

Emerald City Clinic

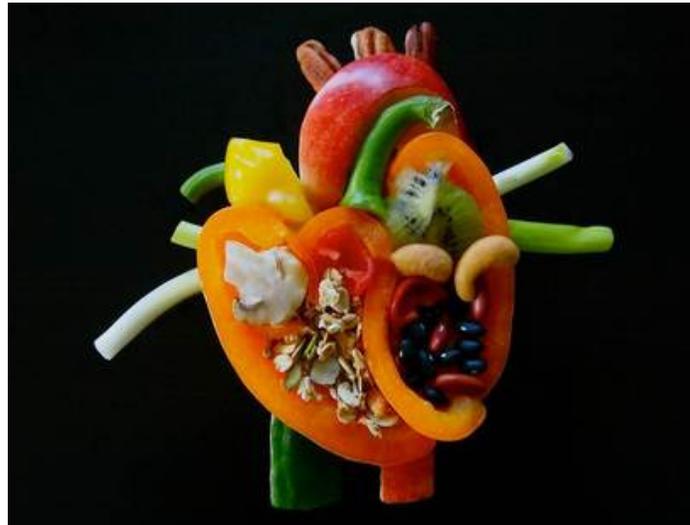
Spring Newsletter

Spring 2013

A Healthy Trajectory

Although many things can terminate our lives early, such as cancer or a traumatic accident, the number one cause of death in the United States still remains heart disease. The most important aspect of the cardiovascular system is that it provides oxygen and nutrients to every cell in the body; most importantly to the brain. Most of you are familiar that Dr. Molly's 5 Point Health plan starts with water. I have recently decided that oxygen is far more important than water. We can live longer without water than without oxygen; hence the essential nature of the coordinated efforts of the heart and lungs to obtain and distribute oxygen.

As a Naturopathic Physician I am primarily interested in optimizing people's health and preventing disease processes. Recently in a discussion with a therapist, she said to me that I was noticing a life "trajectory" that was not headed in the right direction. Of course she was referring to an emotional/psychology situation, but I



really grasped this concept and recognized that I use this concept all the time with my clients. I see the trajectory they are headed and change the angle so that the end point arrives at a healthier life. When you change the angle, even the slightest bit years in advance, the end point can be significantly improved. This is why small changes in making healthier choices can significantly alter the outcome, especially the earlier in life these changes occur. Mathematically speaking the older we get the greater the change in

the angle we need to make to affect the outcome. I would like to address cardiovascular health and some of the biggest issues facing us as Americans and challenge each of you to make one small change to improve your trajectory.

There are some significant factors to heart and cardiovascular health that need to be addressed. The heart itself is a mechanical pump that has a finite number of pumps in its lifetime. This is why a resting heart rate should be as low as possible. If your resting

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heart rate is between 60-65 rather than 70-80 then the pump is less active and has the potential to last longer. Then there are the pipes leading to and from the heart. The arteries leave the heart and are under significant pressure. This type of blood vessel has much thicker musculature for this reason. The veins leave the periphery of the body and go to the heart and are under much less pressure. Besides the pump and plumbing, there is the fluid that goes through the blood vessels: the blood. Depending on the quality and consistency of the blood the whole system will work

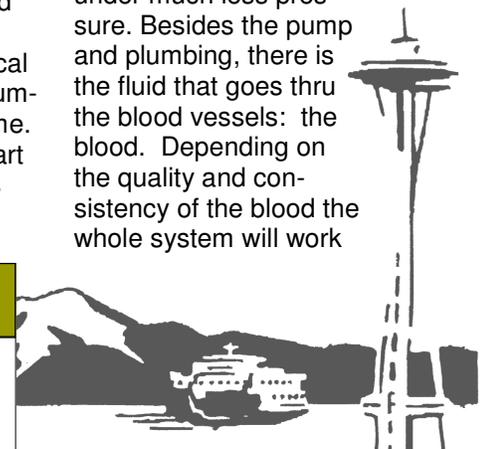
ECN's Upcoming Important Dates

Fri, April 12th: Visioning Meeting: The office will be closed this afternoon.

