



Florida Wellcare Alliance, LC

A Peer Reviewed Physician Organization

Healthy Living

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There are several United States Government websites with up to date health information. Try these as a source of current information on health issues:

www.cdc.gov Centers for Disease Control & Prevention

www.fda.gov US Food & Drug Administration

www.nih.gov National Institutes of Health

www.hhs.gov Dept. of Health and Human Services

As always, be sure to consult with your personal physician if you are having any health concerns.

Atrial Fibrillation

R. Prasad Potu, M.D.

Atrial fibrillation is the most common type of irregular heart rhythm. In atrial fibrillation the impulses in both atria are disorganized and very rapid. Normally, atrial contraction and ventricle contraction go in sequence. In atrial fibrillation the atria and the ventricles do not work together. As a result of this loss of coordination, the blood pools in the atria, leading to clot formation in the atria.

Atrial fibrillation affects more than 2.5 million Americans. Twelve to fifteen percent of the U.S. population 80 years and older will have atrial fibrillation. It is age dependent. Four percent of individuals 60 years and older will develop atrial fibrillation and twenty-five percent of individuals 40 years and older will develop atrial fibrillation during their lifetime. The prevalence of atrial fibrillation is expected to more than double by the year 2050.

Atrial fibrillation is not a benign condition. Symptoms can be disabling. Atrial fibrillation substantially increases the risk of stroke and accounts for one-third of the hospitalizations for cardiac dysrhythmias. The incidence of atrial fibrillation is higher in males than females, more common in whites than blacks and uncommon in childhood except after cardiac surgery.

Risk factors for atrial fibrillation are
1) Hypertension 2) Diabetes mellitus

- 3) Coronary artery disease
- 4) COPD (emphysema)
- 5) Congestive heart failure
- 6) Thyroid disease
- 7) Valvular heart disease
- 8) Alcohol
- 9) Recreational drug use such as cocaine.

Symptoms of atrial fibrillation can range from no symptoms to any combination of these:
1) Palpitations 2) Racing heart beat 3) Dizziness 4) Syncope (black outs) 5) Shortness of breath 6) Chest pain 7) Fatigue.

Patients with atrial fibrillation should be evaluated by a physician. The evaluation should include a complete history and physical examination, a blood test and an electrocardiogram. Patients may have to have cardiac monitoring and if necessary may need an electrophysiological study and also a stress test.

The goals of treatment are to control the ventricular rate and/or restore the cardiac rhythm to a regular rhythm, prevention of stroke and if possible treat most of the underlying causes. Medications commonly used to control the heart rate are beta blockers, calcium channel blockers and digoxin. For rhythm control the following

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medications can be used: Sotalol, Flecainide, Propafenone, Dronedaron and Amiodarone. Rhythm can sometimes be restored with an electrical shock called, cardioversion.

Stroke risk increases if a person has any of the following conditions: Congestive heart failure, Hypertension, age 75 or older, Diabetes mellitus, or Vascular disease. Previous stroke increases another stroke risk significantly. Not only is the frequency of stroke much higher in females, but severity, morbidity and mortality of stroke is also much higher.

Most patients with atrial fibrillation will do well with ventricular rate control. Some may not tolerate the atrial fibrillation. Those patients may have to have cardioversion to regulate rhythm. In some situations patients may need to have electrophysiological studies and a catheter ablation of the focal triggers for the atrial fibrillation.

To prevent stroke, the patient should be treated with blood thinners. Traditionally stroke prevention was achieved through the use of Coumadin, which is a blood thinner and needs frequent blood testing to keep the blood thin enough to prevent stroke. Recently there are newer blood thinners available which do not require frequent blood testing and are as effective as Coumadin.

If a patient cannot tolerate the blood thinners because of bleeding or other significant side effects, then atrial appendage occlusion can be considered. With this procedure, a device can be inserted which will prevent clot formation in the heart and in turn help prevent a stroke.

Dr. Potu is Board Certified in Cardiovascular Disease and Internal Medicine. He has practiced in Citrus County since 1980 and is located at 11527 W. Emerald Oaks Drive in Crystal River. Dr. Potu can be reached at (352) 794-6090.

Test Your Level of Daytime Sleepiness

Dacelin St. Martin, M.D.

