

MEDICAL GAZETTE

FROM THE DESK OF
DAVID L MELLMAN MD & JEANNETTE GUERRASIO MD

December, 2019

LETTER FROM DAVID L MELLMAN MD



Dear Patients,

I hope you all had a wonderful Thanksgiving. I was grateful to spend the holiday in the mountains with immediate and extended family. Cousins, aunts, uncles and dogs all played in the snow together. Around the table, we shared meals, laughed and caught up on one another's lives. Our gathering reminded me of a recent New York Times column, Let's Wage A War on Loneliness, by Nicholas Kristof. It highlighted the importance of connection – and spending time with people we care about – on our overall health.

“Loneliness affects physical health in two ways,” Kristof writes. “First, it produces stress hormones that can lead to inflammation and other health problems. Second, people who are alone are less likely to go to doctor appointments, to take medicine or to exercise and eat a healthy diet. We may resent nagging from loved ones, but it can keep us alive.”

I am thrilled by Dr. Guerrasio's energy and excitement for patient education. Our integrated health program has been a smashing success with her tea parties and workshops. I had the pleasure of speaking alongside Dr. Guerrasio at the Men's Health Workshop in November and was impressed with her speaking abilities. We will offer more workshops starting in January. Our goal is to empower you through education to be an active participant in living a healthy life.

As the NYT article points out, health is about more than exercise, eating well, getting good rest and managing stress. It's about connection with others and the meaning that it brings to our lives and decisions we make about our health. As a father for 25 years, and particularly at this time of year, Mr. Rogers' insights resonate with me. I leave you with three of my favorites.

“There are three ways to ultimate success. The first way is to be kind. The second way is to be kind. The third way is to be kind.”

“Often when you think you are at the end of something, you are at the beginning of something else.”

“Real strength has to do with helping others.”

Wishing happy and healthy holidays,

Dave L Mellman MD



LETTER FROM DR. GUERRASIO

To Our Patients,

Thank you for so graciously welcoming me to the practice and into your lives. I have had the pleasure of meeting many of you and I look forward to getting to know you better. Through the Tea and Talks that I have given at the Mellmans' home, I have come to realize how interconnected our patient community is. These gatherings have provided a wonderful opportunity to learn more about and from you, so that I can be a better doctor for you. For those of you I haven't met, please feel free to say hello next time you're in the office.



My transition into the practice has been so smooth, thanks to the wonderful partnership and mentorship of Dr. Dave and the supportive staff (Anna, Kris, Kristy, Nancy, & Sarah) who are always available to answer my questions and to help me navigate the new system! I couldn't be happier with my new practice, but I do have one concern. While the office mascot, Murphy, has brought me many smiles, I often catch her sleeping on the job.

This is always my favorite time of year. During the peak of fall foliage, I traveled to the Northeast and New York, where I taught at my alma mater, picked apples, visited old friends from college and medical school, ate pumpkin pie and celebrated my father's birthday while visiting with my parents. Back in Denver, we enjoyed Thanksgiving with an annual tradition – joining with friends to deliver holiday baskets to families in need, then celebrating with our own “Friendsgiving” feast.

My heart is full of gratitude. May you find peace, joy and reasons to be thankful this holiday season. And in wishing you good health, don't forget to get your flu shot!

Sincerely,

Jeannette Guerrasio, MD



HOW THE MEDICAL PRACTICE OF DAVID L MELLMAN OPERATES

Is it unique to have a medical practice where patients have two doctors as their physicians?

Yes. I have chosen this model because I believe it is the best medical model for our patients. Dr. Guerrasio and I work collaboratively to familiarize ourselves with you and your medical history before we visit with you. This allows us to provide the most up-to-date, individualized and thoughtful care. As well, this model allows us to offer you exceptional care if I am on holiday or ill. Accordingly, Dr Guerrasio will dedicate her time exclusively to our patients. She works for my practice, David L Mellman PLLC, and is not a member of the Colorado Center of Medical Excellence. Please feel welcome to schedule appointments with Dr. Guerrasio or me.

What is the practice's relationship with the Colorado Center of Medical Excellence?

