

Advocacy | Availability | Compassion | Prevention

Practicing in Boca Raton and the Surrounding Community Since 1979

FALL 2023 - NEWSLETTER

Steven E. Reznick, M.D. FACP

7280 W. Palmetto Park Rd., Suite 205N

Boca Raton, FL 33433

Blog: <https://bocaratonconciergedoctor.wordpress.com/>

Flu Shots 2023

The senior high dose quadrivalent influenza vaccine has arrived in our office. This is the recommended vaccine for adults who are 65 years of age or older or immunosuppressed due to illness or medications. We began administering our vaccinations on September 15, 2023. **Please call the office to set up your flu shot appointment.**

The cost of the vaccine and administration is covered by Medicare. Once you receive the vaccine, it takes about two weeks until immunity develops fully. That immunity begins to wane at 3 months or 90-days in most senior citizens. Since influenza A peaks in South Florida the last two weeks in January and first week in February, most years we recommend waiting until after Halloween and before Thanksgiving to take your inoculation. We rarely see Influenza A locally before Thanksgiving.

For patients younger than 65 years old our supply of influenza vaccine is available. If you would like to schedule an appointment for your vaccination, or if you have questions, please call the office.

Medicare Part D Open Enrollment Period October 15, 2023 - December 7, 2023

Each year I urge our Medicare patients to log onto www.Medicare.Gov and then select the option to pick a drug plan. The website is easy to use and navigate. It will request your zip code, your Medicare number and ask when you first enrolled in the Medicare program. You will be required to list your current prescription medications and the dosage and select a nearby pharmacy. If you use a chain pharmacy like CVS or Walgreens, just select the closest one. It will then list the plans that cover your individual prescription needs at the best price.

Your 2022 plan may be outstanding and cost effective, but the insurer may no longer cover medicines it covered this past year. If you do not perform this computer task you may get a rude surprise when you go to pay for your medication in January 2024. For those patients who do not have a computer, or would like some assistance, just call the office in November and we will gladly help you.

Even Moderate Exercise is Proven to Provide Important Health Benefits

I have always been impressed by the relationship between being physically active and overall health. While attending medical school in 1976, a research article on the importance of physical activity, heart attacks and death received great attention. Researchers looked at longshoremen working the docks of New Jersey over a period of time. Most of these workers repeatedly ate the wrong foods for good health. They all smoked cigarettes in those days and consumed too much alcohol.

A group of these workers showed leadership potential and were promoted to the front office where their physical work took a backseat, and they became sedentary. Their coworkers remained on the docks performing daily loading and unloading of ships and trucks. Over time, there was a significant increase in heart attacks and deaths in the sedentary office staff compared to those longshoremen who worked on the docks until retirement. The study authors attributed the demanding work as protective against heart attack and death.

Over the past many years, studies of physical activity and exercise have consistently shown the benefits of moving and working out. We have seen studies showing exercisers have less of a risk of developing cognitive impairment and dementia.

Recently, *JAMA Oncology* published an article from the University of Sydney in Australia, led by Emmanuel Stamatakis, Ph.D., showing that four to five minutes of vigorous exercise per day reduced the risk of developing cancer. The same week Jamie J. Edwards, Ph. D from Canterbury Church University in the United Kingdom did a study on exercise and blood pressure reduction. Their study revealed that any form of exercise reduced overall blood pressure at rest, but isometric exercises were most effective in reducing blood pressure with almost double the positive effect of other forms of physical activity. "Wall sits and planks" were particularly effective.

The message is clear. Find a form of exercise that you enjoy and go out and do it!

Hope For Brittle Type I Diabetic Patients Using Pancreatic Cell Therapy

Type I diabetes mellitus is a chronic autoimmune disease that destroys the pancreatic islet cell's ability to normally control blood sugar levels by secreting insulin. To control blood sugar within normal levels, most Type I diabetic patients require frequent daily blood sugar monitoring either by drawing blood from a vein or by a finger stick and/or with continuous glucose monitoring systems. To control their blood sugar within a near normal range they often require multiple daily injections of short acting, mid-range acting insulins and long-acting insulins. Often to control the high glucose levels the administration of insulin leads to overcompensation with the blood glucose levels plummeting, resulting in loss of consciousness and serious life-threatening emergencies.

