



# Florida Wellcare Alliance, LC

## *Healthy Living*

complimentary healthcare information for patients

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### INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

|  |
|--|
| The Missing Piece of the Healthy Lifestyle Puzzle: SLEEP |
| Anaphylaxis  |
| Treating Chronic Neck Pain Caused by Disc Disease        |
| Acid Reflux and the Throat                               |
| Physician Listing  |
| Nature Coast Clinical Research                           |

#### **Anaphylaxis**

Some types of allergies, including allergies to foods, drugs and insect stings, may trigger a severe reaction known as anaphylaxis. A life-threatening medical emergency, this reaction can cause you to go into shock. Signs and symptoms of anaphylaxis include:

Loss of consciousness, lightheadedness, severe shortness of breath, rapid, weak pulse, skin rash, nausea and vomiting, and swelling airways, which can interfere with breathing.

You should see a doctor if you have symptoms you think may be caused by an allergy. If you have symptoms after starting a new medication, call the doctor who prescribed it right away.

For a severe allergic reaction (anaphylaxis), call 911 or seek emergency medical help. If you carry an epinephrine auto-injector, give yourself a shot right away. Even if symptoms improve after an emergency epinephrine injection, a visit to the emergency department is still necessary to make sure symptoms don't return when the effects of the injection wear off.

If you've had a severe allergy attack or any signs and symptoms of anaphylaxis in the past, make an appointment to see your doctor.

## **The Missing Piece of the Healthy Lifestyle Puzzle: SLEEP**

**Dacelin St. Martin M.D.**

Physicians often advise patients to eat better and exercise more, but in spite of these healthy lifestyle changes, some patients still feel burned out, can't drop those extra pounds, and don't have the energy to greet each day with enthusiasm. What is missing? It could be sleep.

Sleep rejuvenates the body and mind, regulates mood, and is related to learning and memory functions. Adequate sleep is a critical factor in health, weight and energy level, and an important part in any healthy lifestyle plan. If you are still struggling after monitoring your diet, exercise and sleep patterns, you may want to talk to your doctor, or consult with a sleep specialist.

Sleep apnea is a common sleep disorder seen in people who are overweight. People who suffer from sleep apnea experience lower energy levels due to daytime sleepiness, and often find it difficult to commit to an exercise and/or diet program — which would improve both their weight and sleep apnea. When these patients are treated for sleep apnea they feel restored and are more willing to start an exercise and a diet program.

Proper timing of exercise is important too because exercise right

before bedtime can lead to a poor night's sleep. I recommend exercising at least three hours before bedtime, and the best time is usually late afternoon. Exercising at this time is beneficial because body temperature is related to sleep. Body temperature rises during exercise and takes as long as six hours to begin to drop. Because cooler body temperatures are associated with sleep onset, it's important to allow the body time to cool off before sleep.

Please know that sleep is not a luxury. Getting the proper amount of sleep each night is necessary to face the world with your best foot forward. Sleep will help you on the road to good fitness, good eating and good health.

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## ACID REFLUX AND THE THROAT

### Denis Grillo, D.O.

In recent years, interest has been increasing in the role that gastroesophageal reflux, or acid reflux, may play in poorly understood symptoms and diseases of the throat. Almost everybody is familiar with the common side effects of acid reflux, but there are a number of things that it affects that are important for the ear, nose and throat doctor to be aware of. These areas affected include the voice box. A little bit lower in the throat, patients can have a sensation of a foreign body as a result of reflux and have difficulty swallowing. Even lower in the airway, certain lung conditions are started or aggravated by acid reflux. We hope, in this article, to point out the affects of acid reflux on the upper throat, voice box and lung areas. In some more unusual conditions it can affect the back of the nose and Eustachian tube, which ultimately can affect the ear. It is said that approximately 40% of the general public has some sort of reflux disease.

The variety of voice box symptoms can be mystifying and can include a bothersome cough, post-nasal drainage, choking spells, habitual clearing of the throat, and vague hoarseness with no visible explanation. Cancer of the larynx is usually associated with heavy smoking and drinking, but recent evidence suggests that severe history of heartburn may put the voice box at risk for cancer just as it does the esophagus. The mechanism is that repeated and chronically irritated tissue degenerates into cancer as a result of contact with the acid.

