



CITY OF SAN JOSE

WELLNESS

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A newsletter for wellness information, events and celebrations!

Volume III

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Page 1

In this issue:

Dr. Das says...

“A correct diagnosis first; then pain relief”

Three I.T. Dept. employees make exercise work for them!

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Employee Wellness resources are available at: www.sanjoseca.gov/wellness where you can find info on the following benefits:

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Alternative Medicine



*Rajiv Das, M.D., MPH
Employee Health Services*

Who do you trust to fix you when you don't feel well? Many people automatically go to their doctor, but what type of doctor do people choose? There are many different approaches to healing available and I would like to discuss the different disciplines briefly. The following descriptions are grossly simplified but should convey basic information to you about their differences.

Allopathic Medicine is traditional western medicine which relies on biochemistry and physiology to diagnose and treat illness. Medications are used to kill invaders like bacteria or to target bodily functions to reduce symptoms. Surgery is used to correct damage to the anatomy. Allopathic medicine prides itself on testing

its treatments to ensure that they work as promised and that they do not cause significant harm. Less severe or subtle problems sometimes leave patients dissatisfied with allopathic medicine who then seek other approaches. Since allopathic medicine does not have answers for every problem, other disciplines exist to try and fill that void.

Osteopathic Medicine is not easily distinguished from allopathic medicine as it is currently practiced. Many osteopaths practice allopathic medicine and do not use the approaches learned in osteopathic school. Osteopathy originally based its treatment in a belief that a number of maladies can be addressed by fixing biomechanical dysfunction. Osteopaths rely on muscle and joint mobilization techniques which can be quite effective in relieving musculoskeletal pain if done well.

Chiropractic is another approach that believes addressing biomechanical dysfunction is beneficial. The underlying belief is that the nervous system is responsible for a number

Success for 3 in I.T.

Nobody could have been more thrilled about the opening of the new City Hall Fitness Room than a certain trio of Information Technology employees. Prior to the Fitness Room opening, you'd likely see these three employees jumping and sweating to the images of a Tae-Bo exercise DVD playing on a miniscule 7-inch portable viewing screen in a corner of the underground garage. For months Blynthia Williams, Eddie Dominguez and Catherine Tran exercised together this way, never seeming to mind the cold concrete floor or the dim lighting in order to make their fitness goals a reality. Still exercising together today, they now make excellent use of the City Hall Fitness Room and its offer of a safer workout environment with mats under foot and adequate lighting above.

These three employees work one of the most emotionally demanding front-line positions in

the City – they work in the Customer Service Center and part of their job is to answer calls regarding garbage collection. Garbage collection is mandatory for San Jose residents, and so is paying for it, and sometimes callers aren't very happy about that fact. Occasionally, the garbage haulers miss a pickup, and it's these employees who get the hauler back out to make the collection. They also provide assistance for a homeless encampment program & help residents in home foreclosure.

What started out as a simple power-walk for



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Alternative Medicine, cont.

of maladies and illness can be fixed by correcting spinal joint dysfunction.

Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) believes that we rely on the unobstructed flow of qi (chi) and that illness is brought upon by obstruction of this flow or a deficiency of qi. The correct placement of needles and the use of herbs can help correct these problems.

Homeopathic Medicine believes that a small dose of a drug that causes symptoms in large doses will cure the disease. The “poison” is diluted so that it will generate a healing effect instead of a bad effect.

Ayurvedic Medicine is a form of traditional medicine in India which uses herbs and exercises to treat disease.

I’ve grossly simplified these different medical disciplines in order to help you understand options and personally feel that each approach has its role in

healing the body. Whatever approach is used, the key is to realize when it’s not working and try something different. Knowing the level of training and dedication of a practitioner is very important when choosing one. As with any other field or profession, the quality of care can vary from provider to provider, so patients should not judge an individual discipline solely on one experience.

It’s also important to obtain a correct diagnosis so that a severe illness or problem is not missed. An example of this would be the gradual onset of lower back pain in a 50 year old male which is worse at night and doesn’t seem to get better. More important than getting relief from the pain is finding out what causes the pain. My bias is that allopathic medicine would more quickly identify whether prostate cancer is responsible for the pain than the other disciplines. If there is no “red flag” diagnosis, then the approach to relieve symptoms is up to the individual.

Success for 3, cont.

work-time stress relief among co-workers grew to include using the exercise DVDs, which in turn became the mode for really significant changes in their lives; major weight loss for Eddie, a significant improvement in blood pressure readings for Catherine and a more toned and pain free body for Blynthia. Eddie confesses that he did receive some scary but motivating news from his doctor early last year and was told that he’d either have to lose weight or begin taking diabetes medication. Catherine wasn’t overweight but her doctor pointed out that her blood pressure was nearing unhealthy levels and exercise was going to be her silver bullet to avoid medications. And Blynthia shares with us that she suffers from symptoms associated with Lupis and she uses daily exercise to keep her spirits up and her pain down.

Blynthia, Catherine and Eddie all say that the support they get from their department and each other helps to make their daily workouts possible. Supervisors allow them to take an unconventional lunch break, which helps the department by keeping staff on the phones during the traditional lunch hour, and in return they can

take their lunch break later during the day when the number of employees using the Fitness Room is lower. They’re accountable to each other too and give positive encouragement when someone isn’t feeling up to the task of changing clothes and getting sweaty. They even weigh each other before going on vacations(!); which is really an agreement to remember to maintain their weight, but if anyone actually gains while out of the office, they’ll soon find themselves buying lunch for two!

Although proper nutrition is also an important part of their overall plan, it’s good ol’ exercise that seems to get the credit for removing 58 pounds from Eddie’s mid-section, reducing Catherine’s systolic/diastolic blood pressure by -25/-20 respectively, and for keeping Blynthia at work and focused.

In their own way, each of these remarkable employees has found an answer to their wellness concerns thru exercise and they deserve our praise and attention for their wonderful accomplishments!

by *Debbi Bohnet-Nuttall*
CSJ Employee Wellness Coordinator



Appropriate Treatment - Why MedExpert can make all the difference

When you go to the doctor, you expect to find out what’s wrong and then have it treated appropriately.

- But the fact is, “appropriate treatment” is unique for every individual. There is a best path of care for any patient with any given condition, but this doesn’t mean you will get it. In fact, about half the time, *you won’t*.
- Studies show that 46% of Americans receive substandard care each time they seek medical treatment. Add to that, the complexity of dealing with the healthcare system, coordinating benefits, transferring records, and so on. Inappropriate variation of treatment has become a fact of life. The reason is that no doctor can stay current on the constantly up-dating knowledge base of best-practice care.

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Start by expecting more from healthcare; demand nothing less than the *best* path of care and the *best* healthcare guidance. MedExpert can provide this guidance and works with your regular health care providers. Call MedExpert toll-free at 1-800-999-1999 or send an e-mail via the MedExpert website at www.medexpert.com/members.html. Representatives are available from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m., Monday—Friday.