Sat, April 13th: Next Saturday Hours: The office will be open from 9am-noon. Dr. Kelley Barnes-Valdes will be at the helm.

Fri, April 19th: Dr. Molly's Birthday Weekend: The office will be closed this afternoon.

Wed, July 17th: Summer IMT See Dr. Molly's article above for further information, or contact ECN with any questions.



differently. The master control of this system is feedback from the endocrine glands, which regulate all parts of our cardiovascular system including fluid contents, blood pressure, prioritization of blood location, etc.

Recently, I went to a lecture about “blood viscosity”. It has been associated more strongly with cardiovascular events such as heart attacks and strokes; even MORE than cholesterol and hypertension. It makes sense that thick blood would lead to cardiovascular disease and other health issues. Much like backed up plumbing you exert more pressure on the pipes, which leads to more clogging, more sewage collection, etc. With this in mind, we recognize that the thinner the blood, the better. The lecture was introducing us to this new \$300 test to check our patients’ blood viscosity which was really intriguing to me as a physician, but I had to question the financial expense versus the knowledge we would obtain from the test. I would recommend a test if it would reduce anxiety OR change my therapeutic regime. So I questioned our expert about the treatment for thick blood. I was not surprised to hear once again a version of Molly’s 5 Point Health Plan:

Hydration: Without proper hydration the blood is thick. Hydration requires proper intake of water and herbal teas as well as reduction in things that are diuretics such as alcohol, caffeine, and sugar. It also requires a good fluid/solid balance meaning we need proper mineralization. This means at least 3 cups of vegetables per day to provide the minerals we need to keep proper fluid balance.

Omega 3 oils: Omega 3 oils, especially those high in EPA like fish oils, are anti-inflammatory. They keep the walls of the blood vessels well lubricated and the blood viscosity healthy. They prevent the “sticky” type of cholesterol that gums up the works.

Exercise: Daily exercise, you heard me, daily exercise for at least ½ hour

is needed. This belief that we only need to move our bodies 3x/week just is not how we evolved. In all actuality, men need 1 hour of sustained exercise per day and women need at least three 20 minute sessions of aerobics. This has to do with the differences in hormones, lean body mass, and layers of subcutaneous fat. I also like to point out that evolutionarily men traditionally were the “hunters” running long distances while the women were more apt to be around a home site gathering, tending to children, moving for shorter periods of time more often. Exercise moves the blood around not allowing it to stagnate. Also routine exercise lowers your resting heart rate protecting the “number of pumps” left in the heart.

Raising core temperature: This I found interesting and not in my 5 point health plan per se. The use of hot/cold treatments, saunas, and sweating (from exercise NOT meno-

“.....those who donated blood were less likely to have a heart attack regardless of their diet, exercise, and cholesterol.....”

pause) keeps the blood thinner. Sweating is a great thing to do. People who do not easily sweat are dehydrated and do not have enough minerals in their lives. The inability to sweat is a sign the body is NOT going to let anything go because it is depleted. Our skin is our largest detox organ and needs to be an open channel for excretion of unnecessary toxins. On a side note, menopause sweating is a completely different mechanism which is NOT beneficial for the cardiovascular system. Menopause sweating is beneficial as a way to alert women and their doctor that things are out of balance.

Bloodletting: This one really made sense to me when I heard it explained. There was a large study of

over 20,000 people demonstrating that those who donated blood were less likely to have a heart attack regardless of their diet, exercise, and cholesterol; whether they were medicated or un-medicated. It explains why premenopausal women, who are regularly bleeding, are less likely to have any heart disease. Once we reach menopause we are at equal risk of heart disease as any man. I laughed at the fact that there might have been some therapeutic reason for leeches in previous medical practices.

