

DR. LAURA T. BRAYTON

(201) 792 3544

50 Harrison Street Suite 218
Hoboken, NJ 07030

Newsletter

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Time for a Spinal Tune-up

When you care about your car, you take it to the shop for the tune-ups it needs - oil changes, tire rotations, new brakes, etc. Your spine is no different. It needs a regular "tune-up" as well, complete with chiropractic adjustments. Chiropractic tune-ups can serve three purposes:

1. Evaluate the state of your body, even if you have no pain. Even people who feel fine have areas of their spine or extremities that are out of normal alignment. When we adjust those bones back into place, people feel better in some way. If we waited until we felt pain, we would all wait until we needed root canals or crowns before going to the dentist!
2. Address major or minor pains you currently have, but haven't been too worried about. Have you had any nagging discomforts or pains coming from your spine or extremities? Do these discomforts prevent you from doing the activities you enjoy? Instead of wondering if the pain will continue to get worse or stay that way for the rest of your life, give chiropractic a try. You don't have to live with pain.
3. Prevent future problems that can and likely will arise from your joints being out of alignment and not functioning at 100 percent. Our society is moving toward preventative health care. Chiropractic has been at the forefront of this concept since the chiropractic profession was founded in 1895. Arthritis, overuse injuries (like carpal tunnel syndrome and tennis elbow), rotator cuff injuries and knee problems are just some examples of conditions that may be prevented with chiropractic care.
4. Scheduling chiropractic tune-ups allows you to take care of your body so that your machine functions as well as it possibly can. Please remember to make time to care for yourself; you are worth every penny.

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Super Foods' Can Be Holiday Foods

A new generation of so-called super foods such as cranberries and broccoli sprouts prevent illness and can be holiday fare, as well, a U.S. dietitian says. Stephanie Dean, a dietitian with Baylor University Medical Center at Dallas, says a traditional holiday favorite -- cranberries -- are high in flavonoids, an antioxidant that can help prevent everything from infections to strokes to cancer.

"The crimson color of cranberries signal that they are full of flavonoids," Dean said in a statement. Broccoli sprouts, a close cousin to broccoli, contains 20 percent more anti-cancer agents than regular broccoli, Dean says. Broccoli sprouts are sold by the package and can be thrown on top of salads or can be a great addition to sandwiches, Dean suggests. Kiwis are a fruit that are full of antioxidants, vitamin E and lutein that help ward off vision problems, blood clots and lower cholesterol.

Barley, a grain that can be added to soups, served with meat or eaten as a hot breakfast cereal, can lower cholesterol. "The U.S. Department of Agriculture found that barley specifically could lower your low-density lipoprotein or 'bad' cholesterol by 17.4 percent, which is a phenomenal percentage," Dean said.

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Aging Need Not Be Sedentary

Many assume a sedentary life is an inevitable part of aging, but a U.S. study found the elderly can be more active. University of California at Los Angeles researchers showed in a pilot test that older adults who participated in a program aimed at becoming more physically active increased their walking levels by about 24 percent -- an average increase of 2.5 miles per week. Lead author Dr. Catherine Sarkisian worked with 46 sedentary adults over age 65 who attended four weekly, hour long group sessions led by a trained health educator. The researchers used a technique known as "attribution retraining" to effect a change in what it means to age and what to expect. The participants were taught to reject the notion that becoming older means becoming sedentary and to accept that they can continue engaging in physical activity well into old age. Each retraining session was followed by a one-hour exercise class that included strength, endurance and flexibility training.

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Ears Make Their Own Sound

U.S. brain scientists discovered cells in the developing ear make their own noise, long before the ear is able to detect sound around them. The finding, reported in *Nature*, helps explain how the developing auditory system generates brain activity in the absence of sound and may help people who experience tinnitus -- hearing sounds that seem to come from nowhere. "It's long been thought that nerve cells that connect auditory organs to the brain need to experience sound or other nerve activity to find their way to the part of the brain responsible for processing sound," lead study author, Dwight Bergles, of Johns Hopkins Medical Institutions, said in a statement. "So when we saw that these supporting cells could generate their own electrical activity, we suspected they might somehow be involved in triggering the activity required for proper nerve wiring." Bergles explained the breakthrough came when it was discovered that adenosine triphosphate, or ATP -- a chemical used in providing cell energy -- was also changing the shape of certain cells. He said small amounts of free-floating ATP activate only a few nearby hair cells in the ear and he believes these brief bursts of electrical activity may help the hearing system do fine-tuning.

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More Reasons to Quit Smoking Thank Cancer

The American Academy of Otolaryngology says smoking is associated with much more than lung cancer giving U.S. adults more reason to quit.

Dr. Michael G. Stewart of Weill Cornell Medical College in New York said health complications from smoking affect the entire body. In addition to cancers of the lungs, smoking contributes to chronic obstructive pulmonary disease and cardiovascular disease. Stewart said smoking can cause slow less noticeable damage to many other organs and body systems such as:

1. Exposure to secondhand smoke can cause damage to a child's developing organs, like the lungs and brain.
2. Active smoking produces a negative effect on middle-ear function by chronically irritating the Eustachian tube and the lining of the middle ear.
3. Smoking aggravates conditions like allergies and sinusitis.

