

DR. LAURA T. BRAYTON

(201) 792 3544

50 Harrison Street Suite 218  
Hoboken, NJ 07030

# Newsletter

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## Life Can Be a Pain without Chiropractic

That pain in your knee is often what doctors call patellofemoral pain syndrome (PFPS). Simple activities such as running, jumping, or going up and down stairs can contribute to knee pain, which means that most of us will eventually suffer from some form of PFPS. It has been suggested that PFPS can be relieved by sufficient stretching and lengthening of tight structures around the patella (the kneecap). A study in the Journal of the Neuromusculoskeletal System investigated this potential intervention in 30 patients with PFPS.

Patients were divided into two groups: The first group received “patella mobilization” (extension of the knee with pressure and movement applied for 10 minutes, followed by patellar adjustment in the direction of restricted movement); the second group received detuned ultrasound as placebo (five minutes of ultrasound, but with the intensity set at zero). Patients receiving mobilization had positive improvements in PFPS symptoms compared with the placebo group. The authors note that this type of conservative care may be useful when combined with other treatment options such as exercise, orthotics and activity modification. If you’re suffering from knee pain and would like to know more about nonsurgical approaches to relieving your pain, contact your doctor of chiropractic.

Reference: Rowlands BW, Brantingham JW. The efficacy of patella mobilization in patients suffering from patellofemoral pain syndrome. Journal of the Neuromusculoskeletal System 1999: Vol. 7, No. 4, pp142-49.

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## Half of Computer Users May Develop Pain

The U.S. Census Bureau reports that in 1997, 92 million American adults used a computer, almost 40% of all households had a computer, and half of employed adults worked on a computer on the job. Dozens of studies have evaluated musculoskeletal symptoms and disorders of the hands and arms in computer users, yet the long-term effects of numerous hours at the keyboard remain uncertain.

To determine the incidence of conditions developing from workplace computer use, over 600 recently hired employees who used computers at least 15 hours per week were asked to complete diaries on the hours they worked, hours they spent on the computer, and presence of symptoms in their necks, shoulders, hands, and arms for up to three years. Researchers sought those with symptoms requiring medication or scoring high on a pain scale; the results of their study were published recently in the American Journal of Industrial Medicine. Over 50% of the workers suffered from musculoskeletal symptoms in their first year at the new job. Almost one-third suffered a new onset of neck or shoulder symptoms, and a quarter of the individuals suffered new onset of symptoms in the arms or hands. Carpal tunnel syndrome, one of the best-known conditions related to long-term keyboard use, was surprisingly one of the least likely disorders seen in this study - only 1% of the workers developed it. Women and those over age 30 were most likely to exhibit symptoms from computer use.

If you spend many hours in front of a computer, either at work or at home, be sure to use the proper form and follow basic guidelines to avoid injury: Maintain an upright posture; keep your keyboard even with or slightly below elbow level; be sure your mouse and other devices are within easy reach; and be sure to get up and walk around regularly to stretch and get the blood flowing to your extremities.

Reference: Gerr F, Marcus M, Ensor C, et al. A prospective study of computer users: I. Study design and incidence of musculoskeletal symptoms and disorders. American Journal of Industrial Medicine 2002:41(4), pp. 221-235.

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## Doctors Often Miss Prevention Opportunities

Primary-care physicians rarely discuss risky health behaviors with their patients, says a U.S. study. Doctors fail to ask about behaviors such as smoking, alcohol abuse, poor diet and physical inactivity, researchers found.

“Opportunities to address patients’ health behaviors in strategic settings such as primary care practices often are missed,” study author Dorothy Hung of Columbia University said in a statement.

The review, published in *The Milbank Quarterly*, found primary-care physicians are more likely to offer recommended preventive services if, among others, they are owned by a hospital health system, exhibit a culture of quality improvement or include a multi-specialty physician staff and staff dietitians.

There are many community resources available for patients to receive additional, health-promoting care according to Hung.

Editor’s Note: Chiropractors simply do not miss this opportunity since primary focus is on their patient’s overall well-being and with improving the quality of life for them and their families. As a result, make sure you visit your chiropractor to discuss these and other related topics.

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## Toddlers Observe Others for Behavior Cues

A University of Washington study found toddlers engage in what is described as “emotional eavesdropping” -- observing adults to shape their own behavior. The findings in the journal *Child Development* indicate infants understand other people’s emotional states at a very young age. Betty Repacholi and Andrew Meltzoff of the University of Washington Institute for Learning and Brain Sciences say the study shows children have their emotional antenna up at all times.