Moving forward, I wanted to address another important concept: If the blood vessels themselves are inflamed (which can be reduced by Omega 3 oils) then the body wants to “band aid” the inflammation. This band aid is called plaque. Plaque is more apt to happen in people with more available building blocks like those found in thicker blood. So what causes inflammation? Many things do but some of the top things I see:

Blood sugar: Sugar in the blood stream is like battery acid. This is why diabetes is so dangerous. Diabetes is a cardiovascular disease. The trauma to the blood vessels that high sugar levels cause is the dangerous consequence of diabetes.

Heavy metals/toxins: The vascular walls are totally irritated by toxic metals like lead and mercury. Our strong muscular walls are built with available minerals. Too often the walls were not formed with the calcium and magnesium we needed as it was not in abundance at the time of construction. Instead, the body latched onto the other toxic minerals. This inappropriate deposition of minerals increases plaque formation.

So how do I recommend “changing your trajectory” and keeping your cardiovascular system healthy? First I want to make you aware of many objective findings or tests we can do to help prioritize what changes you make:

Blood tests: A) Cholesterol testing: Testing total cholesterol with HDL and LDL portions is just a screening test. There are many types of HDL or protective cholesterol components and many more types of LDL or more damaging cholesterol. It is important to find out the types of cholesterol you have to properly target your treatment.

B) Inflammatory markers: There are many cardiovascular inflammatory markers that can be addressed nutritionally. These may include homocysteine, CRP, Cystatin, GGT, to name a few. **C)** Spectracell nutritional assessment: There is a blood test available that individually looks at the nutritional status of the white blood cells, and can determine what specifically may be lacking.

Imaging: Many cardiologists are offering "calcium scoring" of the heart. This is imaging to look at the calcium deposits of the heart and therefore the plaque situation. If you already have calcium in the heart, then prevention did not occur. I really recommend a carotid ultrasound OR Intramedia Thickness test (CIMT/IMT). This test is a simple, inexpensive, non-

invasive test that is an ultrasound of your carotid arteries. It takes 15 minutes and lets us know how much inflammation and plaque formation is in your vascular system. There is a 95-97% correlation with the health of the carotid arteries and the health of the heart. Emerald City Clinic does this test quarterly and there are treatments that can be instituted to change your trajectory.

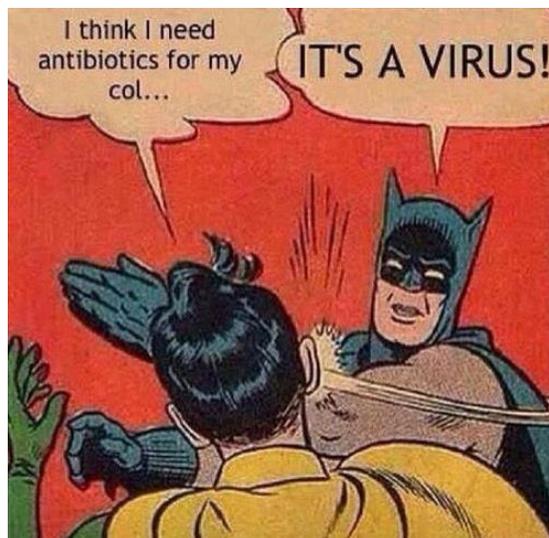
Other testing: Echocardiogram, Stress EKG and Stress Echo. These functional tests should begin in your 50s and you can discuss the need for these tests individually with your physician(s) at Emerald City Clinic.

Bottom-line: First if you follow Dr. Molly's 5 Point Health Plan (found on our website if you do not have it) then minimally you will protect your heart. For the heart the top three are water, omega 3 oils and exercise. In addition, saunas and donating blood could help. We are offering a special through June for saunas: ½ hour of medically managed sauna for \$10. Medically managed means electrolytes, vitals and discussion about how to properly sweat will be included. Packages of 6 for \$50.

Always room for laughter!

Please see our blog for information on how to prevent and treat your cold and flu:

www.emeraldcityclinic.blogspot.com.



