

In Good Hands

A Newsletter for the Friends and Patients of Dr. John Falkenroth, D.C.
Back Pain And Sciatica Clinic ♦ (831) 475-8600 ♦ www.RepairMyBack.com
Open Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday 9am – 12noon and 2pm – 6pm



**Convenient and affordable relief of back pain, neck pain and sciatica.
No long-term treatment plans. Walk-ins welcome. No appointment needed.**

“The only person you are destined to become is the person you decide to be.”
~ *Ralph Waldo Emerson*

Researchers Explain Why Allergies Are More Common Now Than In The Victorian Era... A Surprising Reason...



Also this month:

- ✓ **Carpal tunnel syndrome and the thyroid... are they related?**
- ✓ **The surprising secret ingredient in pepper that fights Parkinson's Disease.**
- ✓ **Do you know the top source of hidden salt in our food? Many people eat this food everyday without knowing just how much salt is in it...**
- ✓ **The story of a pole vaulter who has her sight set on inspiring people... a MUST read**

The concept of cleanliness has been a topic of great debate for many years. On one side of the fence, frequent cleaning reduces the number of bacteria and viruses that cause illness.

On the other side, some experts argue that our body's immune system has to work harder when regularly exposed to pathogens and allergens, which can improve our autoimmune response against the various bugs we might encounter during our day-to-day lives.

**So, what does the evidence say?
The answer may surprise you...**

In a recent study, researchers found that children who bit their nails or sucked their thumb—habits frequently discouraged by parents—were half as likely to have allergies at age 32!

It's suspected that the children's immune systems strengthened due to frequent exposure to the bacteria that were under the nails or on the hands.

This new discovery, coined the hygiene hypothesis, may explain why allergies are more common now than

they were during the Victorian era—a time when hygiene was much worse.

There has been a steady rise in allergies over the past twenty years, yet no one can fully explain why.

For example, in the United Kingdom, one-in-four people suffer from an allergy at some point in life, with an increase in the number each year.

Though some research supports germ exposure concepts, experts stress that other VERY important factors including diet, exercise, environmental factors, antibiotic use, and a family history of allergies may also play a larger role in allergy development.

Of course, maintaining good personal and home hygiene standards is very important!

Avoiding and preventing the spread of infection to others by covering your mouth when you sneeze (especially if you're sick) or washing your hands after using the toilet are solid practices. The KEY is NOT to be obsessive about cleanliness.

The available evidence seems to support the following:

- Children raised on a farm develop fewer allergies (possibly due to farm animal exposure).
- Chemicals found in household cleaning products are NOT linked to a rise in allergies.
- The frequency of bathing or showering is NOT linked to increased allergy risk.
- Antibiotic use IS linked to allergy (by disturbing the body's balance between good and bad bacteria).
- Vaccines are NOT directly linked to the rise in allergy.
- Diet changes, especially in childhood, have been linked to the rise in allergy. Introducing "high allergy" foods like nuts, seeds, milk, soy, wheat/gluten, and egg AFTER at least six months of exclusively breastfeeding (during the weaning process) can reduce the number of children developing allergies in later childhood.
- Chiropractic adjustments that support the immune system may offer relief for some children suffering from allergies.

The Thyroid And Carpal Tunnel Syndrome – Are They Related?

What does the thyroid gland have to do with carpal tunnel syndrome? The short answer is, a lot! But the "how" requires a more detailed explanation...

The carpal tunnel is made up of eight small bones in the wrist that form a tunnel, with the "floor" of the tunnel located on the palm side of the wrist.

Carpal tunnel syndrome is caused by the median nerve getting pinched as it travels through the carpal tunnel.

This results in numbness and tingling into the middle three fingers (index, third, and fourth) initially, and usually weakness of the grip later.

The thyroid gland is located at the base of the neck just below the "Adam's Apple" (which is really thyroid cartilage). There are two "lobes" located on either side of the windpipe (trachea), and a small bridge of thyroid tissue crosses over the front connecting the two lobes (called the "isthmus") in most of us.

The thyroid belongs to the endocrine system, which is controlled by the pituitary or "master" gland that is located inside the head.