“The fascinating result of this study is how sensitive toddlers are to the emotional dynamics of the interactions around them,” Meltzoff said in a statement. “They don’t need to try out a behavior of their own and get rewarded or punished, they can watch what an older brother or sister does and then learn from what happens to them.”

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## Soft Drinks Linked to More Calorie Intake

A new U.S. review of studies has linked the consumption of non-diet soft drinks to higher calorie intake from other foods. A systematic review of studies, published in the April issue of the *American Journal of Public Health*, examined 21 studies looking at non-diet soft-drink intake and increased calorie consumption. In 19 of these studies, as people drank more soda, the number of calories they consumed from other foods also rose. “These results, taken together, provide clear and consistent evidence that people do not compensate for the added calories they consume in soft drinks by reducing their intake of other foods,” according to review co-author Kelly Brownell, director of the Rudd Center for Food Policy and Obesity at Yale University in New Haven, Conn. However, the American Beverage Association claims obesity -- a consequence of eating too many calories -- can’t be tied to one product. “It is not feasible to blame any one food product or beverage as being a sole contributor to obesity. ... No science supports such a claim,” the group said on its Web site.

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## Thin Models Make Women Feel Badly

The rail-thin, boyish figures of models on magazine covers make all women feel bad about their own bodies, according to a U.S. study. Previous research had suggested heavier women felt worse than thinner women after viewing some of ultra-thin models in the mass media, University of Missouri-Columbia researchers said. The study of 81 women, published in the journal *Sex Roles: A Journal of Research*, found no matter what their height or weight, after viewing the svelte models, women reported a drop in their level of satisfaction with their own bodies. “Surprisingly, we found that weight was not a factor. Viewing these pictures was just bad for everyone,” Laurie Mintz of the University of Missouri-Columbia College of Education said in a statement. “These unrealistic images of women, who are often airbrushed or partially computer-generated, have a detrimental impact on women and how they feel about themselves,” she said.

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## Tired Female Athletes Up Knee Risk Injury

Fatigued women and men athletes make different movements, which may explain why female athletes are at greater risk of knee injury, a U.S. study says.

Researchers at the Cleveland Clinic found that female athletes tend to land from a jump with a more flexed ankle -- the foot rolls outward with an elevated arch -- and more knee abduction and knee internal rotation compared with male athletes. When fatigued, these differences were even larger, according to the study published in the journal *Medicine and Science in Sports and Exercise*.

National Collegiate Athletic Association research shows that female athletes are at least twice as likely to suffer an anterior cruciate ligament injury as male athletes, and in some cases up to eight times more likely. In addition, 10 percent of female athletes will experience an ACL injury at some point in their careers, according to the NCAA.

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## Exercise Cuts Young Adult Blood Pressure

U.S. young adults who exercised five times a week reduced their risk of hypertension by 17 percent. Lead author David Jacobs Jr., an epidemiologist at the University of Minnesota in Minneapolis, tracked the physical-activity levels and blood-pressure measurements of almost 4,000 black and white men and women ages 18 to 30 over a 15-year period. Each participant burned 300 calories per exercise session. Overall, 634 adults developed hypertension, defined as systolic pressure of at least 140 mm Hg; diastolic pressure of at least 90 mm Hg; or the need to take blood-pressure medications, according to the study published in the April issue of the *American Journal of Public Health*. The study also found participants who increased their total physical activity from the start of the study decreased their risk of high blood pressure by 11 percent for every 1,500 calories they burned weekly.

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## Most Unaware of Risky Deep-Vein Thrombosis

Vice President Dick Cheney has had it, but most U.S. adults have never heard of deep-vein thrombosis, a survey finds. The survey, conducted by the Coalition to Prevent Deep-Vein Thrombosis, found 60 percent have not heard about this condition, which affects up to 2 million Americans each year. DVT-related complications kill up to 300,000 Americans annually.

While physicians reported they are nearly twice as likely as the general public to have heard or read about DVT, less than 25 percent of physicians surveyed said they educate their high-risk patients about DVT, and only half prescribe medication for these patients.

Nearly half fail to realize the significance of DVT risk factors such as oral contraceptives, pneumonia and cancer. DVT occurs when a blood clot forms and partially or completely blocks blood flow inside a deep vein, typically located in the calf or thigh. If the blood clot breaks free and travels to the lungs, it may block blood flow to the heart.

