hurt the baby," principal investigator Dr. Raul Artal, of Saint Louis University, said in a statement. "We found that obese women do not have to gain any weight, and, in fact, can lose weight and it won't hurt the baby. Pregnancy is an ideal time to start an exercise and fitness program, particularly for women who are obese." The study flies in the face of the "eat for two" and "take it easy" advice that obstetricians gave to a past generation of pregnant women, according to Artal. Artal examined two groups of pregnant women who were obese and had gestational diabetes -- a type of diabetes that starts during pregnancy. More women who exercised and dieted either lost or maintained their weight than women in the group that followed the standard diabetic diet. Babies born to women who lost or maintained their weight were more likely to be of normal size, according to the study published in the journal Applied Physiology, Nutrition, and Metabolism.

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