Dural Release Technique

by Kelley Barnes-Valdes, ND

The central nervous system (brain and spinal cord) signals every process that occurs in the body including the function of all of our muscles and organs. The dura is the connective tissue that surrounds the central nervous system. Just like a "knot" in a muscle, the dura can become restricted due to injury, chronic overuse or posture issues, or may even have restrictions from birth trauma. When these restrictions are present, the nerves cannot function optimally and the muscles or organs that the nerves signal also cannot function optimally. This leads to a whole array of dysfunction such as sluggish digestion, joint pain, back pain, headaches, or even problems with the kidneys or cardiovascular system.

The treatment for this problem is the dural release technique, which takes only about 10 minutes and involves a type of deep stretch of your neck and back. This technique is very gentle and almost anybody can receive it. The dural release technique is an excellent addition to naturopathic care as it enhances other treatments and helps the body heal from chronic pain or dysfunction.

I was personally moved by dural release as I suffered from chronic neck and back pain along with debilitating headaches that were bad enough to cause seizures on several occasions. I tried many treatments including craniosacral, massage, chiropractic care, herbs, oils, baths, dietary changes, etc. over the course of a decade. While many of these things helped for a little while, the headaches and pain always returned. Once I started receiving dural release treatments, my pain and headaches resolved and now I only have to receive a treatment about 2-4 times a year to keep it from coming back. This treatment was so powerful for me I wanted to share it with others, so I trained with my practitioner and am happy to be able to offer it to all of you!

Why you can't lose weight; otherwise known as: STRESS *by Rachel Erickson, ND*

So. You can't lose weight. Maybe you think you can't lose weight because you need to control your eating habits better, cut back on the heavy calories in the beer or wine, eat less sugar, or stop that midnight snacking and weekend binge eating/drinking. Maybe you think if you just got some exercise, or more exercise, everything would be better. Or maybe you're one of those really frustrated types who exercises like crazy (we're talking P90x), eats pretty well, and can't figure out why you're still unable to shed a pound.

Good news folks! You are probably dealing with some really high levels of stress! Yes there are certainly plenty of other reasons why you might not be shedding a pound, but for now let's focus on stress related causes for not losing weight. I see this a lot, and it manifests in many different ways—unfortunately no quick fix diet plan is going to solve your dilemma.

To all you postpartum women, folks on decade 2 or 3 of high-stress jobs, and those of you suffering from the chronic stress of a tough partnership, parenthood, or caretaking position of a loved one: This one is for you. You all have one thing in common. You are Stressed Out, and probably not managing it very well.

How do people look when they are stressed and not managing it? They are eating too much, not exercising regularly enough, gaining weight around the middle, not sleeping well, emotionally volatile or turned off, drinking coffee in the morning and alcohol in the night, depressed, angry, unmotivated to make changes in their life for the better, or just trying to hang on for dear life. Sound familiar? Maybe you are 5 of the 10 listed above. No matter, this affects you, too.

So here's your take home message: You can't do it alone! You didn't learn

how to read by yourself, or ride a bike, or communicate solo; you had coaches all along the way. And if you're really smart, you still have coaches, fitness trainers, a business coach if you're a lucky entrepreneur, counselors, mentors at work, pastors and priests at church, maybe even a dietitian or an acupuncturist, maybe even me. Point being: You're getting older, things are shifting, you're aging, stress has been sleeping in your bed



“...stress has been sleeping in your bed for 7, 15, 23, years now and you think you can figure out how to manage it; you know what to do, you're just not doing it...”

for 7, 15, 23, years now and you think you can figure out how to manage it. You might even think that you can manage it, you know what to do, and you're just not doing it. Tricky, tricky. Well I'm here to give you another perspective.

You've never been here before, so how would you know how to get back? I mean, your stress levels have crept up; you've managed them the best way you know how, and look where it's gotten you? Read two paragraphs above! So clearly you don't know how to manage your stress and weight by yourself. You need a stress manager, or two.

