

# Access | Advocacy | Compassion | Prevention

Practicing in Boca Raton and the Surrounding Community Since 1979

## SUMMER 2018 - NEWSLETTER

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### Is It Time For A New Bottle of Sunscreen?

Summer is upon us. Those of us interested in protecting our skin reach for the bottle of sunscreen. A third of sunscreen users do not look at the bottle to see if the product has expired. The ingredients in sunscreen do expire and become ineffective so check the date of expiration. If you have run out of sunscreen *Consumer Reports* reviews the topic and rates the best new products to buy. If a lotion is your preference, their “best buys” include La Roche Posay, Walmart's Equate, BullFrog Land Sport Quik Gel SPF 50 and Coppertone Water Babies SPF 50. If you prefer a spray they recommend Trader Joe's Spray SPF 50+. For extreme protection, they have recommended Coppertone UltraGuard SPF 70 in the past. They suggest children can use adult sunscreen without problems.

### The American Cancer Society & Colorectal Cancer Screening

Colorectal cancer is the fourth most common cancer with 140,000 diagnoses in the nation annually. It causes 50,000 deaths per year and is the number two cause of death due to cancer.

Colorectal cancer screening guidelines have called for digital rectal examinations beginning at age 40 and colonoscopies at age 50 in low risk individuals. An aggressive public awareness campaign has resulted in a marked decrease in deaths from this disease in men and women over age 65.

The same cannot be said for men and women younger than 55 years old where there is an increased incidence of colorectal cancer by 51% with an increased mortality of 11%. Experts believe the increase may be due to lifestyle issues including tobacco and alcohol usage, obesity, ingestion of processed meats and poorer sleep habits.

To combat this increase, the American Cancer Society has changed its recommendations on screening suggesting that at age 45 we give patients the option of:

- Fecal immunochemical test yearly
- Fecal Occult Blood High Sensitivity Guaiac Based Yearly
- Stool DNA Test (e.g., Cologuard) every 3 years
- CT Scan Virtual Colonoscopy every 5 years
- Flexible Sigmoidoscopy every 5 years
- Colonoscopy every 10 years.

Their position paper points out that people of color, American Indians and Alaskan natives have a higher incidence of colon cancer and mortality than other populations. Therefore, these groups should be screened more diligently. They additionally note that they discourage screening in adults over the age of 85 years old. This decision should be individualized based on the patient's health and expected independent longevity.

As a practicing physician these are sensible guidelines. The CT Virtual Colonoscopy involves a large X irradiation exposure and necessitates a pre-procedure prep. Cologuard and DNA testing misses few malignancies but has shown many false positives necessitating a colonoscopy. Both CT Virtual Colonoscopy and Cologuard may not be covered by your insurer, and they are expensive, so consider the cost in your choice of screening.

I still believe Flexible Sigmoidoscopy must be combined with the Fecal Occult Blood High Sensitivity Testing and prepping. Looking at only part of the colon makes little sense to me in screening.

Colonoscopy is still the gold standard for detecting colorectal cancer.

## **New Law Governing Prescribing of Controlled Substances in Florida July 1**

There is an ongoing epidemic of addiction to prescription pain medications in our country. The death toll from opioid drug overdoses on a daily basis is now higher than loss of life through motor vehicle accidents and violence.

This spring the Florida Legislature passed Hb21, a new law that is meant to keep oral pain medications off the streets. Hb21 requires that when you are prescribed a controlled substance, the prescriber must first access the states Prescription Drug Monitoring Program website (Known as E-FORCSE) and review the recipient's history of receiving prescribed controlled substances in the state of Florida. It is designed to make sure that drug seeking patients are not able to doctor or clinic hop to obtain narcotics.

Dispensers of the controlled substance such as pharmacies and pain clinics with dispensaries will be required to list the prescription on E-FORCSE within 24 hours. There are fines and penalties by the state for physicians and dentists failing to comply with access to E-FORCSE before writing the script. It is expected the Florida Board of Medicine will add penalties, license suspensions and revocations for noncompliance as well.

The law defines "acute pain" from an injury, medical procedure or dental procedure. Practitioners may prescribe three days of controlled substances for pain relief with no refills after accessing E-FORCSE. If they believe the procedure or injury are so severe that it requires more than a three day supply, they must write "Acute Pain Exception" on the prescription and they may request a 7 day supply with no refills. The prescriber will be required to document in the medical record why controlled substances are being prescribed and why there is an exception

The law additionally requires prescribers to complete a state mandated two hour course on safe prescribing of controlled substances. The course must be given by a recognized and accredited statewide professional association for a fee. The course will need to be retaken every two years before your license comes up for renewal. This course is separate and distinct from the course required to prescribe medical marijuana.

