

# Advocacy | Availability | Compassion | Prevention

Practicing in Boca Raton and the Surrounding Community Since 1979

## SUMMER 2023 - NEWSLETTER

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### **Hurricane Season: Prepare in Advance**

The 2023 hurricane season has already begun. Preparation to survive is essential. In the event of a hurricane, these are the phone numbers and procedures you need to be aware of if you need to contact me or the office staff:

1. The office phone number will be forwarded to another location out of the area. If you need to reach me, just call **561-368-0191** and leave a message if no one answers.
2. If cell phone service is disrupted, I will use my satellite phone. Please note, to send and receive calls with a satellite phone, the user must be outdoors with the antenna pointed towards the circulating satellites. If I do not answer, leave me a message and I will return your call as soon as possible.
3. Hospital Emergency Departments will be open before and after the storm. If wind speed reaches 35 MPH, or greater, Emergency Services or the 911 ambulances will not travel on the roads. They are top heavy and are at risk of toppling over. In most cases, the Emergency Rooms are shuttered in and not accepting patients when the winds are 35 MPH or greater.
4. After the storm has cleared, my office will reopen when the Palm Beach County Fire Marshall has inspected the building and agrees to resume normal operations. If the electricity is down, and the alarm and sprinkler systems are not functioning, they will not reopen.
5. You must construct a hurricane plan and let your loved ones know what the plan is. Decide well in advance of the storm if you plan to stay in your home or evacuate. If you plan to evacuate, please leave several days in advance. Let your loved ones know where you will be going and how you plan to communicate with them while you are on the road.

Have a plan to protect your home, property, and pets. If you are medically ill and require electricity to power your medical devices, you must contact the Palm Beach County Special Needs Coordinator at [www.ReadyPBC.com/SpNS](http://www.ReadyPBC.com/SpNS). There is an application to be filled out in advance. They can be reached by phone on **561-712-6400**. If you have a pet, the only shelter available is located at the West Boynton Recreational Center and priority is awarded to those who live in a mandatory evacuation zone, in a mobile home or in sub-standard housing.

If you are remaining in your home protected by hurricane impact windows and doors, or shutters and screens, then please assemble at least a two-week supply of food, prescription medications and water. Even if FEMA responds promptly, you may require several weeks of supplies until they are fully functional.

### **Summer Heat, Humidity and Heat Related Illnesses**

South Florida is already experiencing summer heat and humidity conditions. TV weather stations and internet online weather services are quick to point out the temperature, heat and humidity as well as the “feels like temperature”. They also list the HEAT INDEX which combines temperature and humidity.

A heat index of 90 degrees or greater is considered dangerous. Heat related illness occurs when your body cannot naturally lower the temperature. As the air temperature rises and your body temperature elevates from our muscles performing their work, plus exposure to the sun and outdoors, we sweat as a protective mechanism. The sweat is supposed to evaporate reducing our core temperature. On humid days the sweat cannot efficiently evaporate, and we have difficulty cooling down. As the body core or internal temperature rises, we can become ill. You develop heat exhaustion initially with weakness, nausea, headache, confusion, heavy sweating, rapid heartbeat and dark very concentrated urine. These are all signs that you need to find air conditioning quickly or if it is unavailable get into the shade and out of the sun. Start drinking cool liquids (avoid alcohol and caffeine if possible). Remove tightly constricting clothing and if possible, take a cold shower, swim, hose down or ice down. If you do not feel better within a few minutes, contact your physician, or seek health care. Failure to treat heat exhaustion can lead to heat stroke with core body temperatures at 104 degrees or higher risking brain, kidney damage and risk of death.

Illness from heat is preventable. Try and schedule your outdoor activities before 10:00 a.m. or after 6:00 p.m. on days the heat index is 90 degrees or above. Wear lightweight, light-colored, loose-fitting clothing. Apply sunscreen SPF 30 or greater to exposed skin at least 30 minutes in advance of sun exposure. Drink 1-2 glasses of water before you go out to work and continue to drink 2 - 4 glasses of cool water each hour you are outside. Avoid drinking caffeine or alcohol. Take a break, or time out, every 20 - 30 minutes and drink cool water or a sports drink even if you are not feeling thirsty!

Patients over age 65 years of age, and those who previously had a heat related illness, are more susceptible to heat illnesses. Medications taken for common medical illnesses can impair your body's ability to sweat and control core temperature. These include certain blood pressure medicines, diet pills, antidepressants, antipsychotics, epilepsy prevention medications and certain medications to improve urinary flow from an enlarged prostate.

## **Insect Related Illness and Bug Bites**

Global warming has led to expansion of the range of mosquitoes that can carry and transmit dengue fever, chikungunya fever and zika as well as yellow fever and malaria. The same elevated temperatures have led to expansion of the regions where tick borne illnesses can occur even on well-manicured and treated lawns. Each year, *Consumer Reports* evaluates the best products to protect against insect bites.

