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Rockwood Natural Medicine Clinic Newsletter

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Issue: 2

February 2014



Greetings!

Welcome to RNMC's February e-newsletter. We will be providing healthy tips, coupons and other important information in a monthly e-newsletter, so be sure to add us as a "safe sender" to your email provider. We look forward to hearing from you with requests for articles, thoughts and ideas.

Sincerely,

The Physicians at RNMC

Hair Loss in Women By Meghna Thacker, NMD

Healthy hair is what every woman wants. A woman is almost terrified to experience hair loss. She may deal with any other health problem better but will get completely stressed out if she begins to lose her hair. And that turns into a vicious cycle since stress will cause more hair loss. In my practice, I have found that causes of hair loss in women vary based on their age, health condition, and hormone levels. Let me share with you my experience.



Diet and Nutrition: This is a no-brainer. Everyone needs to eat a well

balanced diet with adequate protein, fresh fruits, and vegetables. I can talk about diet in length but for this topic let's just say that an undernourished person will experience hair loss due to lack of adequate protein and nutrients in the diet.

Low Iron Levels: This is frequently a cause of hair loss in women. I always like to check Serum Ferritin (most specific test for iron) levels in all my women patients. Vegetarian women tend to test lower on this. I correct iron deficiency with a supplement that has iron in form of ferrous succinate which is easily absorbed without causing constipation. The nice part is that this supplement also has Vitamin C that facilitates iron absorption along with folic acid and Vitamin B12 that help blood building.

Polycystic Ovarian Syndrome (PCOS): This is a very common condition in women that often goes undiagnosed. There is no specific test that can diagnose this condition but putting symptoms together can point towards this diagnosis. One of the symptoms is hair loss. What happens is the ovaries are prone to forming cysts that produce higher testosterone levels. Testosterone gets converted to DHT or Dihydrotestosterone which causes hair loss, acne, increase in facial and body hair. I use Saw Palmetto an herbal medicine to block testosterone from converting to DHT and preventing hair loss.

Low thyroid levels: Usually one of first sign of thyroid disorder can be hair loss. Too much or too little production of thyroid hormones, both can cause hair loss. I run a complete thyroid panel including TSH, FT3, FT4, T3, T4, thyroid antibodies to evaluate thyroid function. Many times thyroid disorders go undiagnosed because a patient comes and tells me that "My doctor ran my thyroid test and said it was normal but I am still struggling with all these symptoms, can you please help me?" Most frequently in these cases when I look at what tests were run for thyroid it was only the TSH and because that came back within range patient was sent back without further evaluation or treatment. I have had a good success treating thyroid disorders in my clinic using natural thyroid medications. I look at the blood tests as well as patient symptoms and then come up with a treatment plan.

Low Estrogen Levels: In women who are closer to menopause and post-menopausal, frequently the cause of hair loss can be the drop in estrogen levels. I test them for their hormone levels and treat them with bioidentical hormone replacement therapy as needed. Each patient is unique and they need an individualized approach and treatment.

Thus there are many different reasons for hair loss. There are also times when a woman will temporarily shed hair, for example post pregnancy or while following a diet plan to lose weight. The most important part is to find the cause of the problem and treat it appropriately. I love to do what I do because it is always fun and challenging to find the cause of the problem and then put together a treatment plan to help the patient individually, holistically and most of the times naturally.

Xenobiotics & Persistent Organic Pollutants Benzene

The **Benzene metabolite, Trans, trans-muconic acid** is a component of crude and refined petroleum products and therefore found with automotive emissions, poor emission-control devices on older vehicles, poor maintenance practices, automotive-refueling operations and industrial emissions. It is also a component of discharges of industrial wastewater from chemical plants, chemical manufacturing sites, and petrochemical and petroleum industries.



It is a by-product of various combustion processes such as wood burning, organic wastes, and tobacco smoke. First and second-hand smoke accounts for the largest source of benzene exposure for the general public. The amount of benzene in a single cigarette may vary from 5.9-90 micrograms depending upon the brand.

It is also used in the manufacture of Styrofoam, resins, synthetic fibers and rubbers, gums, lubricants, dyes, glues, paints, and marking pens and is used as a solvent in scientific labs, industrial paints, adhesives, paint removers/strippers, degreasing agents, carburetor cleaner, rubber cements, some arts and crafts supplies, manufacture of faux leather and rubber goods.

