

INFINITE WISDOM

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Special points of interest:

- Individualized health care when you need it.
- Same day or next day appointments.
- Want to talk to your own doctor? Call.
- See your doctor, not a random on call doc in the office

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PRIOR AUTHORIZATIONS

A prior authorization (or PA) is a doctor asking the permission of an insurance if we can prescribe or order certain medications, therapies or diagnostic tests. Let's say you are having a weird headache and I want to order an MRI of your brain. If you were to pay cash the test would cost about \$500. If you have health insurance and you want the MRI facility to bill your insurance company for the test, the facility needs a PA. I get on the telephone and call you insurance company to get an OK. Keep in mind that the insurance company is not saying you cannot have the test. But unless your doctor calls to get the PA, the insurance company will probably not pay for it and



you will owe the facility directly. Because you want to use your insurance there is every reason to believe that the \$500 test will now cost even more. I may get into that next month!

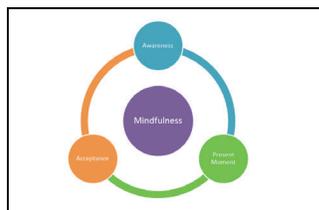
So your doctor who is the one treating you, who knows you and has years of clinical experience writes a legitimate order for you to have a test. But the insurance company does not trust that it is medically necessary. We have to prove it to them first. So a licensed doctor has to navigate through an insurance company tele-

phone menu and eventually talk to a nurse to get the OK. Keep in mind this nurse has never seen you and knows nothing about you. If that nurse does not feel that your doctor is being medically correct then the nurse connects your doctor to an insurance company doctor. That insurance company doctor may be a retired psychiatrist, ENT doctor, who knows? If we are doing an MRI for a weird headache the insurance company doctor is not likely to be a headache specialist.

Insurances...part of the problem, not the solution. The doctor has to prove to the bureaucrats that a test is indicated. Just did a YouTube video to give you an example. <https://youtu.be/JW4LPaKID7Y>

MINDFULNESS

What is mindfulness? It is a term that doctors refer to a lot. Merriam-Webster refers to it as "the practice of maintaining a non-judgmental state of heightened or complete awareness of one's thoughts, emotions, or experiences on a moment-to-moment basis." It is a way towards relaxation where one develops a better sense of



the current environment. It is not meditation, per se, but does share some of the same exercises. There are some derivations from Buddhism although mindfulness is not a religion. The

focus is to reduce or eliminate worry as worrying is a destructive behavior. It is an energy-sapping habit we can get in to. Eliminating rumination, or constantly dwelling on negative thoughts or experiences is another goal of mindfulness. If we can reduce or eliminate those then our health improves.

(Continued on pg 2)

ORGAN CORNER...KIDNEYS

"If your kidneys fail then those toxins build up in your bloodstream and you need a dialysis machine to filter your blood for you."

In most people there is a kidney on each side on the back of the abdomen. The principal function is to filter wastes from the blood stream and mix that with water to create urine so we can "do #1" to get rid of the wastes. The kidney has millions of little structures call glomeruli that accomplish this. They actually allow a lot of good things to go from the kidney blood stream into the urine initially, but then there are structures in the kidney that reabsorb the good things and put them back in the bloodstream.



Seemingly double work but there is a complex reason for that. If your kidneys fail then those toxins build up in your bloodstream and you need a dialysis machine to filter your blood for you.

Since blood passes through the kidney, the

kidney "knows" what your blood count is, whether you are anemic. It creates a chemical that stimulates your bone marrow (where blood is made) to make more blood cells.

The kidney is also very involved in regulating your blood pressure through a series of chemicals.

When you get blood work we assess kidney function and that is often expressed in a calculated value call a "glomerular filtration rate" or GFR. Just so you know the next time you look at your labs.

WATCH THIS 7 CONCERT

"I am sure we will embarrass ourselves."

On Saturday, June 9th at 4:00 PM my quartet, Southern Tradition, and myself will be presenting a music concert, "Watch This 7." As you might guess it is the 7th in our series. It is a FREE concert with a variety of different performers. I am sure we will embarrass ourselves. It will be held at St. Matthews United Methodist Church



at 6017 Camphor St. in Metairie in the Airline Park area. Southern Tradition Quartet has been singing together for twenty years now. We put together a

concert a couple times a year and invite various folks to perform. It is strictly fun and solid music with some really awful humor (but clean!) Our quartet sings barbershop harmony but a variety of other types of music too. We have great guests again this time. Bring a friend or just some random stranger.

MINDFULNESS...CONTINUED

In this age of smartphones there of course are some apps that can be helpful with certain aspects of practicing mindfulness. Some free, some cost a little. Each has its own merits. Some of the ones I have seen (and I am not endorsing nor have any connection to any) are as follows:

Stop, Breath & Think; Happify; 10% Happier; Insight Timer; and Headspace. These actually are pretty well done and some may find them a good start. Of course the main point is that you have to practice mindfulness and being aware of self and surroundings. These apps have little tips and

exercises that can help. Understanding that outside stressors do not have to make you stressed or worried is important. If you can develop a method to recognize how you are feeling and to retrain your brain to respond in a healthier way then you are winning the battle! May sound mystical but it can really be done with great success.