This year's inexpensive and top products include:

- Ben's Tick and Insect Repellent Wilderness and Ben's Tick and Insect Repellent Wipes. Both products cost less than \$10.
- Ultrathon Insect Repellent 8 from 3M and Off Sportsmen Deep Woods Insect Repellent were effective and inexpensive as well.

These four products contain at least 25% DEET or Picaridin. Products with DEET are designed to kill Ticks carrying Lyme's Disease and Powassan Fever as well.

For those looking to avoid chemicals, there is Repel Lemon Eucalyptus Insect Repellent 2 selling for less than \$10.

## **Sunscreens For Summer 2023**

*Consumer Reports* prefers products with an SPF 30 or greater that are water resistant for 40 - 80 minutes.

This year's recommended sprays included Black Girl Sunscreen Make It Glow Spray for \$16, Trader Joe's Spray SPF 50+ for \$13 and Neutrogena Beach Defense Water + Sun Protection for \$10. If you prefer lotions, then Coppertone Water Babies Lotion SPF 50 for \$16 topped the charts.

Remember sunscreens either use chemical shields which can be absorbed into the body or barrier sunscreens such as zinc oxide and titanium oxide. The barrier mineral sunscreens provide less protection than the chemical models but there is no concern about safety.

## Aspirin Use and Colorectal Cancer

In the mid-1950s, data from a Veterans Administration study indicated that men 45 years of age and older should take an aspirin to reduce the risk of heart attack and stroke. We were taught that taking one aspirin prolonged our bleeding time (a test no longer performed prior to surgery) by one week through inhibition of platelets.

Over decades, with repeated studies, these recommendations have changed dramatically. We have reached the point that taking aspirin to prevent heart attacks and strokes is no longer recommended in the primary prevention of heart attacks and strokes because the risk of bleeding may outweigh the aspirin benefits.

The US Preventive Task Force has already made this change to their guidelines while forgetting about the other beneficial observations seen with aspirin ingestion. For years, clinicians observed fewer skin cancers and fewer cases of premalignant colon polyps and colorectal cancer in those who took a daily aspirin product.

Cassandra Fritz, M.D., MPH of the Washington University School of Medicine in St. Louis explored the use of aspirin as prevention for early colorectal cancer. She conducted a prospective study of over 32,000 female nurses participating in the Nurses' Health Study II.

The study looked at the relationship of women younger than 50 years of age who took aspirin or non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs at least twice a week and the development of adenomatous colon polyps with the potential to turn malignant. The results clearly supported the theory that aspirin prevents the development of premalignant colon polyps. A follow-up study looking at female nurses 50 years of age or older found a similar result especially with larger polyps. The data was presented recently at a gastroenterology conference held in Chicago called Digestive Disease Week.

The presentation did not discuss the number of significant bleeding events occurring in their patients. Further research must be done to include men, not just women.

We are currently seeing an explosion of colorectal cancer in men and women who are younger than 50 years old and researchers are trying to find a mechanism to stop that trend. It may be that taking an aspirin regularly provides more than just protection against heart attacks and strokes but also colorectal cancers. If it accomplishes that, will the USPTF change its recommendations on the use of aspirin for prevention?

## Regular Exercise Can Benefit Some Eye Issues

A small peer reviewed article in the *Journal of Ophthalmic and Physiologic Optics* in April examined the risks of spending the day looking at a computer screen. Researchers enrolled 80 individuals who spend an average of 7.7 hours working in front of a computer screen per day. The median age was 28 years old. They compared them with a placebo group who spend 0.1 hours per day looking at a computer. They compared tear quality, vision quality and visual performance. The individuals working in front of a computer tended to complain of dry eye far more frequently and had issues with tear quality. That group's performance on visual acuity was not as good

as the placebo groups were. The small study elucidated the issues with prolonged daily computer use but failed to offer any suggestions on how to improve our computer work daily experience.

A related article was just published in the journal *Contact Lens and Anterior Eye*. It reviewed “dry eyes” and tear contents and integrity in individuals who exercised one time and then regularly. They did not include data on individuals with the immune disease Sjogren’s syndrome.

They found that one session of exercise improved tear volume and integrity. Regular exercise maintained those positive changes. Regular use of computer and phone screens is a necessity of work and life today. The negative changes it produces on tearing and eye fluids can be overcome with regular exercise.

## **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 and Samsung, monitors falls and features emergency SOS. It checks for heart rhythm and rate and can record an EKG and transmit. Blood pressure readings and glucose monitoring are options. It works with Apple iPhone generation 6 or greater as well as the Samsung model 4S.

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. You will be receiving an email in the next few weeks followed by a phone call to discuss the program. If you have any questions regarding the program, please call the office. We attempted this previously and ran into operational issues which have now been resolved.

## **Accepting New Patients - \$300 Referral Incentive**

I am currently accepting a limited number of new patients into his practice. If you know anyone who would benefit from the personalized care he provides, 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.