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## Survey: Parents Lax with Teen Driving

Although U.S. parents know the top killer of teens is automobile accidents, most don't understand the reasons for the crashes, a survey found. Nearly 50 percent of parents polled think crashes involving teens result from drunk driving. In reality, the majority of crashes are caused by driver error, speeding and driving with distractions, according to the survey conducted by The Allstate Foundation. The national survey of more than 1,000 parents of teens ages 15 to 17 also found many parents allow their teens to drive in dangerous situations within the first few months after getting a license, increasing the likelihood of a deadly crash. Ninety percent of the respondents permit their teens to drive after dark, even though teens are twice as likely to crash after 9 p.m. as during the day. Seventy-seven percent of parents allow their teens to drive with friends, even though studies show the chance of crashing increases in proportion to the number of teen passengers in a car. And 69 percent of parents surveyed allow their teens to drive in bad weather.

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## Protective Eyewear Could Cut 40,000 Injuries

Protective eyewear lenses could protect the eyes of the estimated 40,000 U.S. athletes each year who are injured while playing sports. The American Academy of Ophthalmology urges athletes to wear appropriate, sport-specific protective eyewear properly fitted by an eye-care professional to prevent injuries. "Athletes can select from various types of lightweight and sturdy protective eyewear," Dr. M. Bowes Hamill of the Baylor College of Medicine in Houston said in a statement. "Eyewear properly fitted and worn does not hinder performance in any way, and can prevent most sports eye injuries." Protective eyewear lenses made of polycarbonate plastic can withstand impact from a ball or other projectile traveling at 90 miles per hour, while contact lenses offer no protection. Regular glasses are inadequate to protect against any type of eye injury, according to Hamill. Most U.S. sporting leagues don't require children to wear eye protection, but where protective eyewear is required, the occurrence of eye injuries is greatly reduced, according to the academy.

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## Some Video Games Can Improve Vision

A University of Rochester study found playing action video games sharpens vision -- especially in those with amblyopia, known as "lazy eye." The study in Psychological Science found video action game-players did better on tests of visual acuity that assess the ability to see objects accurately in a cluttered space than their non-playing peers. "Action video game play changes the way our brains process visual information," Daphne Bavelier, professor of brain and cognitive sciences, said in a statement. "After just 30 hours of training, people who normally don't play video games showed a substantial increase in the spatial resolution of their vision, meaning they could see small, closely packed letters more clearly." However, only certain games, such as first-person action games, are beneficial. Puzzle games have no effect, according to Bavelier.

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## Shopping List May Lead to Impulse Buying

U.S. researchers have found writing out a grocery list before going shopping could lead to sinful and unhealthy food choices. Researchers from Duke University, the University of California at Los Angeles and the University of Florida reported that trying to recall what food options are available by writing a shopping list at home uses mental resources that might otherwise be used to counter impulsive choices.

Having to come up with options from memory led to more impulsive decisions, the researchers found. It's called "memory-based" decision-making; "stimulus-based" decision-making occurs when the consumer buys what they see in the store. The study, published in the Journal of Consumer Research, suggests a person may opt for a sinful dessert like cheesecake over a healthy alternative like a fruit salad. "We find that consumers who must generate options from memory are more likely to select fun, hedonistic, and sinful options over sensible options or 'appropriate' options," Yuval Rottenreich of Duke University said in a statement.

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## No More Walking it Off for Young Athletes

"Walking it off" or "playing through the pain" is no longer an option for young athletes with foot or ankle injuries, say U.S. experts. Athletic children who ignore injuries, cut physical therapy short or skip it altogether could face repeated injuries and foot instability well into their teens and adulthood, warned sports-medicine experts meeting in Orlando, Fla., for the American College of Foot and Ankle Surgeons annual scientific conference. Ignored injuries could also lead to long-term problems including osteoarthritis, chronic ankle instability, arthritis and tendon problems. More children are playing high-level competitive sports such as gymnastics, tennis, soccer, volleyball, track & field and golf, contributing to a rise in serious foot and ankle injuries in younger patients. "I'm treating chronic heel injuries in pre-teen athletes, where a few years ago we saw these cases only among 16- and 17-year-olds," Robert J. Duggan, a leading sports-medicine expert with the ACFAS, said in a statement. "When the level of competition intensifies, so do the stresses on the feet and ankles and ultimately injuries."

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