I opened the Colorado Center of Medical Excellence with Dr. Dawson and Dr. Goldsmith in October 2016. We each own and run our own practices at the Center. We share call shifts after hours and on the weekends. We also share rent, some operating expenses, and hire the receptionists at the front desk. Dr. Dawson and Dr. Goldsmith are both highly regarded physicians and I am very proud of the Colorado Center of Medical Excellence.

What is the best method to communicate with the practice?

In an emergency, please call 911. When you call during office hours at 720-320-2061, select #2 to be connected to Dr. Mellman and Dr. Guerrasio's practice, where a patient liaison can address your concerns. We hired a full-time patient liaison to answer this line between 8:00 a.m. and 4:30 p.m..

Please do not send text messages or emails with confidential medical information as it is not HIPPA compliant. We prefer you call the main office number or use the Patient Portal so we can respond knowing that your medical information is secure.

If you have an acute medical concern before or after office hours, you must call the direct office line and follow the prompts for reaching the physician on call.

If I need the medical assistant to help me with refills or prior authorizations what is the best procedure?

If you need same day prescription refills, please call the office before noon so that we can send your prescriptions during lunch and give the pharmacies time to fill your prescriptions. Prior authorizations take time to complete (hours to days) so please give the office staff plenty of time.

UPCOMING PHYSICIAN WORKSHOPS

THE AFFECTS OF DEPRESSION, ANXIETY & LONELINESS ON YOUR HEALTH

DATE: Tuesday, January 21, 2020
TIME: 5:30 PM
LOCATION: Main Office
4700 Hale Parkway #300

SEXUAL HEALTH AND TIPS FOR YOUNG ADULTS (AGE 18-40)

DATE: Wednesday, January 29, 2020
TIME: 6:00 PM
LOCATION: Dr. Guerrasio's House
3104 Zenobia St. Denver, CO 80202

ADVANCED DIRECTIVES

what they are and how they are interpreted by the physicians who read them.

PRESENTED BY Jeanie Youngwerth, MD Palliative Care
University of Colorado
DATE: Tuesday, February 11, 2020
TIME: 6:00 PM
LOCATION: Main Office
4700 Hale Parkway #300

Garden Gate Integrated Health Program

During the last two teas at the Mellman's home. Drs. Guerrasio and Mellman gave talks dedicated to gender specific issues. They intentionally chose topics that can be difficult to talk about with one's physician with the goal of both providing information and also to help break down communication barriers.

Women's Health Talk with Jeannette Guerrasio MD

During the Women's Health talk in October, I reviewed menopause, hormone replacement therapy, sexual health and osteoporosis. In brief, here are the highlights of that gathering.

Menopause

I started with a review of menopause because the decline in estrogen during menopause continues to impact women's health for the rest of their lives. As estrogen levels drop, 80 percent of women get hot flashes, also known as hot flushes. If a woman is lucky, they go away after 4-7 years. There also is data to support hypnosis, acupuncture, hormone replacement therapy and certain antidepressants to help with symptoms!

While most women moisturize their faces and dry skin, they often neglect their drying vaginas. Replens is a great moisturizer for the vaginal canal and coconut oil can be used to revitalize the vulva (the part of the vagina that you can see). Vaginal estrogen creams, rings and tablets also help with dryness and have very few side effects, mostly inconvenience.

HRT and sexual health

Dr. Mellman and I reviewed all of the formulations of supplemental estrogen – from patches to tablets, with and without progesterone – and the pros and cons of hormone replacement therapy (HRT). The risks vary widely based on a woman's age and her personal and family histories. If you're considering HRT, contact one of us. We will explain your options, let you know your risks and help you decide whether you would like to try HRT.

Decreases in estrogen that occur with age can affect sexual health. However, there are a range of options to assist with intercourse. These include lubricants such as Astroglide gel, vaginal dilation with fingers or dilators prior to intercourse, Botox, managing constipation, estrogen cream and physical therapy. As well, there are medications to help with libido, arousal and pain that may help restore pleasurable sexual function (and reduce risk of a urinary tract infection!)