Daytime sleepiness is a problem we have all faced at some point in our lives. Normally it can be attributed to a late night or poor night sleep. With a proper nights rest, most people should be able to function well throughout the day. However, if you or someone you know routinely struggles with excessive daytime sleepiness, please mention it to your physician. They may ask you to fill out questionnaire called the Epworth Sleepiness Scale.

The Epworth Sleepiness Scale is an 8-question questionnaire which is used to determine the level of a person's daytime sleepiness. The Epworth Sleepiness Scale is based on your assessment of the likelihood of you falling asleep in certain situations commonly encountered in daily life. The questionnaire can be used to help diagnose sleep disorders like sleep apnea. The Epworth Sleepiness Scale was developed in 1990 by Murray W. Johns at Epworth Hospital in Melbourne, Australia. If this test shows that you have a tendency to fall asleep during the day you should talk to your doctor about your condition. You may need to be referred to a certified sleep medicine physician. With the proper tests, a diagnosis can be made, and a treatment plan established. You don't need to live with excessive daytime sleepiness!

Epworth Sleepiness Scale

How likely are you to doze off or fall asleep in the following situations, in contrast to feeling just tired? This refers to your usual way of life in recent times. Even if you have not done some of these things recently, try to work out how they would have affected you. Use the following scale to choose the most appropriate number for each situation:

- 0 - No chance of falling asleep
- 1 - Slight chance of falling asleep
- 2 - Moderate chance of falling asleep
- 3 - High chance of falling asleep

Situation	Chance of Falling Asleep
Sitting and reading	0 1 2 3 <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>
Watching TV	0 1 2 3 <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>
Sitting inactive in a public place (e.g. a theater or a meeting)	0 1 2 3 <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>
As a passenger in a car for an hour without a break	0 1 2 3 <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>
Lying down to rest in the afternoon as circumstances permit	0 1 2 3 <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>
Sitting and talking to someone	0 1 2 3 <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>
Sitting quietly after lunch without alcohol	0 1 2 3 <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>
In a car while stopped for a few minutes in traffic	0 1 2 3 <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>
<p>Epworth Scoring Results 1 - 6 = Good. You're likely getting restful sleep. 7 - 9 = Okay. Your sleep could be improved, but you may not have sleep apnea. 10 or higher = Bad. You likely have a sleep disorder like sleep apnea.</p>	

Dr. Dacelin St. Martin is board-certified in sleep, internal, and pediatric medicine. He is the medical director of the “Sleep Clinic of America” in Lecanto, which is accredited by the American Academy of Sleep Medicine. Contact him at Sleep Clinic of America, 1980 N. Prospect Ave., Lecanto, FL 34461, call 352 527-6673, or visit www.SleepClinicAmerica.com

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The Florida Wellcare Alliance (FWA) is a limited liability partnership comprised of over 100 Citrus County physicians representing multiple medical specialties.

Each partner of the Florida Wellcare alliance commits to the principles of excellence to which the Alliance adheres. Every partner receives approval by a committee of his peers, and participates in an annual peer review evaluation of the Alliance partners.

5 Things You Should Know About Yoga

Yoga typically combines physical postures, breathing exercises, and meditation or relaxation. Researchers are studying how yoga may be used to help improve health and to learn more about its safe use. If you're thinking about practicing yoga, here are 5 things you should know:

1. Studies suggest that yoga may be beneficial for a number of conditions, including pain. Recent studies in people with chronic low-back pain suggest that a carefully adapted set of yoga poses can help reduce pain and improve function. Other studies also suggest that practicing yoga (as well as other forms of regular exercise) might have other health benefits such as reducing heart rate and blood pressure, and may also help relieve anxiety and depression.

2. Studies show that certain other health conditions may not benefit from yoga. Research suggests that yoga is not helpful for asthma, and studies looking at yoga and arthritis have had mixed results.

3. Yoga is generally considered to be safe in healthy people when practiced appropriately. However, people with high blood pressure, glaucoma, or sciatica, and women who are pregnant should modify or avoid some yoga poses.

4. Practice safely and mindfully. Everyone's body is different, and yoga postures should be modified based on individual abilities. Carefully selecting an instructor who is experienced and is attentive to your needs is an important step toward helping you practice yoga safely. Inform your instructor about any medical issues you have, and ask about the physical demands of yoga.

