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Rockwood Natural Medicine Clinic Newsletter

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Issue: 3

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Greetings!

Welcome to RNMC's March 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

Endometriosis By Katie Stage ND

March is endometriosis awareness month, a good time to discuss this important condition and natural approaches to treatment.

Endometriosis is a condition in which the lining of the uterus or womb (endometrium) ends up on other places of the body, such as on the ovaries, fallopian tubes, or in the pelvic cavity. As part of the normal menstrual cycle, the endometrium grows and sheds on a monthly basis. However, when this happens outside of the uterus, it causes a variety of symptoms including painful menstrual periods/cramping, back pain, pelvic pain, painful bowel movements, an irregular menstrual cycle, and infertility.

Endometriosis is most common when women are 30-40 years of age. Symptoms typically improve during pregnancy and menopause. Endometriosis is diagnosed by laparoscopy, in which a camera is inserted into the pelvis and the endometrial tissue is



visualized. Sometimes an ultrasound is also ordered to rule out other causes of the pain, such as ovarian cysts or fibroids.

Conventional treatment for endometriosis typically involves prescribing the birth control pill or surgery to remove the growths. However, there are many more effective and less invasive natural approaches to treating endometriosis.

Natural treatment goals for endometriosis involve treating the imbalance between estrogen and progesterone, which is typically unbalanced, decreasing inflammation and pain, and enhancing fertility if desired.

Lifestyle recommendations include avoidance of environmental estrogens (xenoestrogens). For example, BPA is a product used in many hard plastics, in the lining of canned food, and on shiny receipt paper. BPA is very similar to estrogen, and can imbalance the delicate relationship between estrogen and progesterone in a women's (and man's!) body. Thus BPA, and other environmental endocrine disrupting chemicals, should be avoided, as should pesticides, conventional red meat, and solvents.

Exercise and an **anti-inflammatory diet** are effective in treating endometriosis. Eating a whole food diet, rich in fiber and vegetables, is very beneficial in decreasing the inflammation and pain of endometriosis. Essential fatty acids, either supplemented as fish oil or in wild, fatty fish eaten several times a week, are also beneficial. Avoidance of alcohol and coffee is also important.

Herbs are wonderful at helping balance hormones in the body and decreasing pain. The exact herbal formula is best individualized to each patient, but some herbs which are commonly used are Vitex agnus-castus and Angelica sinensis, which are hormone balancers, and Taraxicum officinalis root and Silybum marianum, which help the body break down excess estrogens.

Mayan Uterine Massage is another effective treatment for endometriosis. Mayan Uterine Massage is an external manipulation of the organs of the pelvic area. It corrects a malpositioned uterus and enhances blood flow, lymphatic drainage, and nervous system function to the pelvic area. It can also help break up any tissue adhesions which contribute to infertility.

There are many other treatment options for endometriosis; each treatment plan is customized to the individual. We are very successful in treating endometriosis. For more information, please visit our website or call to schedule a free 15 minute consult.

Whats New at RNMC

Dr Katie Stage will be speaking at the **Sprouts** at Cactus and Tatum Blvd on Wednesday, March 12 from 6-7pm on the topic: **Are You Protecting Your Adrenals?** This event is free.

Dr Stage will also be speaking at the Southwest Conference on Botanical Medicine on April 12th on the topic: **Botanicals without Borders: Surpassing Our Gender Bias with Herbs.** The conference takes place at SCNM in Tempe April 11-13th. For more information, please visit

Paraben Metabolite Para-Hydroxybenzoate

Parabens are esters of para-hydroxybenzoic acid, are widely utilized and sources of exposure are derived from its use as an antimicrobial and as a preservative and for flavoring food. It also is found in cosmetic and pharmaceutical formulations to increase shelf life and may also be derived from bacterial metabolism in the gut. Some parabens are found naturally in plant sources such as methylparaben that is found in blueberries where it acts as an antimicrobial agent.



Body care products such as sprays, fragrances, conditioners, shampoos, hair gels, deodorants, soaps, hand sanitizers, facial masks and foundations, sunscreens, self-tanners, hair removal creams and shaving gels, nail and skin creams, baby lotion all have parabens.

Pharmaceuticals such as injectable drugs, antacids, suppositories, Benadryl™ cream, hydrocortisone creams and ointments, medicated pain-relieving patches, mentholated vapor rubs, chapstick, antifungal and antibacterial preparations contain parabens.

Food products such as packaged meats, fish and poultry, mayonnaise, oils, salad dressings, catsup, pickles, relishes, processed fruits and vegetables, frozen dairy products, cakes, pies, pastries, icings, jellies and jams, beers and ciders, soft drinks, fruit juices, syrups, and some candies.