Here are some easy things to remember:

1. Weight loss is very difficult when stressed
2. Relaxation techniques, meditation, prayer, and breathing exercises reduce the levels of stress hormones in your body
3. Adrenal support is essential to modulate stress hormone production, talk to your naturopath or come see me
4. Acupuncture, massage, hot tubs, scrubs at the spa, saunas, craniosacral therapy or any other hands on therapies reduce stress levels
5. Stop the addictive cycles of temporary stress reduction like alcohol, tobacco, watching tv instead of sleeping, not exercising, and eating when you're not hungry.
6. Stop the addictive cycles of uppers that keep you going and increase your stress hormones; coffee, red bull, sugar, monsters, etc.

But here's the catch, you can't just STOP doing the bad things-- that doesn't work, or you would have done it by now. So ADD in the good things, TAPER out the bad things, be GENTLE with yourself, and get a coach to lead you through this process. It's not easy, but by reducing your stress, stress triggers, and stress inducers, you can start the gradual process of permanent weight loss.

ECN's Green Corner

- We will take your old tincture bottles, just drop them off at your next visit! If you NEED larger bottles (16 or 32 oz), we have these available for you!
- We will recycle your old glasses and contact lenses that are still packaged.

What does your TONGUE say about your health? *by Vanda Huang, ND, LAc*

Grab a mirror and let's see if your tongue falls into one or more of the top 3 patterns that I typically see.

1. Does your tongue look purplish or dusky?

Look underneath your tongue and see if you can see two purple colored veins—if you can, you have some degree of blood stagnation which can result from any sort of chronic stress, chronic pain or circulation problems.

Treatment: Chinese herbs, cupping or gua sha

Effect: better blood circulation, detoxification, less pain, looser muscles and we all know that a relaxed

body equals a relaxed mind so less stress!

2. Does your tongue have a thick white coat?

The top of your tongue should have a thin white coat. If it's too thick or too wet, too dry or slightly yellow in color these all indicate dysfunction. A thick white coat usually points to a problem with your digestion. By strengthening your digestion, you can prevent a large variety of health problems.

Treatment: acupuncture, Chinese herbs and dietary changes

Effect: better digestion, more energy, less sugar cravings, clearer thinking

3. Does your tongue have tooth marks on the edges, i.e., is it scalloped?

An ideal tongue has no tooth marks and doesn't look slightly swollen. A scalloped tongue indicates you have some sort of deficiency which can cause symptoms such as fatigue, malaise, poor memory and feeling cold easily.

Treatment: acupuncture or moxibustion and dietary changes

Effect: improved mood and energy, less aversion to cold, more stamina

The wonderful thing about Chinese Medicine is how it uses simple diagnostic methods such as looking at your tongue to not only treat your current symptoms but prevent future health problems as well.

Notes from the Admin Side

- **Exciting News! Emerald City Clinic is launching a new website this Spring! Log on in April to explore all we have to offer:**
 - Handouts on Health Maintenance, Acute Illness, Pediatrics, and Nutrition
 - Current and archived Newsletters
 - Explanations on all of the modalities we offer
 - Ability to pay your bill and look up insurance information
 - Direct links to our blog (sign up for email notifications!), scheduling features, and our Facebook page (Be sure to "Like" us on our FB page!)
- ECN is becoming more active in the Crown Hill Business Association, and you can too! If you have a business in the Crown Hill area and would like to work on forward progress in our neighborhood, check out their website on how to join! [Www.crownhillbusiness.org](http://www.crownhillbusiness.org)
- Please remember: Dr. Molly is here only part time. It will take longer to answer any emails that you send her way. If you have something more urgent that needs to be discussed, please call our front desk. Although you may often reach our voicemail, we will be sure to call you RIGHT back!

Keeping Crown Hill Beautiful!

The Crown Hill Business Association is hosting a Spring Clean for the Crown Hill area. Here are the details:

Saturday, April 27th at 9am

- Meet at PetCo at 9am
- Teams will spread out along Holman Road, 15th Ave. NW and various side roads
- Pick up litter, paint out graffiti
- Work until 1pm, or whenever your schedule allows
- Kids are welcome too!