Globus hystericus, or globus, is defined as the sensation of choking or a lump in the throat. It can be accompanied by symptoms such as a tight feeling in the throat and a tendency toward choking. This sensation is usually in the midline in the front part of the neck. The patient frequently engages in dry swallowing in efforts to dislodge the sensation, but that only makes it worse. Symptoms typically are more prominent between meals and usually disappear with a meal.

This sensation can occur with physical evidence of a problem in the throat such as infection or growth. In the case of a negative examination, one must suspect acid reflux such as occurs with a hiatal hernia, which is an incompetent valve at the top of the stomach, allowing acid to come up into the esophagus and top part of the throat. It is not completely clear what causes the globus sensation. It is probably due to a combination of things including environmental stress in our fast-paced society, varying degrees of anxiety, and personal events individual to each patient. Extreme cases of acid reflux injury to the upper throat can result in difficulty swallowing, where a patient has difficulty with passage of solids or liquids from the back of the throat into the upper esophagus, or food tube. As with all throat problems, evaluation must be made to rule out more serious problems such as cancer. Swallowing problems lower in the throat can be associated with a diverticulum, which is a pouch in the throat that retains food products after a meal that are later regurgitated. Researchers feel that acid reflux may play a part in creating the weakening of the wall of the esophagus or throat and create the pouch that traps the food that later regurgitates.

Complications of acid reflux in the lower respiratory tract include pneumonia, infections, abscesses, wheezing that is attributed to asthma, and long-term pulmonary fibrosis, which means that the lung tissue becomes scarred and does not let the patient breathe easily. Patients who don't respond to the usual medications should be evaluated for acid reflux. In some rare instances, medications for acid reflux and/or surgery may have a dramatic result on the patient's asthma. Also, in rare cases, narrowing of the windpipe due to repeated exposure to acid and scar tissue formation could cause a patient to have difficulty breathing. In this instance, surgical intervention to enlarge the opening would be the treatment of choice. The occurrence of acid reflux in small children is usually overlooked and is more common than initially thought. One of the common manifestations

*Continued on page 3*

*Continued from page 2*

of this problem is increased incidence of ear disease. The theory is that the infant is allowed to lie on his back and drink from a bottle, which would put him at risk for the contents of the stomach coming up and injuring his Eustachian tube openings, which are located in the back of the upper throat and nose. Usually, treatment only requires conservative measures such as changes in eating habits.

Treatment of acid reflux includes postural changes such as elevating the head of the bed at night to allow gravity to keep the acid in the stomach, and avoiding certain foods. Among the most common offenders include carbonated beverages, orange juice, tomato juice, coffee and liquor. It is important to avoid eating approximately 2 to 4 hours before bed. Antacids have long been a mainstay of reflux therapy and are quite common and effective. This includes all of the over-the-counter varieties. Drug therapy has become more sophisticated and new medications are developing all the time. Current reflux medications are very effective, as can be seen by the decrease of acid reflux surgery to repair the stomach. Smoking also seems to aggravate acid reflux and should be avoided at all costs.

Some medications we take to help other medical problems may aggravate reflux and make it worse. Some of the more common medications that aggravate reflux include progesterone therapy, Theophylline, which is used in chronic respiratory diseases such as emphysema, heart medications

including beta-blockers and calcium-channel blockers which are commonly used to treat heart and blood pressure problems. Common over-the-counter items such as vitamins and aspirin have been known to directly irritate and increase the acidity of the stomach. It is clear that acid plays a large role in affecting not only the stomach and esophagus, but also the throat. It is very important to have this evaluated, as long-term exposure can lead to serious problems such as cancer. As with all other disease processes, if caught and evaluated early, success in treatment is likely.

Dr. Grillo is Board Certified in Otorhinolaryngology and Facial Plastics. He has been practicing in Citrus County since 1998 at Crystal Community Ear, Nose and Throat in Crystal River.



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*Continued on page 6*

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*Continued from page 5*

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## Treating Chronic Neck Pain Caused by Disc Disease Mark Hashim, M.D.

Many people suffer from neck and arm pain due to disc disease and arthritis. Just like low back pain and sciatica caused by disc disease in the lower segments of the spine, the same processes can occur in the neck. The symptoms can be chronic neck pain, numbness, tingling or pain traveling down the arm. When these symptoms occur, it is important to be evaluated and treated so that this problem does not interfere with your quality of life.