Exposure to parabens can result in allergic contact dermatitis. Parabens have been found to exhibit estrogenic activity and decreased testosterone levels and sperm counts have been demonstrated in animal studies. Parabens are becoming increasingly controversial however, because they have been found in breast cancer tumors. To date no direct link between parabens and cancer have been established. Another concern is that the estrogen-mimicking aspect of parabens may be a factor in the increasing prevalence of early puberty in girls.

Parabens are metabolized by hydrolyzing the alkyl esters of para-hydroxybenzoic acid, to para-hydroxybenzoate, the main metabolite of parabens. This occurs via tissue esterases found in skin, subcutaneous fat, liver and kidney. Bioaccumulation of parabens may result from chronic exposure. Antioxidants will lower exposures and help to eliminate them from the body.

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.

Sleeping Troubles
By Meghna Thacker, NMD

A good night's sleep is essential to me as well as all of us in order to have a good, energetic and productive day. These days there are many factors that cause disturbed sleep. These factors include ones that are self created by certain habits or related to other health conditions. I want to reflect on some common reasons that cause sleep problems, along with common remedies or suggestions to further evaluate the problem. Usually sleep problems can present as either difficulty falling asleep or difficulty staying asleep, leading to waking up in the middle of the night. Sleep can be divided into two types: (REM) sleep and non-REM (NREM) sleep. NREM sleep has four stages of increasingly deep sleep. Stage 1 sleep is the lightest, while stage 4 is the deepest. During normal sleep, you cycle through these types and stages of sleep which are needed for a good nights rest.

Respecting our Circadian Rhythms:

When I attended medical school, one of my classmates had told me that human beings are meant to go to bed when birds go to bed and awake when birds woke up. At the time, I used to find that concept very strange. I was so used to staying up late at night and studying for my classes and exams and remember being tired, groggy and brain foggy the next day. Now I appreciate his thoughts on sleep since I had burned out my adrenal glands by my sleep habits in those days. At my clinic, if a patient presents with a problem of difficulty falling asleep at night and has difficulty waking up the next morning, I may use a saliva based test called ASI (Adrenal stress index) to evaluate their adrenal gland function. A kit is given to a patient with instructions to collect their saliva sample at 4 times of the day and then send it out to the lab. Typically one should produce higher cortisol levels in the morning that gradually reduce during the day to its lowest point at night. In people who have difficulty sleeping at night and who wake up feeling tired, this adrenal cycle is often reversed where they produce higher cortisol levels at night and are lower in the mornings when it should be highest. A natural supplement that I have successfully used in such patients is Cortisol Manager which is a blend of phosphatidyl serine, Ashwagandha (*Withania somnifera*), and L-theanine. This helps to re-regulate the hypothalamic/pituitary-adrenal axis.

Low hormone levels:

A typical presentation at my clinic is that a woman between 45-55 years old will come in complaining of difficulty falling asleep along with symptoms of hot flashes, night sweats and other symptoms that perimenopause or menopause will bring along. We perform blood work for hormone levels, Estradiol, Progesterone, FSH and Testosterone that usually show that they are out of balance. Balancing these using natural bioidentical hormones not only restores their sleep cycle, but also provides other changes that affects their lives. I remember while I was growing up my grandma said that as we age, we lose our sleep. She would be unable to go to bed till midnight and was up again by 4.30 or 5 in the morning. Now I know that her lack of hormones caused this and

now a days women no longer have to live with this problem. Besides helping ones sleep and other hormone related symptoms, keeping our hormones balanced helps our bone density and prevents osteoporosis, prevents cardiac disease and keeps blood sugar balanced among many other advantages.

Use of electronics:

We are at that age when every month a new gadget is introduced in the market. At home I have electronic gadget addicts. My husband loves his laptop and my 3 year old his ipad. I try to get them to leave their "gadgets" after dinner but am not always successful. I have noticed that constant stimulus from these devices towards bed time, keeps you wired up and makes it difficult falling into a natural peaceful sleep.

Time of eating your last meal: Its best to at least eat 2 hours before your bedtime because it takes that much time for your stomach to empty. Many people tend to eat a big meal and go right to bed. This causes health problems like acid reflux and often causes disturbed sleep.

Sleep apnea:

Many times I have heard my patients complain about their partners snoring at night. They seem to have difficulty breathing and are very lethargic the next day. In those cases, a sleep study would be worthwhile to rule out sleep apnea. But the culprit may also be allergies, especially to food. A test for food allergies can help identify the culprit, while elimination will help eliminate snoring.

Pregnancy and infants:

With the growing belly, sleep usually gets quite uncomfortable. You can get a big body pillow and lay it behind you as you lay on the side to sleep. Leaning towards the pillow takes some discomfort away. Waking up in the middle of the nights for bathroom trips with the growing uterus putting pressure on the bladder is yet another reason. After the baby is born waking up every few hours at night for feedings and diaper changes adds to poor sleep! That's why during the day, nap when your baby naps.