Our office has been registered with and has used E-FORSCE for several years now. It is helpful in tracking a patient's ability to obtain controlled substance medications. It clearly adds additional time and labor to a doctor's visit to comply with the new state regulations. Once again the Legislature has chosen to treat every patient as an addict and every prescriber as a criminal.

There is talk that in the near future we may be required to prescribe controlled pain substances electronically as opposed to the current requirement that a patient present a legible hand written or typed script. We have been told by our computer software maintenance vendors that there will be a significant charge to set up this service along with a monthly maintenance fee.

The law goes into far more detail than this synopsis permits me to go into. I suspect that, as we move forward, pharmaceutical chains may find it cost prohibitive to stock controlled substances and designate only certain locations as prescribing centers. This is what happened when the Legislature passed a 2011 law to deal with chronic pain and eliminate the "pill mills."

If you have any questions or concerns feel free to call or email me and we will review your individual situation.

## Inflammation and Increased Risk of Cardiovascular Disease

For years, experts have noted that up to 50% of men who have a heart attack do not have diabetes, high blood pressure, high cholesterol, do not smoke and are active. This has led to an exploration of other causes and risk factors of cardiac and cerebrovascular disease.

In recent years, studies have shown an increased risk of cardiovascular disease in patients with rheumatoid arthritis, in untreated psoriatic arthritis and in severe psoriasis. We can also add atopic eczema to the list of cardiovascular risk factors.

In a publication in the British Medical Journal, investigators noted that patients with severe atopic eczema had a 20% increase risk in stroke, 40 - 50% increase risk of a heart attack, unstable angina, atrial fibrillation and cardiovascular death. There was a 70% increased risk of heart failure. The longer the skin condition remained active the higher their risks.

The study looked at almost 380,000 patients over at least a 5 year period and their outcomes were compared to almost 1.5 million controls without the skin conditions. Data came from a review of medical records and insurance information in the United Kingdom.

It's clear that severe inflammatory conditions including skin conditions put patients at increased risk. It remains to be seen whether aggressive treatment of the skin conditions with immune modulators and medications to reduce inflammation will reduce the cardiovascular risks?

It will be additionally interesting to see what modalities cardiologists on each side of the Atlantic suggest we should employ for detection and with what frequency? Will it be exercise stress testing or checking coronary artery calcification or even CT coronary artery angiograms? Statins have been used to reduce inflammation by some cardiologists even in patients with reasonable lipid levels? Should we be prescribing statins in men and women with these inflammatory skin and joint conditions but normal lipid patterns?

The correlation of inflammatory situations with increased risk of vascular disease currently raises more questions with few answers at the present time.

## Hurricane Season: Health Related Preparations

The 2016 hurricane season began on June 1. We suggest the following preparations especially since we have not had a direct hit locally in over a decade and most of the local residents have not lived through a hurricane experience.

- a. Create a Hurricane Plan
- b. Decide well in advance if you plan to stay in your home or evacuate
- c. If you decide to leave plan to leave days in advance of the storm.
- d. Create a plan to communicate with loved ones and friends
- e. Have a plan to protect your home, property and pets.
- f. If you require a special needs shelter you must download the application at [pbc.gov](http://pbc.gov) special needs program application and mail it to the Special Needs Coordinator, 20 South Military Trail, West Palm Beach FL 33415
- g. Assemble a two week supply of food, water, medicine and other needed items. Even if FEMA and local authorities respond rapidly you may need several weeks of supplies to sustain yourself before their help is available.

The office phone numbers will be forwarded to another location out of the area. If there is electricity and phone service we should be reachable at 561 368 0191. If that does not work then call my satellite phone at 1.254.240.9301. Satellite phones require me to be outside with the antennae pointed towards the stars. Leave a message and I will be checking the voicemail frequently.

Hospital emergency rooms will be open before and after the storm. The Emergency Departments lock down and shut down during the storm. The Emergency Medical Services 911 paramedics will not be allowed to drive once the winds reach 35 MPH. Boca Raton Regional Hospital is now staffed with full time residents in medicine and surgery so there will be doctors at the hospital to care for arrivals and inpatients during and after the storm until your personal physician can assume care. With communications down in the storm aftermath the hospitals have sent police officers to their homes if they need the doctor to come to the hospital. The office will open for services as soon as electricity is restored, the fire sensing equipment is functional and the Fire Marshall permits the reopening of the building.

### **[Refer Someone You Know](#)**

The greatest compliment you can you can provide is the referral of someone you know to my practice. If you have a family member, friend, neighbor, co-worker, etc. you believe would benefit from more personalized care and attention, please have them call the office and speak to Judi to schedule their complimentary meeting with me.

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