5. Talk to your health care providers about any complementary health practices you use, including yoga. If you're thinking about practicing yoga, also be sure to talk to your health care providers. Give them a full picture of what you do to manage your health. This will help ensure coordinated and safe care.

Crohn's Disease Research Trial

Crohn's Disease affects many Americans. Physicians in your area are currently seeking volunteers to participate in a clinical research study evaluating an investigational medication for people with Crohn's Disease. You may be eligible if you

- Are between the ages of 18 and 75
- Have a diagnosis of Crohn's Disease by a physician
- Have taken OR could not tolerate OR have not had an adequate response to an anti-TNF medication (such as Humira®, Remicade®, Enbrel®, Cimzia® or Simponi®)
- Have not had bowel surgery within the past 3 months

Qualified participants may receive study related medication and study related medical exams at no cost for up to 11 months. Compensation for time and travel is available for qualified participants.

For more information call:

Nature Coast Clinical Research—Inverness
352 341-2100



**Your anxiety grows
when the bathroom is
OCCUPIED**

If you've been diagnosed with Irritable Bowel Syndrome with Diarrhea (IBS-D), you can help local doctors evaluate an investigational medication as part of the IRIS study.

To be pre-qualified for this study, you must be:

- A female at least 18 years of age
- Have a diagnosis of IBS-D, with:
Onset of symptoms of IBS-D at least 6 months ago
Recurrent abdominal pain or discomfort for at least 3 days per month in the last 3 months
Loose or watery stools sometimes or most of the time/always in the last 3 months
More than 3 bowel movements per day sometimes or most of the time/always in the last 3 months

All study-related visits, tests, and medications will be provided at no cost. In addition, reimbursement for travel-related expenses may be provided.

**To learn more, please contact:
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www.irisstudies.com



Do you currently suffer from moderate to severe Ulcerative Colitis?

Ulcerative Colitis (UC) is a lifelong condition that can seriously affect quality of life for thousands who suffer from this painful condition. Unfortunately, current treatments only help manage the symptoms—not the disease.

We are currently looking for volunteers to participate in a clinical research study to evaluate treatment and safety of an investigational medication compared to placebo (*an inactive look-alike substance*) in patients who have not received or not responded to other therapy in relieving moderate to severe UC.

All study medication, placebos (*an inactive look-alike substance*) and study-related examinations and procedures are provided at no cost. Qualified participants may be eligible for reimbursement for time & travel.

You may be qualified to participate if you:

- are between 18 and 65 years of age
- have a positive histological diagnosis of ulcerative colitis
- are willing to participate in the study, complete participant assessments and attend scheduled clinical visits
- satisfy all of the eligibility requirements

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ENCouraging COmmunity Research and Education

Nature Coast Clinical Research has two locations serving Citrus County:

NCCR Inverness Office
411 W. Highland Blvd.
Inverness, Florida 34452
Phone: 352 341-2100
Fax: 352 341-0363

NCCR Crystal River Office
6122 West Corporate Oaks Dr.
Crystal River, Florida 34429
Phone: 352 563-1865
Fax: 352 563-2169

www.naturecoastresearch.com

CONTACT THE OFFICE NEAREST YOU FOR MORE INFORMATION!

Clinical Trial Information Form

Please call me with more information about...

INVERNESS OFFICE

CRYSTAL RIVER OFFICE

- Arthritis of Knees and Hips
- Chronic Constipation
- Chronic Liver Disease/Liver Cirrhosis
- Constipation Induced by Pain Medication
- Crohn's Disease
- Diabetic Gastroparesis
- Diabetes—Type 2
- Gastroparesis
- Heartburn
- High Cholesterol
- High Triglycerides
- Irritable Bowel—Constipation
- Irritable Bowel—Diarrhea
- Ulcerative Colitis
- Weight Loss with Cardiac History

- Acute Coronary Syndrome (ACS) (post heart attack treatment)
- Arthritis of Knees and Hips
- C-diff Vaccine Prevention
- Constipation Induced by Pain Medication
- Dry Eyes
- Endometriosis
- Glaucoma
- Gout
- High Cholesterol
- High Triglycerides
- Hot Flashes
- Irritable Bowel—Diarrhea
- Oral Contraceptives & Birth Control Patch
- Vaginal Atrophy/Dryness
- Weight Loss with Cardiac History

COMPLETE AND MAIL THIS FORM

Name _____

Address _____

Phone _____