These glands secrete hormones into the bloodstream that influence the body in a variety of ways. Some of the other "members" of the endocrine system include the adrenals, the parathyroid, the gonads (testicles or ovaries), the insulin producing part of the pancreas, the mammary glands, and more.

Think of the endocrine system as a "team" and the pituitary gland as the "coach."

The thyroid's role on the endocrine "team" is to release hormones (primarily T3 and T4) that regulate our metabolism/metabolic rate (digestion, heart rate, breathing, body temperature, etc.).

It's been known for a long time that thyroid disease—particularly low thyroid function—increases one's risk for developing carpal tunnel syndrome.

One thought is that the type of swelling that occurs with hypothyroid (called "myxedema") places enough pressure on the median nerve to pinch it, resulting in the classic signs and symptoms of carpal tunnel syndrome.

Recently, researchers used ultrasound to measure the size of the median nerve (called the cross-sectional area) in 30 patients with newly diagnosed primary hypothyroidism and comparable "normal" controls (similar size/BMI, similar gender, and age).

In those with hypothyroidism, the cross sectional size of the median nerve was larger than those measured in the normal group, and four of the hypothyroid patients already began experiencing carpal tunnel syndrome signs and symptoms.

After receiving treatment to restore their thyroid levels, both the size of the median nerve was reduced and the symptoms that were present resolved within three months.

This study points out the significant relationship between the thyroid and its effect on carpal tunnel syndrome. Doctors of chiropractic treat the mechanical causes of carpal tunnel syndrome very successfully, but they may rely on the expertise of a "team" of healthcare providers to treat the patient when necessary.

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 providing you natural pain relief.

THANK YOU... 😊

Thank you to those of you who referred your family, friends, co-workers and neighbors to our practice. When we see your name as the person who referred a new patient, we get reassured that you're happy with your experience at our clinic. Thank you for your trust and thank you again for your referrals.

She Is The Best Pole Vaulter In Her School's History

Why She Has Her "Sight" Set On Inspiring Other People...

If you watched her at a track meet, you would see three things: power, grace, and beauty. Charlotte has cleared heights in the pole vault that no female at Rains High School in Emory, Texas ever has.

"I'd definitely consider myself very competitive. And I think a lot of that comes from my older brothers. They are never giving me a break."

Competitive she is. When talking about her first track coach, Charlotte said, "Our coach was pretty harsh. He was like...there's no excuses...you are going to run and you are going to be good at it... and you are gonna like it, and if you don't, you can leave."

What Charlotte said next summed up the real secret to her success: "It's easier to run hard than to have to think about an excuse."

What's incredible is that Charlotte would not have to think very hard to come up with an excuse because she is legally blind.

When describing her sight, she said, "When I look out right now, I see a pin dot of white, which I guess is the grass. And it's blurry... kinda like looking through a coffee stirrer."

Running is not the only thing Charlotte never makes excuses about. She doesn't make excuses about carrying extra large text books, or that she has to use a talking calculator, or use a magnifier to make the pages of her books and any paper work huge so she can barely read it.

Her mental toughness comes from her parents who say it's her job to recognize and overcome problems. The phrase "no excuses" has been the family motto right from the beginning.

Charlotte's mother said, "One of the first conversations we ever had with Charlotte [was] when she was about three. We told her at that time, everyone struggles with something in their life. Everyone has something in their life that they have to overcome in this world, and her vision was going to be her something, and she might as well figure it out and move on. And... she did."

Charlotte was born with natural vision, but quickly developed infant cataracts. Her sight went back and forth between good and bad until sixth grade when she lost most of her sight. It is now 20/-400.

So, how does Charlotte pole vault? First, she gets a little help from Ulala. Ulala is a tennis ball with a smiley face and wig attached to a spike Charlotte puts in the ground to help match her path. Ulala sits exactly at her 14th step away from the bar. She starts with her foot touching Ulala and plants the pole on her 14th step, not seeing where she is going.

When she trains, she runs on the inside lane where she can barely make out the contrast between the grass and track. Her cross country teammates wear bells on their shoes so she can follow. She even plays on the basketball team. She counts her steps and listens to the ball. Watching her play, you'd have no idea she cannot see.