Use of stimulants:

like caffeine or nicotine towards bed time can keep you awake.

Thus if you are someone who is having trouble with sleeping, don't ignore it and get some help from your doctor. Regular exercising and practice of yoga and meditation has shown to promote better sleep and energy levels. There are natural herbal medicines that help promote sleep. For my patients I have successfully used a blend of Passiflora, Valeriana, 5 HTP and Melatonin.

For further help or questions, you can reach me at 480-767-7119.

What's New in the Literature

Culinary Culprits: Foods That May Harm the Brain - In this article in *Medscape News*, several different studies were looked at in relation to brain and cognitive function and dietary intake. "Emerging research is providing new insights to support the suggestion that food can have a profound influence on mental health and cognition." While a direct cause and effect relationship for the development of mental illness has been difficult to demonstrate, an association between mental illness and dietary choices has clearly been demonstrated. In particular is the association of junk food intake and worsening in mental health in a 2 year study in Australia while another study of more than 23,020 women and children in the Norwegian Mother and Child Cohort Study showed that high consumption of junk foods during pregnancy and during the first 5 years of life predicted externalizing problems, such as aggression, hyperactivity, or tantrums, among children, independent of other confounding factors and of the childhood diet. While a third study of 5731 adult and older men and women, the research team found a lower risk for depression among participants with better-quality diets, and increased anxiety was observed with a higher intake of processed and unhealthy foods (*Psychosomatic Medicine*, 2011;73;483-490)

Comment: This article states that this research provides "new insights" to support the clinical observations made by many physicians, that diet affects brain function. Any teacher or parent will tell you that after children have eaten sugar coated frosted chocolate bombs for breakfast that there is increased mental and physical activity until about 9 AM and then they crash and are unable to learn anything else until after lunch! Additionally, fast foods deplete of essential nutrients such as vitamins and minerals, add to the problem of childhood obesity simply because they do not have enough nutrients. When we consume nutritionally deplete foods, a signal is sent to the hunger center in the brain that tell the child (or adult) to eat more because we are not getting what we need. Thus the cycle that leads to weight gain and obesity.

Mediterranean Diet Improves Cognition - In this article in the *J Neurol Neurosurg Psychiatry*, researchers evaluated global cognition among subjects participating in a long-term prevention randomised trial that compared two interventions with Mediterranean Diet (MedDiet) versus a low-fat diet. The study assessed 522 participants who were at high vascular risk for the development of cognitive disorder. Global cognitive performance was examined

by Mini-Mental State Examination (MMSE) and Clock Drawing Test (CDT) after 6.5 years of nutritional intervention. After adjustment for sex, age, education, Apolipoprotein E genotype, family history of cognitive impairment/dementia, smoking, physical activity, body mass index, hypertension, dyslipidaemia, diabetes, alcohol and total energy intake, participants allocated to the MedDiet+EVOO showed higher mean MMSE and CDT scores with significant differences versus control subjects. They concluded that an intervention with MedDiets enhanced with either EVOO or nuts appears to improve cognition compared with a low-fat diet.

Comment: Some of the previous studies looking at the Mediterranean Diet were deemed inconclusive or not statistically significant which were probably more of a function of the study design than lack of benefit of the diet. This study looked at long-term use of the diet, which is really the way "diets" should be evaluated as short term evaluations do not allow enough time to assess changes as in evaluating a drug trial. Dietary changes take some time to alter the body's biochemistry as organ systems turn over at varying rates and the effects of diet tend to be cumulative. The Mediterranean Diet with its emphasis on the use of Extra Virgin Olive Oil and the inclusion of nuts, fruits and vegetables certainly can provide the nutrients needed to help anyone's cognitive function.

Improper Use of Prescription Drugs Costs \$200 Billion a Year, Report Finds - This report in *Medscape News* says that the U.S. spends \$200 billion each year, or about 8 percent of the nation's health care expenditures on medical care stemming from improper or unnecessary use of prescription medications. Much of those costs result from unneeded hospitalizations due to prescription over dosing or drug/drug interactions due to poly pharmacy, and doctor visits to deal with drug side effects. The report states that "medical costs are driven up by patients who don't get the right medications or fail to take their drugs, the misuse of antibiotics, medication errors and inadequate oversight when patients take multiple drugs."

Comment: I am currently preparing a presentation for a medical conference later this spring on how to safely remove patients from prescription medications and have been surprised to see the volume of literature devoted to just this problem. Improper use of prescription drugs is now reaching such a critical point that the DEA and FDA have begun to monitor physician prescriptions as

never before. Not only does improper prescribing and patient use increase health care costs, but drug over doses are now contributing to problems with dependency, increased morbidity and increased mortality from prescription medication over doses.

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 Kruzal, 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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