Bone health

Lastly, we discussed bone health and how the drop in estrogen that occurs during the 10-year period around menopause causes significant bone loss in women, relative to their aging male counterparts (although some men can get osteoporosis, too.) To prevent osteoporosis, there are weight-bearing exercises, fall prevention strategies, vitamin D supplementation, and ensuring that you get 1200mg of Calcium each day through diet and a supplement, if needed. As well, it's important to eat a nutritious diet overall, as various other nutrients support bone health. Bone density testing can help determine if you need additional treatment for your bone health.

Here are some quick pearls from our last talk:

Helpful tips for menopause

- increase hydration
- turn down the thermostat
- reduce caffeine, alcohol and spicy food
- eat a nutritious diet, rich in vegetables and other plants, healthy fats and quality proteins
- dress in layers
- invest in moisture wicking fabrics
- replace your down comforter
- increase aerobic exercise

My three favorite resources include:

- ***The Menopause Book*** by Pat Wingert and Barbara Kantrowitz
- The North American Menopause Society website www.menopause.org.
- www.womenshealth.gov

Health Workshops

English Tea Parties coming back in April and May 2020.

Men's Health Talk with David Mellman MD

During the Men's Health talk in November, Drs. Mellman and Guerrasio reviewed sarcopenia, which is the loss of muscle mass associated with aging and disuse, testosterone, benign prostatic hypertrophy (BPH), prostate cancer, and erectile dysfunction.

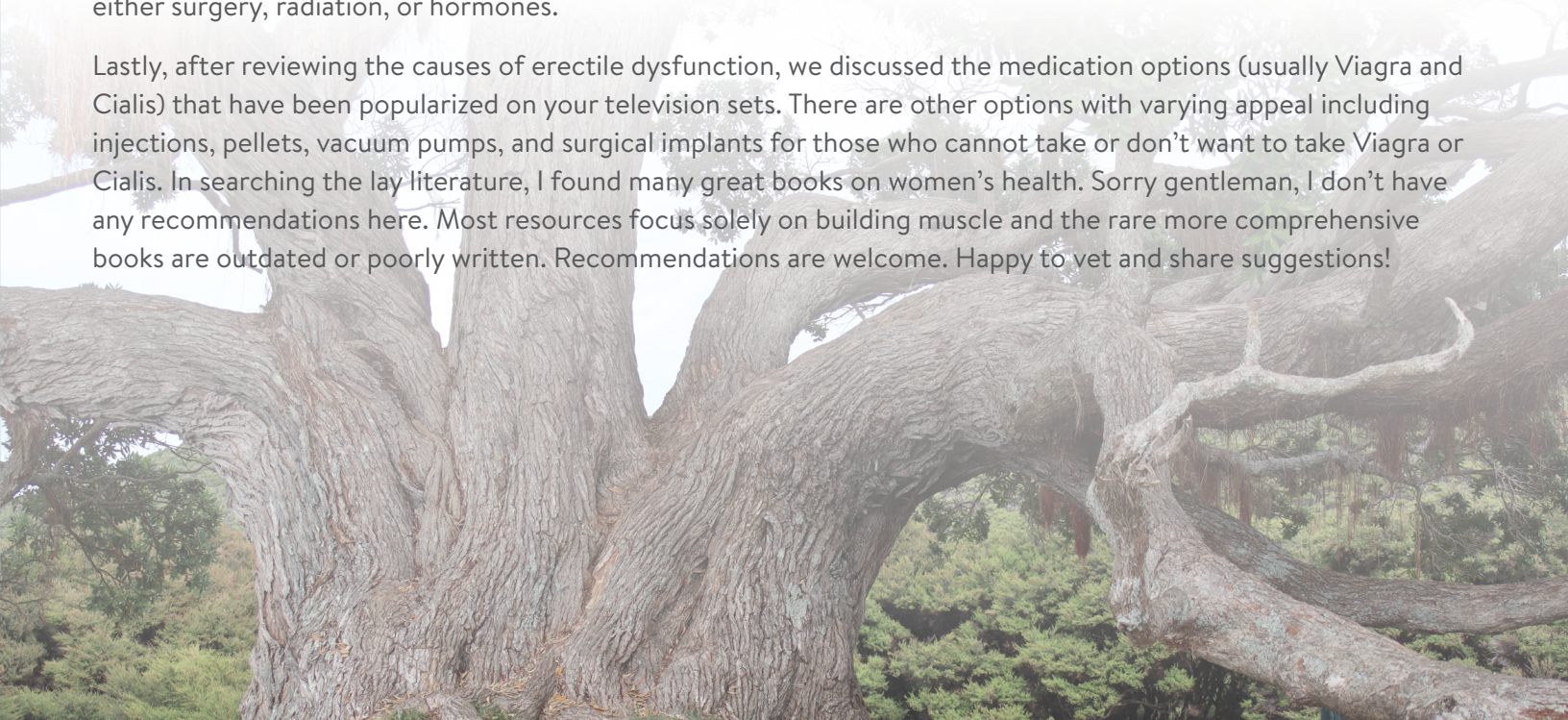
The average male loses 25% of their muscle mass from ages 30 to 70 and another 25% from ages 70-90. But, this loss is preventable with basic strength training 2-3 times per week. We discussed the benefits of personal trainers for helping to ensure that form is correct, progress is gradual and safe, and that work-outs are balanced with emphasis on core strength. Dr. Guerrasio's favorite free online exercise videos are available at www.fitness-blender.com, where you can select the difficulty, length of training, body focus and available equipment prior to choosing a workout video.