Type I diabetic patients and their loved ones undergo extensive nutritional and educational instruction to assist with their care. Despite this, when conditions change such as when exercising, ill with a viral upper respiratory illness or undergoing a medical or surgical procedure, the safety zone for administering insulin and preventing low blood sugar complications becomes much more complicated.

Researchers have been searching for years for ways to help type I diabetics. Recently, the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) announced initial progress in this process with the administration of Lantidra. Lantidra is an accumulation of pancreatic insulin producing islet cells which are placed directly into the patient's hepatic vein. The islet cells are harvested from deceased donors. Recipients are then considered transplant recipients and must take immunosuppressive drugs to prevent their bodies from rejecting these foreign cells.

This procedure was performed on a small group of 30 patients who, despite expert management and supervision of their medications, experienced repetitive low blood sugar episodes threatening their health and lives. Of the 30 participants who received one or more infusions of pancreatic islet cells, 21 did not require the use of insulin for a year or more. Eleven participants went without requiring insulin for one to five years and 10 participants did not need insulin for more than five years. Five of the patients continued to require insulin.

Adverse effects included nausea, fatigue, low blood count, abdominal pains and diarrhea. The recipients will require the use of immunosuppressive medications forever and this can cause several well-known medical issues such as susceptibility to certain types of infection. This study, revealing that there will be a safe and effective

way to replace nonfunctioning insulin producing islet cells someday to relieve type I diabetics, is a great first step towards the cure of a devastating metabolic disease.

Heartburn and Indigestion. Alternatives to Protein Pump Inhibitors

Many of us develop heartburn, indigestion and sometimes mild regurgitation of food and stomach contents short of emesis regularly. When the symptoms become repetitive, we refer patients to gastroenterologists who evaluate the lining of the stomach (gastric mucosa), and the lining of the esophagus, for growths, narrowing, inflammation, erosions and even deeper wounds or ulcers.

The EGD (esophagogastroduodenoscopy) is a fiber optic exam which can view the anatomy and take samples and biopsies to look for the bacteria H Pylori which is associated with inflammation. Often, none of these maladies are present and you still have bloating, belching, burning and indigestion.

Quick-acting Alka Seltzer was the mainstay of “the Greatest Generation.” The baby boomers started on Maalox, Mylanta, Roloids and Gaviscon. They then graduated to Tagamet, an H2 receptor blocker. Next came the proton pump inhibitors (PPI) including Nexium, Prilosec etc.

Many patients made these PPI’s a staple of their daily medication administration routine until the whispers started about adverse effects of chronic use. Did chronic use make you more likely to develop an infection by inhibiting the production of stomach acid? Did these meds lead to dementia.? Did daily chronic use lead to Gastrointestinal cancer? The consensus is that they are safe but still doubts exist.

For this reason, researchers in Italy decided to look for alternatives to PPIs for chronic indigestion and GERD (gastrointestinal esophageal reflux disease). They conducted a study in hospitalized patients in Italy between 2017 and 2021 and published their data in the *American Journal of Gastroenterology*.

The Italian researchers compared the effects of Omeprazole (Prilosec) which is a PPI with a mucosal protective agent called Poliprotect. The stomach cells are normally coated with mucous which acts as a protective layer against inflammation, erosion, and ulceration. Drugs like aspirin and non-steroidal inflammatory medications can pierce this layer and cause stomach lining inflammation and injury. Mucosal protective agents such as Poliprotect were designed to coat the areas of inflammation much like a band aid covers a cut. This prevents the acid and digestive juices from further irritating the stomach lining cells and producing symptoms.

The study looked at a group of 275 adults with heartburn and indigestion who did not have erosions or ulcers, or erosive esophagitis based on their EGD exam. They were then given either the Poliprotect five times a day for the first two weeks and then only upon demand for symptoms of heartburn while the others took Omeprazole (20 mg) four times a day for four weeks and then on demand.