Sorbic acid and potassium sorbate, common food preservatives, are metabolized to muconic acid, which may therefore cause elevations of this marker. Sources include; processed cheese slices and spreads, salad dressings, mayonnaise, flavored drinks, canned foods, and baked goods.

Exposure to Trans, trans-muconic acid can cause a lowering of blood parameters such as hematocrit and haemoglobin levels, erythrocyte, leukocyte, and platelet counts; bone marrow depression which may lead to aplastic anemia, leukaemia, or thrombocytopenia. It is a known human carcinogen, is genotoxic and causes skin and eye irritation as well as central nervous system depression.

Benzene and its metabolites accumulate in lipid depots. Therefore, with weight loss stores are released which may cause symptoms. Following inhalation, most benzene is excreted through exhalation unchanged. Benzene is metabolized by the cytochrome P-450 system in the liver, is dependent oxidase enzymes and excreted as conjugated derivatives (sulfates and glucuronides) in the urine. This is all the more reason to maintain good liver function.

Screening tests for **Xenobiotic** and **Persistent Organic Pollutants** requires a first morning urine which will contain a larger concentration of the metabolite. If present, a detoxification program will help to eliminate the metabolites while an on-going antioxidant regimen will help to keep them from building up from future exposures.

Whats New at RNMC

Dr. Meghna Thacker has become certified in Medical Aesthetics Botox and fillers.

Dr Katie Stage will be speaking on the Paleo Diet @ Sprouts at Shea and 92nd St on Wed February 5th at 6pm. She will also be speaking at

the SCNM Discovery Day March 22nd on Immune and gut health at noon.

Dr Stage is offering a 20% discount on her **5 Transformations** week cleanse and diet program if started in February. This includes an initial intake, quick weekly visits, final assessment, handbook, protein powder, and more. Contact the front desk for more information and to set an appointment.

Due to requests from a number of our patients, we are now offering **Doctor pHresh** greens and **Mountain Peak Nutritional's** energy drinks in packets and bulk canisters at the check out area. More information on them is available from the medical and office staff.

What's New in the Literature

Effects of Vitamin D Supplements on Bone Mineral Density: A Systematic Review and Meta-analysis - In this study published in the *Lancet*, the authors concluded that Vitamin D supplementation should not be prescribed to individuals without risk factors. After a review of a few meta-analysis, the authors concluded that that Vitamin D supplementation alone does not prevent hip fracture, while several clinical trials and meta-analyses do show a decrease in risk of fractures and falls. However, these studies are mainly seen when supplementation is with Vitamin D supplementation plus calcium. The authors of the study found little evidence of a convincing positive effect of Vitamin D supplementation in improving bone mineral density. The authors concluded that their analysis provides further support that there are health risks associated with Vitamin D deficiency, but there is little evidence that levels higher than 40-50 nmol/L provide additional benefit.

Comment: This analysis focused on bone density and the risk of fractures, but did not look at the hormonal and systemic effects that Vitamin D supplementation provides. There have been a considerable number of studies in the past few years showing that a deficiency of Vitamin D is associated with a variety of disease conditions. There are several things that must be considered here. One is that the studies use blood levels as a marker, which have been shown to be somewhat inaccurate. Secondly, there have been very few cause and effect associations between Vitamin D deficiency and the onset of a specific disease. More often than not there are additional factors that can also affect the disease in question. While I am a supporter of Vitamin D supplementation, increasing the doses based upon blood levels that are suspect, may not provide the assurance that what is being taken will actually alter the course of the disease.

Evidence Underlying Most Guidelines May Be Questionable - This article in *Mayo Clinic Proceedings* concluded that "most clinical practice guidelines for interventional procedures are based on lower-quality medical evidence and fail to disclose the authors' conflicts of interest." The researchers examined the validity of guidelines published as of November 2012, on the Web sites of interventional medical societies and evaluated whether they reported conflicts of interest (COI's) and if they graded the quality of the evidence supporting the recommended guidelines. Less than half (46%: 69/149) of the guidelines graded

the quality of evidence, and of the 3425 recommendations reviewed, level A evidence supported only 11% whereas level B evidence supported 42% and level C evidence supported 48%. The authors concluded: "Most of the interventional guidelines failed to grade the evidence," When present, most guidelines used lower-quality evidence, and most guidelines failed to disclose COIs and when commented on, numerous COIs were present."