Supplies are provided by the City of Seattle

- Gloves (or bring your own!)
- Safety Vests
- Trash Bags— the City will pick them up after the event.

Emerald City Clinic is a part of the Crown Hill Business Association. We may see you there!

Arsenic in Rice *by Erin Westaway, ND*



Why arsenic is a problem:

- Arsenic is a naturally occurring element that is highly toxic in large amounts.
- Arsenic exposure in smaller quantities is associated with increased risk of a variety of health conditions including cancer, cardiovascular and respiratory conditions, diabetes, neurobehavioral issues, etc.
- Infants and toddlers are most at risk for immediate serious complications from arsenic exposure. The long term effects of smaller exposures usually show up later in life.

Why rice is specifically an issue:

- Rice takes up arsenic out of the soil at a higher rate than other grains.
- Rice in the U.S. is often grown in soil where arsenic has historically been used as a pesticide.
- In some other countries, rice fields are often irrigated with arsenic contaminated water.

Other sources of arsenic exposure:

- Other foods that are the most common sources of arsenic include tree fruits and juices from tree fruits such as apples. This is because of the pesticides that were used on the land, even if they aren't used anymore.

- Other grains do take up arsenic, just not at rates as high as rice
- Non-organic poultry. Arsenic is often added to non-organic poultry feed. The waste of these animals is then used as fertilizer, arsenic and all.
- Lumber treated before 2004
- Contaminated drinking water
- Cigarette smoke

Differences in rice Products:

- Brown rice has more arsenic than white rice, because the arsenic is concentrated in the outer parts of the grain that are stripped when rice is processed into white rice. Brown rice has other nutritional benefits over white rice though, so I wouldn't throw the baby out with the bathwater here.
- Brown rice syrup can concentrate arsenic and contain higher levels of arsenic than other sweeteners. This is a very common sweetener in "natural" products.
- Rice drinks, infant rice formulas, and rice cereals can also contain high levels of arsenic.

What you can do:

- Eat a diet high in insoluble fiber. This helps to bind toxins like arsenic so they can get out of your body in your stool. It also helps reduce constipation and has many other health benefits.
- Vary your diet. Mix it up. Instead of eating rice every day, try substituting other grains like millet and quinoa.
- Cook your rice differently. Cook your rice with lots of extra water and then drain off the water (more like how you would cook pasta). Inorganic arsenic, which is the most toxic form of arsenic, is water soluble and you'll end up draining some of it off.

- Read labels. Be aware of when you're buying products that contain rice syrup, rice bran, or rice flour. You'll be surprised how often this is the case.
- Buy organic poultry. Organically raised poultry are not fed arsenic containing feed and therefore they are not contributing to arsenic contamination on other crops. Poultry waste is often used as fertilizer.

- Avoid using rice cereal as a first food for infants.
- Make sure that any rice protein powders you're using have very strict quality control measures. At Emerald City Naturopathic Clinic we are careful to carry products that are tested for arsenic and other contaminants and found to be safe.

If you're concerned about your diet or your arsenic levels, give us a call. We're experienced in dealing with toxicity issues and can help you make a plan to optimize your health.

Friendly Reminder from Dr. Molly:

Prescription rights: Clients have informed me recently that they did not know that Naturopaths (specifically those at Emerald City Clinic) have prescription rights. We do! This means not only can we prescribe all pharmaceuticals (except narcotics); we can also legally wean you off your prescription medications when appropriate. So there is no need to "keep" your conventional MD if all you are doing is refilling your prescriptions with him/her. Your physician at Emerald City Clinic can do this with a broad knowledge base about how to use prescriptions judiciously. Also please never "cold turkey" off of your prescriptions. The body has learned to lean on these medications, and by stopping them suddenly you could make any situation worse for yourself. Best practices include having all of your prescriptions, whether pharmaceuticals or natural supplements, monitored by your Emerald City Clinic doctors.