At the end of the study, the Poliprotect group did as well as the Omeprazole group at the two-week mark. When they stopped the Poliprotect and only accessed it for recurrent heartburn they had fewer and less severe recurrences of symptoms than the Omeprazole group. As part of the study, researchers looked at the composition of the digestive healthy bacteria or biome before and after the study. The Poliprotect did not alter the bacterial structure or composition.

Poliprotect is not available as a medication in the United States. The bismuth in Pepto Bismol is considered a mucosal protective agent as is Carafate (sucralfate). When heartburn strikes and recurs and is not associated with apparent lesions in the stomach or esophagus, these two products are available as alternatives to the PPIs and are effective. The Carafate is costly with a one-month supply costing about \$530 dollars for 120 one-gram pills. Pepto Bismol is an over-the-counter medication with 30 chewable tablets costing about \$6.

Whole Fat in Dairy May Be Beneficial. Drink Milk for Hydration?

We are all aware of the popular heart healthy foods including fruit, vegetables, nuts, legumes, and fish. The Mediterranean Diet receives repeated public notice because it works, and it is healthy.

Andrew Mente, PhD, of the Population Health Research Unit of McMaster University in Hamilton, Ontario just published his group's findings on the benefits of consuming whole fat dairy. The research was published in the *European Heart Journal* and found that whole fat dairy, including saturated fats, reduced the risks of death, heart attack and stroke. If this is not blasphemous enough in the comments section in the online journal *MDedge Internal Medicine*, the author said a small amount of red meat is not as harmful as it is made out to be.

For many years now American consumers have been besieged with no fat and low-fat products including milk, cheese, ice cream, but along comes a study using data from the PURE study that challenges our recent dietary actions. That study found a reduced mortality risk with increased consumption of dietary fat. The authors discussed the fact that in low-income nations, whole fat dairy is often available and more often affordable than some of the "healthier" diet groups. A recent heat wave related article republished in the *NY Times* discussed the ideal liquid for hydration and rehydration. Their choice was cool milk. It was absorbed quicker and more efficiently than cool water and sports drinks.

I bring this to your attention with a degree of amazement and skepticism. Years ago, I viewed a Woody Allen movie called "Sleeper". The plot revolved around the main character entering St. Vincent's Hospital in Greenwich Village and suffering a fatal medical catastrophe, so they quick froze him and wrapped him in Aluminum Foil. Fifty years later they had developed the technology to cure his medical illness, so they thawed him out and fed him his first meal. On his plate was a thick steak, a glass of whole milk, a bowl of ice cream and a package of cigarettes. "How can I eat this?" the thawed-out patient inquired. "After all, I ran a health food store selling almond milk and soy protein?" He was told that research in the 2020's revealed we were all wrong and everything on his plate was considered healthy. That movie was a comedy.

Reading these studies, I am not sure if I should be laughing or crying?

Remote Patient Monitoring Available

I am currently offering and advising you to try my remote patient monitoring (RPM) program which is covered by Medicare and many commercial health plans. The program, using Smart Watches from Apple, Series 6 or newer, and the Samsung 4S. The Watches monitor falls and feature emergency SOS. They check for heart rhythm and rate and can record an EKG and transmit. Blood pressure readings and glucose monitoring are options.

I will provide you with a brand new compatible Smart Phone at our expense if you download the monitoring app and use it a minimum of 16 days out of the month. However, I recommend you use it every day.

I urge you to try this clinical program. If you have any questions regarding the program, please call the office.

Accepting New Patients - \$300 Referral Incentive

I am currently accepting a limited number of new patients into my practice. If you know anyone who would benefit from the personalized care I provide, please refer them to Judi, my office manager. She will then schedule them for a complimentary meet and greet meeting with me.

As a reminder, if you refer someone new, and they become a member of my practice, you will receive a \$300 discount off the price of your next membership annual renewal.