Next we moved on to discuss how testosterone declines in men 1% per year starting at 30, but that most men still produce enough to maintain libido and that low testosterone is infrequently (15%) the cause of erectile dysfunction. However, if you are concerned about having low testosterone, ask Drs. Mellman or Guerrasio to test you. Like estrogen, it comes in a patch, cream, gel and also injections and depos. The benefits include increased feeling of wellness, increased muscle mass, but not strength, and potentially improved bone density.

Unfortunately, studies have not shown improvement in libido, erectile function or sexual performance in older men. The prostate can cause trouble if it enlarges (BPH) or if it develops cancer. BPH is a nuisance but fortunately it doesn't cause cancer. To help with the symptoms, consider reducing fluid intake after dinner, limiting alcohol and caffeine, avoiding Sudafed and other decongestants, and avoiding Benadryl. Drs. Mellman or Guerrasio can explore medication options that are very well tolerated as well as surgical options to help decrease your symptoms.

As for prostate cancer, don't forget your yearly PSA and rectal exam. Both are necessary as the PSA lab test does miss some cancers. A male's lifetime risk of prostate cancer is 30%, though only <10% will ever become sick from their cancer. We explained how the Gleason score, determined by looking at the cancer cells under a microscope, is used to decide between treatment options. Scores range from 2-10. Patients with scores of 6 or less are watched carefully, where as patients with scores of 7 or greater are often treated more aggressively with either surgery, radiation, or hormones.

Lastly, after reviewing the causes of erectile dysfunction, we discussed the medication options (usually Viagra and Cialis) that have been popularized on your television sets. There are other options with varying appeal including injections, pellets, vacuum pumps, and surgical implants for those who cannot take or don't want to take Viagra or Cialis. In searching the lay literature, I found many great books on women's health. Sorry gentleman, I don't have any recommendations here. Most resources focus solely on building muscle and the rare more comprehensive books are outdated or poorly written. Recommendations are welcome. Happy to vet and share suggestions!



Nutrition Corner by Kelly Dwyer



Eating your way toward a stronger immune system

Oh, winter... 'Tis the season to gather with family and friends, hit the slopes or get cozy with a cup of tea and a good book. But alas, winter is the time cold and flu bugs stir up the most trouble.

This is where good nutrition comes in. Eating the right foods – along with other healthy habits such as daily exercise, quality sleep and keeping stress in check – helps the immune system stay in tip-top shape. What's more, maintaining a healthy lifestyle is especially important because immune function diminishes as we age, in part due to deficiencies in vitamins and minerals. (See where this article is headed?)

An immune-boosting diet starts with good hydration. Aim to drink at least half your body weight in ounces each day (e.g. 75 oz. for someone 150 lbs.). Exercise, stress, caffeine and alcohol all raise hydration needs. Drink filtered water, herbal teas or sparkling water. Sure, you'll need to pee more. But the body needs water to eliminate toxins, digest food, boost energy and support sleep. Staying hydrated also helps prevent tiny cracks from forming in your mucous membranes, where viruses can sneak in.

