

In Good Hands

A Free Monthly Newsletter For The Friends and Patients of: Dr. Donald P.

Nebel, M.D.

"When unhappy, one doubts everything; when happy, one doubts nothing."

~Joseph Roux~

Thinking About Knee Surgery?

You May Want To Think Again...

Pittsburgh, PA – Knee pain is common. In fact, an estimated 12% of the population age 65 and older has osteoarthritis of the knee.

Many of these knee pain sufferers are advised to undergo surgery... and... the operation of choice is arthroscopic.

Arthroscopic surgery is one of the major advancements in modern surgical technology. For this particular knee surgery, it involves making three small incisions in the knee; inserting an arthroscope, a thin instrument that allows surgeons to see the joint; and then flushing debris from the knee or shaving rough areas of cartilage from the joint and then flushing it.

Prior to this technology, much larger incisions had to be made... ending up with more surgical damage, scar tissue and healing time.

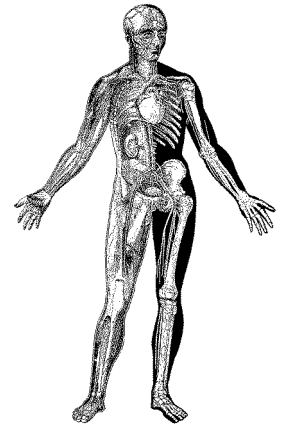
This arthroscopic knee surgery is performed on 650,000 people in the U.S. every year at a cost of about \$5,000 per procedure, for a total cost of \$3.3 billion dollars every year in the US.

With such good technology, so many procedures performed and so much money is made – you would think the results would be impressive... wouldn't you?

You would at least think there was some kind of scientific proof this operation worked before it was performed on so many people every year.... Right?

Well...

Guess Again!



The sad fact of the matter is placebo studies of surgery are almost never done. Many doctors consider them unethical because patients could undergo risks with no benefits.

My question is: What about the risk of performing a surgery... over and over... without having scientific proof of the benefits versus the risks in the first place? What is so "ethical" about that?

Well, a placebo study was done for this arthroscopic knee surgery... **with shocking results.**

The 180 participants in the study were randomly assigned to have the operation or to have placebo surgery in which surgeons simply made cuts in their knees so the patients would not know if they had the surgery.

The day of surgery meant being wheeled into an operating room while neither they nor any of the medical staff knew what their treatment would be. When they were on the operating table, Dr. Moseley, who did all the operations, opened a sealed envelope telling him whether the patient was to have the surgery or not.

Those in the placebo group received a drug that put them to sleep. Unlike those getting the real operation, they did not have general anesthesia.

Dr. Moseley made small cuts in their knees to simulate an operation. He bent and straightened the knee and asked for surgical instruments, just in case the patient was partly conscious. An assistant slouched

water in a bucket to make the sound of a knee being flushed clean.

Results: Tests of knee functions revealed that the operation had not helped, and those who got the placebo surgery reported feeling just as good as those who had had the real operation.

Dr. Baruch Brody, an ethicist at Baylor who helped design the study, described the surgery as a sham.

The paper in The New England Journal is accompanied by two editorials. One, by Sam Horng and Dr. Franklin G. Miller of the National Institute of Health, asks whether placebo surgery is unethical. The controversy, they wrote, comes because doctors assume that patients in clinical research should not be put at risk if they cannot benefit, and placebo surgery involves risk.

But, they say, clinical research is different from medical therapy; its aim is not to help those in the study but to help future patients. To be ethical, they say, a study with placebo surgery must meet three criteria: it must not place patients at undue risk; the benefits of learning whether the surgery works must be worth any potential risk to the patients; and the patients must give informed consent.

In the current case, they wrote, all those objectives were met and the study "exemplifies the ethically justified use of placebo surgery."

Ready for the real kicker in this month's newsletter?

This study was reported in the New England Journal of Medicine OVER TWO YEARS AGO!

Well... have YOU heard about it yet?

If I didn't read medical journals... I wouldn't have either. **And the worst thing is** – my patients keep coming in telling me their doctors are recommending this surgery!

I'm beginning to wonder if this study had any effect on the 650,000 done every year.

Or better yet...

The \$3.3 Billion Every Year!

For some reason, I bet it didn't.

Writing this newsletter, it reminds me of a very similar finding around the same time as this study.

Premarin a \$3 billion a year drug was not providing the benefits once thought and was found to increase the risk of heart disease and breast cancer. Premarin was praised as a wonder drug for over 30 years before it was proven harmful.

So, as so many "trusted" medical procedures are proven not to work or actually harmful... WHAT OTHER OPTIONS DO YOU HAVE?