FISH FOR THE HEART

Two 3.5 ounce servings of fish per week is what is needed according to the American Heart Association. The best fish are the oily fish such as salmon, albacore tuna, mackerel, lake trout, herring and sardines. And...don't fry it, that messes it up. There are actual studies that show lovers of fried fish have more heart failure. The oily fish have omega-3 fatty acids which may have something do with the health effects. You can get your recommended daily omega-3 intake with 4 ounces of salmon each



week. The lead author of the study from the May 17th Circulation journal, Eric Rimm, reinforced using the "good" fish to replace some of the other stuff we eat. So instead of a hamburger, have grilled salmon. You ask, well can't I just take omega-3 pills? You can, but there is no evidence that taking omega-3 pills has the same effect as eating the oily

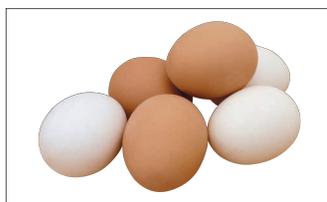
fishes. We have seen this before with other nutrients. Taking the pill is not the same as eating the food where that nutrient is found. There must be other attributes found in the source food that make it better than the isolated nutrients.

Salmon locally can cost around \$15 per pound. That comes to \$3.75 per 4 ounces, a weekly portion or about 2 bucks twice a week so it is pretty affordable. So make these fish part of your diet replacing some of the typical things you may eat.

"The best fish are the oily fish such as salmon, albacore tuna, mackerel, lake trout, herring and sardines."

EGGS OK?

Yep! In a study published in May in the American Journal of Clinical Nutrition Australian researchers found that eating up to a dozen eggs per week for a year did not increase levels of heart disease. This was already reflected in the American 2015 dietary guidelines. One other interesting aspect of this study is that these were folks



who were either diabetic or pre-diabetic. Eggs are a good source of protein and micronutrients. They also contain cholesterol but eating two eggs a day has

essentially no effect on your cholesterol levels or blood pressure. Dr. Nick Fuller, one of the authors of the study said "A healthy diet as prescribed in this study emphasized replacing saturated fats (such as butter) with monounsaturated and polyunsaturated fats (such as avocado and olive oil)." Eat away as they are an eggcellent food choice.

"Eggs are a good source of protein and micronutrients."

CANCER SCREEN UPDATE

Colon cancer screening is one of the few cancer illness that we can effectively address by screening. That is we can attempt to detect the cancer in its very early stage and do something about it before it spreads or requires major intervention. The typical age at which to start screening is age 50. That recommendation is based on the fact that co-



lon cancer starts to become more common in the mid-50s. What is screening? That can be a colonoscopy, yearly stool testing for blood or every three year stool genetic testing. The American Cancer Society

now recommends screening start at age 45 for those of average risk. Why? We are seeing an increasing number of people with colon cancer at an earlier age. Other organizations still suggest starting at 50. We estimate that 97,000 Americans will be diagnosed with colon cancer and 43,000 with rectal cancer. 50,000 are expected to die this year from this disease.

"We are seeing an increasing number of people with colon cancer at an earlier age."

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*An Invitation:
If you know of a friend or
family member that would be
interested in becoming a
member, please have them
contact us for a free non-*



A
Direct Primary Care
Practice
Newsletter
written and published
by Karl N. Hanson, MD

Previous Newsletters
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Infinity Health is a Direct Primary Care practice developed by Dr. Hanson. Dr. Hanson has been in medical practice since 1987 and has been a solo practitioner since 1990 in the conventional insurance-based model.

The concept of dealing or contracting directly with the patient is a bit of a throwback but it places the relationship where it should be, with the patient. There is no point in Dr. Hanson or our office wasting time interacting with insurance companies unless it directly contributes to your health. Instead we developed a medical home which has its focus on the patient's health regardless of their insurance status. Infinity Health is a product of Dr. Hanson and is not affiliated with any other organization. We are a membership-based practice. Direct Primary Care is not the same as typical "Concierge" practices which charge a fee AND bill your insurance company.

Dr. Hanson is Board Certified by the American Board of Family Medicine, a Fellow in the American Academy of Family Physicians and a member of the Alpha Omega Alpha Medical Honor Society. He completed his recertification process in April 2016.

USPSTF CORNER: AUTISM

Autism is a term for a collection of disorders that results in individual having problems with social interactions and communication. We do not know the cause. There is a lot of evidence suggesting that it is a genetic disorder but we are still trying to piece that together. Abnormal behavior is typically first noticed in the first two or three years of a child's life. They don't seem to talk to any significant degree, are often withdrawn, engage in repetitive behavior and do not exhibit normal social interaction. The presentation varies considerably.

Our question here in this section of the newsletter is about screening. Should we routinely test young children to see if we can identify autism before it becomes obvious? Is there a way that if we did find it early, that we can alter the course and prevent further deterioration



of social and language function? If we had a method to treat autism disorders so that the issues would not be as bad later then we could make a case for screening. There are treatments available to this wildly variable disorder. Various forms of therapy, behavioral intervention, educational therapies, school-based programs and even medications have been tried with some success, especially in the milder forms.

It appears however that at this time there is not sufficient evidence for us to screen for autism related disorders at a very early age. Finding subtle hints of

autism before the behaviors become more obvious does not seem to help our treatment plan or the long-term outlook. So far as we know, waiting until signs develop, then having an extensive evaluation to find the cause of the behavior with then followup treatment is the logical approach. Nothing we know so far can change the natural progression of this disorder if we chose to treat it very early. Plenty of research is ongoing.

The U. S. Preventive Services Task Force (USPSTF) is an expert panel which reviews the current evidence to help us docs recommend counseling, medical screenings and preventive medications. It is funded by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.