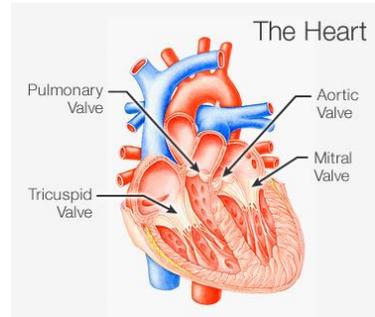
Comment: A few years ago we reported on 2 studies that reviewed the quality of the research and whether the conclusions matched the data and secondly the types of research articles that we published in the so called "main stream" medical journals such as JAMA etc. In both cases the reviewers found that many of the conclusions were not supported by the data and that an inordinate number of articles that were funded by special interest groups such as drug companies, made it into the "main stream" journals. These research articles of course, are used to set the guidelines for many clinical practices, and as the authors of this review article note, the evidence supporting them is largely weak and conflicts of interest are abundant.

Meditation May Slow Progression to Alzheimer's - In this study soon to be published in of Neuroscience Letters, a small, randomized pilot study of adult patients with mild cognitive impairment (MCI) showed that those who received mindfulness-based stress reduction (MBSR) therapy for 8 weeks had a greater increase in functional connectivity between brain regions related to both MCI and AD than those who received usual care. The investigators noted that patients with high stress levels are at increased risk of developing MCI and AD, and more than 50% of those with MCI will go on to develop dementia within 5 years. "MBSR is a relatively simple intervention, with very little downside, that may provide real promise for these individuals. If [it] can help delay the symptoms of cognitive decline even a little bit, it can contribute to improved quality of life," according to the authors. "This study suggests that an intervention with meditation and yoga may impact the areas of the brain that are most susceptible to developing dementia," says lead author Rebecca Erwin Wells, MD, MPH.

Comment: An article in the latest Journal of the Arizona Geriatrics Society discussed meditation and singing therapy to reduce the risk of developing dementia but also to reverse its effects. The research was conducted at the University of Arizona School of Medicine and adds to a growing number of articles that show that meditation, exercise, good diet and spiritual practices decrease the incidence of dementia and Alzheimers Disease. Previously we reported on a review of articles on the use of beet juice and improvements in cognitive function and erectile dysfunction. Both areas benefited.

February is Heart Health Month

Heart disease is the leading cause of death for men and women in the U.S., which includes conditions such as coronary heart disease, heart attack, congestive heart failure, and congenital heart disease. Prevention of heart disease is key and includes quitting smoking, maintaining a low cholesterol, controlling high blood pressure, maintaining a healthy weight, exercising, and a good diet and nutrition.



Early heart disease often does not present with symptoms and therefore makes screening all the more important before a significant level of damage has been done. Laboratory screening tests and yearly evaluations can help detect early disease and/or prevent heart disease from starting. An important aspect of early detection is assessment of your risk factors for development of heart disease as some people are more susceptible than others. Genetics, lifestyle, environmental factors, diet and nutritional status all have a role in preventing heart disease and can be evaluated by your physician.

Types of Heart Disease

Coronary artery disease (CAD) affects more than 13 million Americans and is the leading cause of death in men and women. CAD is a result of plaque buildup in your coronary arteries that leads to blockages. The arteries, which start out smooth and elastic, become increasingly narrow and rigid, restricting blood flow to the heart. The heart becomes starved of oxygen and the nutrients it needs to pump properly.

Cardiomegaly, or an enlarged heart, can have various causes but is most often due to high blood pressure or coronary artery disease. An enlarged heart may not pump blood effectively, resulting in congestive heart failure. Cardiomegaly may improve over time with early recognition and proper treatment. However most people with an enlarged heart will need on-going treatment.

