



# PEP TALK

PULMONARY EDUCATION PROGRAM  
LITTLE COMPANY OF MARY HOSPITAL

*Special Edition, April 2021*



## Advances in Pulmonary Research

Dr. Harry Rossiter will be our April luncheon speaker. He will speak on the advances that are currently being made in pulmonary research.

- 11:00-11:30 Social time
- 11:30-12:15 Presentation
- 12:15-12:30 Question and answer

## Alternative Medicine

By Yvonne Koga

Our March 18 Zoom luncheon speakers were Dr. Aamina Mirza, pharmacist and certified hormone specialist, and her colleague Susan Semelka, clinical nutritionist, at Remedy Pharmacy in Torrance. They provided information about the important roles hormones and food play in our health, particularly when coping with inflammation and pain. Stressors result in the adrenal gland releasing hormones (cortisol) that leads to imbalance of our immune system.

Dr. Mirza provided an overview of the roles essential oils, homeopathic medication, low-dose naltrexone, and cannabidi-

ol (CBD oil) can play in pain and inflammation management. CBD is available in topical rubs and tinctures (oils, gummies, candies) for internal consumption. CBD is not addictive and doesn't interfere with medications you take.

Low-dose naltrexone has been used to address over a hundred different afflictions such as autoimmune disorders, MS, crohns disease, neurological and depressive disorders, restless leg syndrome, rheumatoid arthritis, and fibromyalgia. Naltrexone is available only by prescription from a physician and must be filled at a compounding pharmacy. It has an antagonist effect on opiate and non-opiate receptors of the body to decrease inflammation, balance the immune system and raise endorphin levels. Other products were named which have been effective in lowering inflammation, the cause of pain.

Susan Semelka stated that food can be the most powerful medicine. Fruits and vegetables are important. She recommends avoiding processed foods and fried foods. Seed oils are pro-inflammatory. Alternative oils to use are avocado and coconut oils at high

temperatures. Olive oil is also fine but not at high temperatures. Using an air fryer is a good idea. She also provided information on nutritional supplements available at the pharmacy that work on pain neurotransmitters that are not NSAIDs, not opioids, and not addictive.

For more in-depth information go to [peppioneers.com](http://peppioneers.com) to view the taped presentation. Contact information for the speakers: Remedy Pharmacy, 23811 Hawthorne Blvd., Torrance 90505. Phone 310-375-0655.



## Should You be Flying with Supplemental Oxygen

PERF Blog

Some of you have expressed concerns about going to higher altitudes, either by flying or by driving up to the



**mountains.** You may remember that as you ascend in altitude, the amount of oxygen available in the air decreases. That is because the decrease in atmospheric pressure causes the oxygen molecules to spread out (become farther apart). This means that whomever you are, if you travel to high altitude, your arterial blood oxygen concentration and your oxygen saturation will decrease. The way that many healthy people compensate for this problem is by increasing their rate and depth of breathing. But if you are a pulmonary patient and already short of breath, increasing your breathing does not sound appealing! And pulmonary patients who already have a low oxygen saturation at sea level may have an even greater problem in keeping their oxygen saturation levels up as they ascend to higher altitude. Even at 3,000 feet, there is a 10% drop in barometric pressure, and therefore a 10% drop in the number of oxygen molecules for each breath you take. Passenger airplanes are usually pressurized to between about 6,000 to 8,000 feet when the plane is cruising at 36,000 feet.

**How can the doctor tell if you need to be put on supplemental oxygen to fly across the country? Or, if you are already using oxygen at sea level, how do you know whether to increase the liter flow of your oxygen during a drive up to the mountains or on a flight?** Unfortunately, needs vary with the individual and can be hard to estimate. Your physician might know from experience and from your history what your oxygen needs may be at higher altitudes. A 6-minute walking test to see if your oxygen saturation goes down (called desaturation), and how much you desaturate, can help with estimating your oxygen needs at various altitudes.

**A High Altitude Simulation Test (HAST) might be ordered when there is concern about the safety of going on a long trip.** This test provides accurate information on what your oxygen saturation will be, and is easily done in a pulmonary function laboratory by adjusting the percentage of oxygen given to you to breathe during the test and checking your oxygen saturation and shortness of breath.

**If you do need oxygen when flying, make sure you contact your airline company well in advance!** Rules vary from company to company so be sure you check on this well in advance of a trip. Make sure you understand what their rules are for oxygen use, or for taking along your equipment! If they want an oxygen prescription from your doctor, bring at least one duplicate!



**What can you do if you find that the road you are driving for a long time is at a higher altitude than you expected?** If you have any concerns, you might want to invest in an oximeter to monitor your saturation levels, as well as to remind you to do your pursed lip breathing if your oxygen saturation drops below 88%. See our Essentials article on Pulse Oximeters and Oxygen Saturation for more information on oximeters. What should

you do if you are stuck at a high altitude much longer than you expected? Well, not very much except to relax, enjoy the scenery and avoid going out for a long hike. We promise it won't kill you, and you probably won't even notice a problem during a few hours of driving. **If you do feel short of breath, now is the time to do your pursed lip breathing.** Done properly, pursed lip breathing can keep your oxygen saturation as high as they would be on 2 liters of supplemental oxygen. But again, the best thing to do is to sit back, relax, and enjoy the scenery.



**May Birthdays**

- |                    |                    |
|--------------------|--------------------|
| 6 David Veiga      | 19 Hildren Haiston |
| 13 Patty Kaupp     | 21 Muniwarge Silva |
| 14 Raymond Wuno    | 23 Rose Sarukian   |
| 14 Evelyn Beatie   | 26 Tom Anderson    |
| 17 Margaret Equchi | 27 Edna Murphy     |
| 17 Carol Champayne | 30 Duane Kelly     |
| 18 Carol Jones     | 31 Frank Valenza   |
| 19 Jean Griffin    |                    |

Karen Thompson, Editor

PEP PIONEERS is a non-profit corporation comprised of graduates of the Pulmonary Rehabilitation Program at Providence Little Company of Mary Hospital. We are dependent on private donations and fundraisers to finance events and purchase equipment that benefit all of its members. Tax Deductible donations may be made to:  
**PEP PIONEERS**  
 Pulmonary Rehabilitation  
 20929 Hawthorne Blvd.  
 Torrance, CA 90503  
 310-303-7079  
[www.peppioneers.com](http://www.peppioneers.com)