When it comes to filling your plate, aim for “nutrient density,” which comes from eating a broad range of quality, whole foods: proteins, healthy fats, vegetables, fruit and other whole plant foods. Choose organic when possible. Seasonal and local mean higher nutrient content. When it comes to antioxidant powerhouses like blueberries, frozen is a great choice (since “fresh” berries in the produce department were picked far away and long before buy them.)

How exactly do nutrients help the immune system? Some vitamins, minerals and other nutrients work directly to halt cold viruses and bacteria from multiplying. Others help keep immune cells healthy, act as antioxidants or counter inflammation. And while good nutrition won't always prevent you from catching a nasty bug, it may well lessen the severity and shorten the duration of your symptoms.

But wait! What about the peppermint lattes, eggnog, rugelach and Yule logs? Staying healthy doesn't mean you can't indulge a bit over the holidays, but keep your treats as, well, treats vs. daily affairs. Alcohol suppresses the immune system and sugar feeds bad actors in the gut, which may impact immunity and other aspects of health. And most importantly, if you frequently imbibe or eat sweets, your tummy has less space for the good stuff your body needs to stay healthy.

Immune-system all stars

The following nutrients are especially helpful in keeping the immune system strong. Aim to get these from foods listed below. While certain vitamin and herbal supplements help support immune function, please talk to us before starting a new supplement to avoid potential drug interactions or other contraindications.

- **Zinc:** seafood, beef, lamb, lentils, quinoa, spinach, pumpkin seeds, cashews
- **Vitamin A:** beef, lamb, poultry; carotenoids (precursors to vitamin A): Red, orange and yellow veggies, i.e. carrots and butternut squash, as well as leafy greens (carotenoids are better utilized by the body when cooked and eaten with fat)
- **B vitamins (folate, B6 & B12):** fish, meats, sweet potato, potato, lentils, beans, spinach, sunflower seeds and asparagus
- **Vitamin C:** papaya, bell peppers, broccoli, pineapple, strawberries, Brussels sprouts, oranges, kiwi, cantaloupe (vitamin C is degraded with cooking)
- **Vitamin D:** sunshine is the best source, and many people require a supplement: salmon, sardines, milk, eggs, cod liver oil
- **Vitamin E:** almonds, sunflower seeds, dark leafy greens, avocado, sweet potato, butternut squash, olive oil
- **EPA & DHA (omega-3 fatty acids):** wild Alaskan salmon and other cold-water fish, cod liver oil, pasture-raised beef and eggs (limit tuna due to high mercury content)
- **Probiotics:** yogurt, kefir, fermented vegetables i.e. sauerkraut and Kim chi, miso soup

Upcoming Nutrition Classes

CLASS & LOCATION	CLASS DESCRIPTION
<p>NUTRITION FOR HEALTHY AGING</p> <p>DATE: Monday, January 13, 2020</p> <p>TIME: 5:30 PM - 7:00 PM</p> <p>RSVP: 720-320-2061</p> <p>LOCATION: Main Office 4700 Hale Parkway #300</p>	<p>As we age, we tend to require fewer calories. However, we need as much or more of certain nutrients to nurture good health. This makes nutrient density - the concentration of nutrients in each bite of food - more important than ever. Learn practical ways to prepare foods that support energy, muscle mass and immune health. Kelly will discuss:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• unique nutrition needs of older adults• what constitutes a nutrient-dense diet• easy and tasty ways to boost daily nutrition <p><i>There is no charge for the workshop. Guests are welcome for \$20.</i></p>
<p>STRATEGIES FOR DITCHING SUGAR</p> <p>DATE: Monday, February 10, 2020</p> <p>TIME: 5:30 PM - 7:00 PM</p> <p>RSVP: 720-320-2061</p> <p>LOCATION: Main Office 4700 Hale Parkway #300</p>	<p>Sugar seems to be in everything - from pies and ice cream to “healthy” foods like oatmeal, yogurt, granola, salad dressings and even roasted chicken! Reducing sugar can positively impact health in a myriad of ways. These includes reducing inflammation, blood sugar and triglycerides, as well as keeping the gut healthier and aiding in weight loss. Kelly will discuss:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• how sugar hurts our health• where to look for hidden sources of sugar• ways to kick the sugar habit <p><i>There is no charge for the workshop. Guests are welcome for \$20.</i></p>
<p>FATS: THE GOOD, THE BAD & THE UGLY</p> <p>DATE: Monday, March 23, 2020</p> <p>TIME: 5:30 PM - 7:00 PM</p> <p>RSVP: 720-320-2061</p> <p>LOCATION: Main Office 4700 Hale Parkway #300</p>	<p>Are you confused about all the fuss over fats? Wondering which fats are good for you and which aren't? Or how much fat to eat? We'll talk about the good, the bad and the ugly in the world of fats, and why it matters to your health. It's all in the science! Kelly will discuss:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• the best fats to use in cooking• how healthy (and tasty!) fats can aid in weight loss• the role of fats in brain, heart and hormone health <p><i>There is no charge for the workshop. Guests are welcome for \$20.</i></p>