"We know that quitting is no easy task, but the overall health benefits are immeasurable," Stewart said in a statement. "There are many healthcare professionals available to help you. You don't have to go it alone."

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One-third U.S. Children Take Supplements

More than 30 percent of U.S. children age 18 and younger take some type of dietary supplements, most often multivitamins and multiminerals, a study found.

Mary Frances Picciano of the Office of Dietary Supplements at National Institutes of Health in Bethesda, Md., and colleagues analyzed data from the 1999 to 2002 National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey -- a survey of 10,136 U.S. children age 18 or younger, who were given examinations, and their parents were interviewed. The study, published in the *Archives of Pediatrics & Adolescent Medicine*, found 32 percent of children had used dietary supplements in the previous 30 days, including 12 percent of infants younger than 12 months.

More non-Hispanic whites, 38 percent, and Mexican-Americans, 22 percent, used supplements than non-Hispanic black participants, 19 percent. Supplement use was associated with higher family income, a smoke-free environment, lower body mass index in children and less daily television, video game or computer time. Children underweight or at risk for being underweight were the most likely to take supplements.

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Energy Drinks May Pose Risk for Some

U.S. researchers suggest energy drinks may pose risks for people with high blood pressure and heart disease. James Kalus, senior manager of Patient Care Services at Henry Ford Hospital in Detroit, and a former Wayne State researcher who led the study said some studies have found most energy drinks contain high levels of caffeine and taurine -- an amino acid that has had effects on heart function and blood pressure. Sports drinks generally contain various mixtures of water, sugars and salts, Kalus said. In a small study, Wayne State University researchers found energy drinks increased blood pressure by about 7 percent and heart rates by about 11 percent in adults who drank two cans a day of a popular energy drink. "While the increases didn't reach dangerous levels in the healthy volunteers, the increases in blood pressure and heart rate could prove to be clinically significant in patients with heart disease or in those who consume energy drinks often," Kalus said in a statement. "Individuals with high blood pressure and heart disease should be advised to avoid these drinks." The findings were presented at the American Heart Association's scientific sessions in Orlando, Fla.

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Child TV Viewing Linked to Behavior Issues

Daily television viewing for two or more hours in early childhood has been linked to behavioral problems and poor social skills, a U.S. study found. A study of children ages 2.5 to 5.5 years, conducted by researchers at the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health in Baltimore, found that the impact of TV viewing on a child's behavior and social skills varied by the age at which the viewing occurred, but heavy television viewing that decreased over time was not associated with behavior or social problems. Lead author Kamila Mistry, a doctoral candidate at The Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School, analyzed data for 2,707 children collected from the Healthy Steps for Young Children national evaluation. Parents were surveyed about their child's television viewing habits and behavior at 2.5 and at 5.5 years of age. The study, published in the journal *Pediatrics*, found that having a television in the child's bedroom at 5.5 years of age was associated with behavioral problems, poor social skills and poor sleep. Forty-one percent of the children in the study had a television in their bedroom.

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Exercise Should Be Stepped Up

British researchers say the public may be getting the wrong message about exercise -- believing that moderate exercise is sufficient. The study, published in *Preventive Medicine*, finds 56 percent of men and 71 percent of women believe moderate activities -- like walking -- best promote health. Study lead author Gary O'Donovan, exercise physiologist at the University of Exeter says Britain's department of health guidelines that recommend moderate exercise since 1995 should be changed to vigorous activity. "Time and time again, the largest and most robust studies have shown that vigorously active individuals live longer and enjoy a better quality of life than moderately active individuals and couch potatoes," O'Donovan said in a statement. "It's extremely worrying that British adults now believe that a brief stroll and a bit of gardening is enough to make them fit and healthy." While 30 minutes of brisk walking per day might be sufficient to reduce the risk of breast cancer, O'Donovan believes regular participation in vigorous exercise is probably necessary to reduce the risk of prostate and colorectal cancers. O'Donovan warns sedentary adults should first consult their doctor and complete a six-to-12-week program of moderate exercise before beginning vigorous exercise.

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Men, Women Respond Differently to Stress

Men have a "fight-or-flight" response to stress while women are more likely to "tend-and-befriend," a U.S. researcher suggests. University of Pennsylvania School of Medicine researchers found that different parts of the brain activate with different spatial and temporal profiles for men and women when they are faced with performance-related stress. Lead author J.J. Wang said evolutionarily, males may have had to confront a stressor either by overcoming or fleeing it, while women may have responded by nurturing offspring and affiliating with social groups that maximize the survival of the species. Thirty-two healthy subjects -- half of them women -- received functional magnetic resonance imaging scans before, during and after they underwent a challenging arithmetic task, under pressure. As a low stress control condition, participants were asked to count backward without pressure. The researchers measured regional cerebral blood flow -- a marker of regional brain function. In men, stress was associated with increased cerebral blood flow in the right prefrontal cortex and cerebral blood flow reduction in the left orbitofrontal cortex -- associated with higher levels of the stress hormone cortisol. The limbic system -- a part of the brain primarily involved in emotion -- was activated when the women were under stress, reported the journal *Social Cognitive and Affective Neuroscience*.

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