Interventional Pain Management physicians have the ability to properly evaluate your condition and begin treatment. After taking a careful history and performing a physical exam the patient is started with medications such as an anti-inflammatory or other prescription medicines that are not addictive. In addition, an MRI of the neck is done to evaluate the specific disease process that is occurring. Once the work-up is complete, the MRI findings are reviewed with the patient and further treatment options are suggested. Sometimes physical therapy is prescribed, and it can be very effective. If the pain continues, safe and reliable procedures may have to be performed.

Many times, the disease process is due to a disc that is either ruptured or slightly torn and is causing a localized inflammatory reaction. If indicated, an epidural steroid injection may be given to relieve the pressure from the inflammation that is affecting the nerves to the neck and arms. This is done utilizing the assistance of an X-ray machine to help guide the needle into the correct location to optimally treat the condition. The procedure is done by first numbing the skin, then guiding the needle into the space where an anti inflammatory medication is deposited after confirming the correct location with a dye. Usually within 24 to 48 hours the symptoms begin to dissipate and the patient starts to feel better. This can be repeated if need be every two weeks for a total of three injections, but usually one injection will suffice. If the patient's symptoms do return, a single "booster" injection can be done every three months.

There can also be other disease processes occurring such as a type of arthritis in the joints of the neck. If this is the case, a different procedure can be done to block the nerves that are signaling the pain to the brain. This is called a cervical facet block and is also done with the assistance of the X-ray machine. First, the skin and the nerve that travels to the affected joints in the neck are numbed. This is not a painful procedure and only takes a few minutes. This procedure can also be repeated if need be, but usually one or two treatments can help significantly to reduce the neck pain.

If these procedures are not effective a more complicated, yet very successful procedure called spinal cord stimulation can be performed. This is first done with a three-day trial and if the symptoms are relieved, the patient is referred to a surgeon for a permanent implant.

My philosophy in treating patients is to control their pain, and return him or her to the best possible quality of life. I do not subscribe to the theory of placing people on dangerous addictive medications. There are other treatment options that can be very effective.

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## 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**

### NEW STUDY SEEKING PEOPLE WITH TYPE 2 DIABETES AND HEART DISEASE

Nature Coast Clinical Research  
is seeking people with type 2  
diabetes and heart disease  
to take part in the **SUSTAIN™ 6**  
Long-term Outcomes trial.

**SUSTAIN™**



**NATURE COAST  
CLINICAL RESEARCH**

Contact: Brandi Lattinville  
352.563.1865

### ABDOMINAL PAIN, BLOATING, DIARRHEA

Have you or someone you know been Diagnosed with Irritable Bowel Syndrome?

If so, there is now an opportunity to join a new research study.

Are you eligible?

- Between the ages 18-80 years old
- Have diarrhea predominant irritable bowel syndrome



**NATURE COAST  
CLINICAL RESEARCH**

**Qualified Participants:** Will receive study medication or placebo, study-related testing, physical exams, and lab work at no charge

**Additionally:** Compensation may be available to qualified participants for each completed visit (for time and travel)

**Furiex**  
Pharmaceuticals

**NATURE COAST CLINICAL RESEARCH**

Kim Siddell

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352.341.2100

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6122 W. Corporate Oaks Dr. Crystal River, FL 34429

352.563.1865

**If you would like to know more about these studies or just learn more about research participation, please fill out the form on the back of this newsletter and mail it to us.**



# Nature Coast Clinical Research, LLC.

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](http://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

- Chronic Constipation
- Constipation Induced by Pain Medication
- Crohn's Disease
- Diabetic Gastroparesis
- Diabetes—Type 2
- High Cholesterol
- High Triglycerides
- Irritable Bowel—Constipation
- Irritable Bowel—Diarrhea
- Ulcerative Colitis

- Acute Coronary Syndrome (ACS) (post heart attack treatment)
- Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD)
- Constipation Induced by Pain Medication
- Diabetes—Type 2
- Endometriosis
- Glaucoma
- Gout
- High Cholesterol
- High Triglycerides
- Irritable Bowel—Diarrhea

**COMPLETE AND MAIL THIS FORM**

**Name** \_\_\_\_\_

**Address** \_\_\_\_\_

**Phone** \_\_\_\_\_