Weight Loss Series

Our nutritionist, Kelly Dwyer, will run a small-group weight loss series in early 2020 through her private practice, Grow Nutrition llc. If you are interested in learning more, please contact Kelly at 303-570-5679 or kelly@eatwellgrow.com.

Chicken Soup: Myth or Magic?

Dr. Stephen Rennard, a researcher at the University of Nebraska Medical Center, along with his wife Barbara, tested the age-old advice to eat chicken soup to help your cold. His hypothesis: chicken soup would reduce the movement of neutrophils, a type of white blood cell involved with immune defense. If the soup could do this, it might dampen virus activity responsible for inflammation in the upper respiratory tract.

Indeed, his hypothesis proved correct (at least under a microscope). Several chicken soup varieties, including a homemade family recipe, reduced movement of neutrophils. (Hydration and clearing of mucous are other logical benefits, Stephen Rennard noted.)

So what's the magic ingredient? The researchers aren't sure, but they not only tested the soup but its individual ingredients. The greatest benefit was seen with the whole soup – an excellent example of how vitamins, minerals, antioxidants and phytonutrients work synergistically to improve our health and are worth more than the sum of their parts.



Chicken Noodle Soup Adapted from Taste of Home

INGREDIENTS

- 2.5 lbs. bone-in chicken thighs
- 2 tsp. pepper
- 3-5 tsp. salt (or to taste) Note: if you use bone broth, the soup will need more salt. If using regular chicken stock or broth, you likely won't need extra salt.)
- 1-2 T coconut oil
- 1 T butter
- 1 large onion, chopped
- 2 garlic cloves, minced
- 10 C chicken bone broth
- 4 celery ribs, chopped
- 4 medium carrots, chopped (or a mix of carrots and parsnips)
- 2 bay leaves
- 1 tsp. minced fresh thyme or 1/4 tsp. dried thyme
- 3 C noodles: spaghetti squash, zoodles or rice noodles
- 2 T chopped fresh parsley
- 1 T fresh lemon juice

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Noodles: If using spaghetti squash for noodles, cut squash in half, remove seeds and rub flesh with a bit of coconut oil. Place each half face down in a glass dish and roast at 375 degrees until tender – 25-45 min depending on size. (If using zoodles or rice noodles, you'll start them later.)
2. Pat chicken dry with paper towels; sprinkle with salt and pepper.
3. In a 6-qt. stockpot, heat some coconut oil over medium-high heat. Add chicken in batches, skin side down; cook until golden brown, about 3-4 minutes.
4. Remove chicken from pan; remove and discard skin.
5. Add onion and butter to drippings; cook and stir over medium heat 4-5 minutes.
6. Add garlic; cook 1 minute more. Add broth, stirring to loosen browned bits from pan. Bring to a light boil. Return chicken to pot. Add celery, carrots, bay leaves and thyme. Reduce heat to simmer, covered, until chicken is tender, 25-30 min.
7. If using zoodles or rice noodles, prepare them as soup simmers. Set aside.
8. Transfer chicken to a plate, and when it's cool enough to handle, remove meat from bones. Shred meat into bite-size pieces and put it back in the pot. Stir in parsley and lemon juice. Add S&P to taste. Place a handful of noodles in each bowl and ladle soup on top. Serve.

Yield: 10 servings (3-1/2 quarts)