

WINTER 2011 NEWSLETTER

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On the Horizon

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Annual Physical Exam



I have listened to health economists debate the value of an annual physical exam. Is it cost effective? Does it prevent disease? It doesn't matter. It is an essential part of the development and continuation of the doctor patient relationship.

The annual physical exam is a form of benchmarking. It allows the doctor and patient to review all the pertinent aspects of your health history and physical exam and use the data to coordinate a care plan for you which is personalized.

The history of present illness illustrates any immediate and current concerns. The past history reviews previous illness and how those problems may affect your current and future health. A family history presents genetic data which may affect you and your loved ones in the future. It updates your physician on what changes have occurred in your family's' health that may affect you. The social history looks at your school and employment history as well as lifestyle choices. Are you working with industrial toxins or in a field prone to certain predictable and preventable disease? Are you smoking? How much alcohol is in your diet? Are you partaking in physical exercise? Are you in a stable relationship? All these factors influence your health and choices. Do you have a living will? Who is your health care surrogate and who are your emergency contacts? It is a great time to review your allergies and medications both prescription and over the counter vitamins, minerals, herbs and supplements. Last but not least we look at checkups, vaccinations and immunizations. Are you current on tetanus shots? Do you know about pneumonia vaccine and zostavax for shingles? Have you had your eyes checked for glaucoma? When did you last see a dentist? What about skin checks, colonoscopies, mammograms, pap smears and bone densitometry? The history session ends with a complete review of all your body systems. By asking a laundry list of questions we hope to jog your memory to discuss all those little items you meant to ask about but may have forgotten to bring up.

The physical exam is used to support the hypothesis and answer the questions raised during the history taking session. It should be thorough looking at you from the top of your head to the bottom of your feet without skipping any orifices in between. The findings of the exam, coupled with the history session, will determine which laboratory tests, if any, your doctor will choose to order. In thirty years of practice, I am rarely surprised by the results of a blood test if I have done a thorough and complete

history and exam. Patients seem to feel something magical about lab tests but the truth is that a thorough and experienced clinician usually knows what the findings will be before he orders the test.

The complete exam should be followed by a consultative review session during which the doctor explains the findings of the history, exam and lab and makes suggestions. A care plan should be established at that session and a defined follow-up plan suggested and scheduled.

During your physical exam the doctor is learning a great deal about you. From the way you dress, to the way you carry yourself to your speech pattern; the physician is seeing you while you are healthy. It is much easier to diagnose a problem if you have had the opportunity to see the patient when everything is normal. This knowledge of your normal appearance is what allows your doctor to find a problem in its initial stages rather than a crisis requiring a visit to a hospital emergency department. It is all part of the concept of longitudinal long term care and relationship.

Find a doctor. Schedule your yearly checkups. If you find a physician you trust and respect stick with them. It may save your life.

Whooping Cough – Adults Can Pass It To Young Children



Whooping Cough is caused by bacteria called Bordatella Pertussis which produces a severe upper respiratory tract infection in unvaccinated children with a severe cough and “whooping “sound. The cough is so severe that they stop eating, breathing and surviving. There have been over 100 deaths of infants in Texas and

California this year due to whooping cough. The disease can be prevented by immunizing children with a series of shots beginning at 2 months.

Most of those reading this article had the DPT shots as children and expect to be immune to whooping cough forever. Recent studies have shown that our immunity wears out as we reach middle age. Adults can catch a form of whooping cough with a severe bronchitis which produces a prolonged cough without the classic “whooping” sound children exhibit. In most cases the adults and their doctor have no idea they have whooping cough.

If not treated with antibiotics the bronchitis lasts for months and they can spread the infection for months after the symptoms resolve. The adults have no idea they are still infectious. If they come in contact with children who have not completed their vaccination series, or who just didn’t mount an immune response, those children can get the life threatening whooping cough disease. The disease is passed from well meaning adults to susceptible children. It passes from parents and grandparents to infants as well as from teachers and caregivers to infants. There is no simple out- patient laboratory test to distinguish simple adult viral upper respiratory tract infection with bronchitis from the whooping cough variant.