The biggest lesson in all this is to take care of your health before you lose it and start scrambling for miracle medical cures that may not exist.

Too many Americans believe they can neglect or even abuse their health until they start getting symptoms and then some pill or surgery will give them a quick fix.

Research is proving more and more every day – these quick fixes either do not work or come with a pretty hefty price tag... in the form of side effects.

The REAL answer is eating right, exercise, reducing stress and REGULAR Chiropractic care. Regular Chiropractic care can help your bones and joints work correctly and minimize many of the effects of aging and arthritis. Like they say – An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure.

...And don't forget, if you ever have any questions or concerns about your health, talk to us. Contact us with your, questions. We're here to help, and don't enjoy anything more than participating in your life long good health.

Success Story of The Month

(A Chiropractic Story)

“Convicted Murderer Gives Life...”

This amazing story was written by Susan Bottoms, RN, and first printed in Nursing 2004 and then reprinted in the September 2004 edition of Readers Digest. The title is “The Preacher and the Felon.” I highly recommend you get a copy and read the original version. It will change your life.

But since you don't have a copy in front of you right now... let me bring you up to speed with a little “condensed” version.

Here's the cliff note version: An elderly preacher they call “Sam” is in the ICU... dying in the last stages of lung cancer. His doctor went so far as to tell his wife to call his family and tell them to make plans for their last visit. He didn't have very much longer.

Sam's wife requested the hospital make plans for Sam's son to come and see his father for the last time. Doesn't seem like a big request – except -- Sam's son is...

Serving A Life Sentence For Murder

This was quite a shocker to the hospital staff. Sam and his wife were such wonderful people. It seemed so unlikely.

The author of the story, who was the staff nurse for Sam, arranged the visit for the next day. She also mentioned how worried she became of the uncertainty she was about to face. She said she expected a long, greasy haired man covered with tattoos. She also feared what this “murderer” might do. Maybe even break free and take them all hostage.

When that fateful day finally arrived, the preacher's son walked through the door with a police officer. Both well dressed. Neither one obviously the “killer.”

Relief Was Instant...

The truth was not revealed until the police officer flashed a badge and the preacher's son extended his hand to greet the staff nurse. Her relief was instant.

As the story goes, Sam instantly began to look better as soon as he saw his son. As the visit went on, he gained strength.

The amazing thing was: After the visit, Sam continued to gain life. Shortly after the visit, his improvement was so great, he was discharged.

Sam went on to live another full year.

I guess the most shocking thing about this story was what the author said in conclusion,

“I realized how much I'd grown. I'd learned to put biases behind me, and not to give up on patients. I felt proud that I had helped make James' visit happen. Perhaps our efforts bought Mr. Sam extra time for healing before he left this life.”

What's shocking about that?

Here's what: I have been practicing Chiropractic for 15 years. In that time, I have seen so many miracles they have become almost uneventful. Patients come to me, just about everyday, who have been told by other doctors they are beyond help. They have done all they can do for them and they will just have to learn to live with the pain.

So many of these patients tell me I am the first doctor who told them they could get better. I was the only doctor that gave them hope.

And many of them get better.

Sometimes I wonder if it is more what I say than what I do. After years and year of seeing suffering patients get better – I know it is BOTH.

I have spoken to several nurses. They all said how they are surrounded by sickness and disease every day. They said it is very difficult to stay hopeful with all that darkness surrounding them.

Many doctors give out diagnoses like death sentences that become self-fulfilling prophecies.

Telling someone with God-like authority they are incurable or have 6 months to live is the quickest way to make this happen.

Your mind is the most wonderful healing tool you possess. Remember the last time you had a nightmare and you woke up out of breath with your heart racing? How about when you see someone you love and your whole body feels wonderful? Ever wonder why people with high-stress jobs die from heart disease... no matter how much they exercise or what they eat?

The bottom line is: Your body produces chemicals that heal or harm – from what you think. Within genetic exceptions... you can think yourself sick... or... think yourself healthy. The choice is yours.

I remember a quote from an early Chiropractic pioneer. I'm paraphrasing, but it went something like this:

Medicine: The study of disease and why a man dies.

Chiropractic: The study of health and why a man lives.

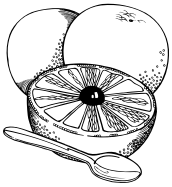
We need the study of disease and why a man (or woman) dies. It saves lives. But I'm glad I go to work and study why a man (or woman) lives.

We love helping our patients and their friends and relatives through their tough times and getting them feeling better! We are here to help you stay feeling better and looking younger! Don't be a stranger. Call us, and we will assist you in putting together a customized maintenance plan. It's not a luxury anymore! With our low monthly payment plan, it's less expensive to maintain your good health! You really can afford Chiropractic care! Don't wait until you can no longer move!