Her parents never told her she could not do something. Instead, they always asked her, "HOW ARE YOU GOING TO DO IT?" ...and she always came up with the answers.

Here are some more wise words from Charlotte, "I don't think disability should be in the dictionary. That's a dumb word. A disability is something that limits you or stops you from being able to do the things you want to do. And I don't think anything, even if it's vision impairment, should stop you."

The last teeny, tiny bit of sight that Charlotte has could be gone at any moment. So, what is holding you back? What are you worried about today? Charlotte's story sure helps put life in perspective.

If you know anyone with back pain, neck pain or sciatica, encourage them to call us. We love helping our patients and their friends and family through their tough times and getting them feeling better. Remember that early treatment is key to a full and complete recovery. Don't wait until you can no longer move!

Did You Know?...

Top Source Of Hidden Salt: Bread

Here's a surprising discovery made by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention... The number one salt culprit in the United States is bread, including rolls and sweet rolls.

Americans get twice as much salt from bread products as they do from salty snacks, which only stand at number 10 in the CDC's list of the saltiest foods. Breads and rolls aren't saltier than many other foods, but people eat a lot more of them, according to the CDC.

Breads and rolls account for about 7 percent of the salt we consume.

About 40 percent of the salt we eat is hidden. After bread, the next nine are: cold cuts and cured meats, such as deli turkey or ham; pizza; fresh and processed poultry; soups; sandwiches on bread or buns (including cheeseburgers); cheese; pasta dishes; meat-mixed dishes, such as meat loaf with tomato sauce; and snacks, such as chips, pretzels and popcorn. These 10 foods are responsible for 44 percent of all sodium consumed.

Nine out of ten Americans over age two consume too much sodium. On average, they eat 3,300 mg a day. Experts say everyone over age 51, individuals of African descent, and anyone with high blood pressure, diabetes, or chronic kidney disease should limit sodium to 1,500 mg a day. For everyone else, less than 2,300 mg is recommended. Consuming too much salt has been linked to heart disease and stroke.

Tip Of The Month

The Surprising Secret Ingredient In Pepper That Fights Parkinson's Disease.

If you are in pain, you're probably looking for a treatment for your pain. If you have a disease, you are probably looking for a treatment for that disease. Most people look for a miracle scientific breakthrough like a brand new surgical procedure or a new drug.

Stem cell therapy has many people (and doctors) dreaming of potential cures, but many times, mother nature had the answer all along.

For example, research published in the *Annals of Neurology* tested the effects that eating plants in the Solanaceae family had on Parkinson's disease. Solanaceae is a plant family that includes plants with edible nicotine. Plants in this family include tobacco, peppers, tomatoes, and potatoes.

This study examined whether Parkinson's disease was associated with self-reported typical frequency of consumption of peppers, tomatoes, tomato juice, and potatoes during adulthood, while adjusting for consumption of other vegetables, age, sex, race/ethnicity, tobacco use, and caffeine.

Results: Parkinson's disease (PD) was inversely associated with consumption of all edible Solanaceae. The more concentrated the nicotine in the food, the greater the impact. The inverse association was greatest for peppers.

According to the study, *"Dietary nicotine or other constituents of tobacco and peppers may reduce PD risk. However, confirmation and extension of these findings are needed to strengthen causal inferences that could suggest possible dietary or pharmaceutical interventions for PD prevention."*

Peppers may not be the "cure" for Parkinson's disease, but once again, it points out the importance of the basics: eating right, exercise, and stress reduction.

Remember, we're always here to help you and your friends and family get pain relief and maintain your independence and the active lifestyle that you all deserve. After you're done with this newsletter and the enclosed flyers, please pass them on to someone you know who has back pain, neck pain or sciatica. Thank you.

The information contained in this newsletter and in the inserted flyers is solely advisory, and should not be substituted for medical advice. Any and all health care concerns, decisions, and actions must be done through the advice and counsel of a healthcare professional who is familiar with your updated medical history. We cannot be held responsible for actions you may take without a thorough exam or appropriate referral. If you have any further concerns or questions, please call our office at (831)475-8600.