Heart attacks can range from silent ones with few or no symptoms, to the classic pattern of chest pains, pressure and shortness of breath. Because other conditions such as indigestion, pericarditis, pneumonia and inflammation of the chest wall can mimic a heart attack, any symptoms should be reported to your physician ASAP.

Irregular heart rhythm or an arrhythmia can be caused by many different factors such as existing coronary artery disease, heart muscle changes, heart attack, electrolyte imbalances, and toxic effects of medications or environmental toxins. An irregular rhythm can also occur in healthy individuals as well. A persistent arrhythmia needs to be evaluated as there are a number of different types.

Atrial fibrillation is the most common kind of irregular heart beat whose presence increases the risk of stroke and heart disease. Signs include dizziness, weakness, and fatigue, and patients who experience this will report a fluttering sensation in their chest

Heart valve disease is a commonly encountered form of heart disease that often goes undetected until an evaluation is done.

Valvular stenosis occurs when a heart valve doesn't fully open due to stiff or fused leaflets. The narrowed opening may make the heart work much harder which can lead to heart failure. All four valves, the tricuspid, pulmonic, aortic and mitral can develop stenosis.

Valvular insufficiency, also called regurgitation, incompetence, or leaky valve, occurs when a valve does not close tightly. When the valves do not seal, some blood leaks backwards across it. As the leak worsens, the heart has to work harder to make up for the leaky valve, and less blood may flow to the rest of the body. Regurgitation can also affect all of the valves.

There are a number of causes of heart valve disease . Heart valve disease can develop before birth (congenital) or can be acquired sometime during one's lifetime. Sometimes the cause of valve disease is unknown.

Congenital valve disease means that the person is born with it. Most often these defects are able to be corrected surgically.

Acquired valve disease is usually the result of an infection such as with Rheumatic fever or endocarditis from a viral or bacterial infection. Microorganisms that cause endocarditis can enter the blood during dental procedures, surgery, IV drug use, or with severe infections.

Mitral valve prolapse (MVP) is a very common condition, affecting 1% to 2% of the population. MVP causes the leaflets of the mitral valve to flop back into the left atrium during the heart's contraction. MVP also causes the tissues of the valve to become abnormal and stretchy, causing the valve to leak. However, the condition rarely causes symptoms and usually doesn't require treatment.

An **enlarged heart** or cardiomegaly can have a variety of causes but is usually caused by high blood pressure or coronary artery disease. An enlarged heart does not pump blood effectively, resulting in varying degrees of congestive heart failure. Cardiomegaly may improve over time. But most people with an enlarged heart need lifelong treatment with medications.

Cardiomyopathy, or heart muscle disease, is a type of progressive heart disease in which the heart is abnormally enlarged, thickened, and/or rigid. As a result, the heart muscle's ability to pump blood is weakened, often causing congestive heart failure and a backup of blood into the lungs or the rest of the body. There are several types of cardiomyopathy such as dilated, hypertrophic and restrictive.

Pericardial disease, or pericarditis, is inflammation of any of the layers of the pericardium. The pericardium is a thin tissue sac that surrounds the heart protecting and lubricating it. A small amount of fluid is always present but can become larger due to an infection, heart attack, trauma, a tumor, cancer, radiation or an autoimmune disorder.

Pericardial effusion (fluid around the heart) can be caused by an

infection or inflammation, cancer, kidney disease or heart surgery. This fluid can impair heart function if the volume becomes large enough. Viral infections are one of the main causes of pericarditis and pericardial effusions, which can be very painful. In a large number of people with pericardial effusion, no cause can be identified.

Thank you for being a patient with Rockwood Natural Medicine Clinic. We will continue to provide you with safe, effective and affordable healthcare.

Sincerely,

Thomas Kruzel, N.D.

Rockwood Natural Medicine Clinic (RNMC) is a naturopathic family practice facility. RNMC was founded in 1991 as a primary care/family practice clinic with a mission to provide safe, sensible and effective natural medicine for the entire family. The physicians at RNMC are dedicated to educating and training the next generation of healthcare providers. For more information about RNMC, please visit www.rockwoodnaturalmedicine.com.

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If you'd like more information about the topics in this newsletter, or to schedule an appointment with one of the clinic physicians, please call Kathleen or Joan at (480) 767-7119 or e-mail them at RNMC9755@gmail.com.

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