Did You Know? ...

1. *If you heat up water in a microwave to boil it, make sure you stir it up before you place anything in it. If you don't stir the water up and break up the surface tension, when you put in anything like a tea bag or powdered hot chocolate, the water can splatter and possibly burn you! It sounds like such a simple thing, but many people get burned this way from simply not stirring the hot water before putting the food into it!*
2. *Prepaying a funeral may not be the best way to go now-a-days. The way they are written can be far too inflexible and cause you to lock in certain decisions now, which may not be applicable in the future. For example, you may end up with a different spouse down the road, or wish to be buried in a location that's different than the one you think you'd opt for now. Plus, the funeral industry is making some sweeping changes to the way they charge clients, which may substantially lower the costs in the future. If you prepay now, you may end up overpaying for the eventual costs. Keep this in mind if you are thinking along the lines of prepaying for burial expenses!*
3. *You'll get more out of walking if you take MORE steps as opposed to longer ones. Longer strides have been shown to cause all kinds of leg and joint problems. Going faster, and using a smoother rhythm will get you better results and be much easier on your body!*
4. *Optimistic people who have suffered a heart attack are less likely to have a recurrence of the heart problems. A study of 300 people who were treated for blockage to the coronary arteries and had been through an angioplasty procedure found an amazing fact. The optimistic people were more than three times less likely to have another blockage requiring an angioplasty within six months of the first procedure! Your attitude DOES make a big difference in your health!*
5. *The idea that exercise before going to bed will cause you to have trouble falling asleep isn't true, according to a study done at a major university. In the study, non-exercisers worked out for an hour at different times of the day. The group who exercised before they went to bed fell asleep two to three times as quickly as people who exercised earlier in the day. Plus, not only did they fall asleep faster, they reported enjoying their night's sleep much better than the people who worked out in the morning or afternoon.*
6. *Tea is a great food for health! Did you know: * Tea without sugar or honey only has two calories per cup? * Steeping tea for three to five minutes produces the most antioxidants? * Milk in your tea doesn't reduce the health benefits the tea contains? * The maximum amount of antioxidants contained in tea comes from brewing loose leaves or from tea bags? (Tea in powders or bottles has little or no helpful antioxidants!) * Tea in products applied to the skin has little or no health enhancing properties?*

Tip of The Month: "Lose Weight Without Hunger...Try Grapefruit!"



Not too long ago I was watching one of those shows that profiles a celebrity and showcases their home. I don't remember who the star was, but I do remember this: Their house was located in South Florida and their backyard was filled with citrus trees.

They said the best part about living there was waking up early, walking out to the citrus grove and picking their breakfast, which most of the time consisted of a sun ripened grapefruit.

If all of us could live in such luxury, we would find it easier to lose weight and could possibly lower our chances to acquire Type II Diabetes.

How? For as long as I can remember, grapefruit has been thought to aid in weight loss. But no one had any proof. Until now... Researchers at Scripps Clinic of San Diego divided a group of 100 obese subjects into three equal groups: one group ate half a grapefruit before each meal, one group drank a glass of grapefruit juice before each meal, and one group was instructed not to eat any grapefruit or drink any grapefruit juice. Subjects followed their regimens for three months, while continuing to eat as they normally would.

The results were striking. Those in the group that ate grapefruit with each meal lost an average of 3.6 pounds. Subjects in the grapefruit juice group lost an average of 3.3 pounds. A few of the subjects in both of these groups lost nearly 10 pounds. Meanwhile, the average weight loss in the group that consumed no grapefruit was less than one pound.

What is it about grapefruit that makes it so helpful in shedding excess pounds?

It is believed grapefruit contains chemicals that help stabilize insulin levels. This is good news for both diabetics and diets alike. At the beginning and the completion of the Scripps' study, researchers measured the insulin and glucose levels of all subjects. When the test was over, those in the two grapefruit groups had lower levels of insulin and glucose than they did at the beginning, while levels in the non-grapefruit group were unchanged.

Enzymes in the grapefruit may help control insulin spikes that occur from sugar intake with a meal. This allows the digestive system to process food more efficiently. When food is processed more efficiently – less is stored as fat. Grapefruit (like all citrus fruit) is also high in soluble fiber. Soluble fiber has been shown to help digestion and regulate the absorption of carbohydrates.

The best part for weight loss may be: Lower insulin levels mean less feelings of hunger. When you feel less hunger... you eat less. And we all know what happens when we eat less! So next time you feel a little hungry – reach for Mother Nature's weight loss remedy – the grapefruit! **One last thought:** Make sure you eat your grapefruits plain. DON'T LOAD THEM UP WITH SUGAR!