The best way to prevent giving this disease to young children and, infants in particular, is to receive a booster vaccination of Tdap. The Center for Disease Control is suggesting that every 7 to ten years all adults receive a tetanus and diphtheria booster. One of those vaccinations should be the Tdap version. Originally Tdap was limited to 45 - 60 year olds, but last week the CDC said it is safe for all adults and seniors. Protect your children and grandchildren against the whooping cough epidemic. Ask your physician about getting Tdap.

Our Practice Does Not Have Narcotics on Site



From time to time I'll have a patient that needs to be treated with narcotics. It's not uncommon for the patient to be surprised when they learn that we do **not** keep narcotics, injectable or oral, in our office.

Florida law makes it extremely difficult to keep, maintain and administer narcotics for pain. If a practice keeps narcotics in their office under lock and key as required by law, the paper work is long and tedious, the threat of theft is large and the reward monetarily is quite small.

Furthermore, there is a certain level of risk associated with keeping narcotics. During my 30 year medical career, I have been robbed at knifepoint by someone seeking narcotics and my family has been stalked by a crazed drug seeking patient which only stopped when the police became involved.

When a patient has pain requiring injections we will provide a prescription for the patient to obtain the medication at a local pharmacy. We will gladly administer the medication for the patient in the office or at home and train them and their caregivers how to administer the medicine yourself. On occasion, we have referred patients to the hospital Emergency Department when necessary and met them there for the purposes of providing injectable narcotics for pain relief or control.

Unfortunately, keeping narcotics at our office has become far too dangerous and complicated in today's world. We appreciate your understanding of this matter and we will do everything possible to effectively treat our pain patients and make the treatment as convenient as possible.

Refilling Prescription Medications



My office staff is instructed to automatically fulfill any refill request for active patients seen within the last six (6) months requesting non-narcotic prescriptions. If your medication bottle says that you no longer have any refills, we ask that you call the office and request a refill rather than calling the pharmacy.

If you have been calling your pharmacy first when you are out of refills, we have most likely not received a message from them. Pharmacies typically communicate with us electronically and if the transmission does not go through they just keep resending it without recognizing that the message is not going through.

In this scenario, patients have been told by the pharmacy that we have not responded to their request for a refill. We cannot respond if we don't know about it. Please, if you are out of refills please call us first and we will call the pharmacy and renew the medication. If your prescription bottle shows that you have remaining refills then it is quicker to call the pharmacy directly and give the prescription number.

Membership- If you Like our Care and Service, Please Refer a Friend.

Practicing medicine in South Florida always involves a constant turnover of patients. Patients move frequently and unfortunately elderly long time patients pass on. We need to replenish our patient membership constantly. If you like the way the staff and I care for you, please refer in a friend. There is a discount on membership for patients who send in a friend who joins the practice.

Executive Health Plans

The practice is set up to deliver corporate health care, including executive physicals. Many of you own thriving businesses. We would like to work with you to keep you, your senior management team and your employees healthy. If you are interested in discussing a plan please let us know.



Do you have an idea for the practice?



We have a wonderful and diverse group of patients in this practice. If there is a service or idea you have for improving upon the practice please let us know.

To set an appointment, please contact my practice at:

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Be sure to visit my web site at [www.BocaConcierge Doc.com](http://www.BocaConciergeDoc.com)



The staff joins me in looking forward to seeing each of you in the near future.

Steven E. Reznick, M.D., FACP, PA (Boca Concierge Doctor) is a concierge medical practice that provides gracious service in a comfortable and private office setting while administering 21st century care and technology with old fashioned attention and concern.

Check out my blog at: <http://bocaratonconciergedoctor.wordpress.com/>