

Senior Services News

Pain: Strategy and Tactics

When an Army General surveys the field of battle, he has at his service two major tools – tactics and strategy. Tactics include troop movements, weapons, drones and communications. These all serve an overarching strategy which involves how to bring a geographic area under his control, and to defend what he already has.

When doctors treat disease, the same concept of tactics and strategy applies. With diabetes for example, we have diet, exercise, oral drugs, insulin, and glucose monitors as tactical tools that serve the overall strategy of prevention of strokes, heart attacks, and kidney failure, thus preserving long-term quality of life.

When it comes to the treatment of pain however, it occurred to me that in my initial contacts with pain patients, my approach may have been mostly tactical, with little long-term strategic vision in mind.

Our country is in the grip of an epidemic of overuse and addiction to pain medication and street drugs. Since 2010, the number of annual deaths from heroin overdose has increased sharply, and this may be caused in part by the way doctors have approached prescribing for pain, as well as how the regulatory authorities have approached restrictions on narcotic prescribing.

At the end of the 20th century, there developed the public perception that physicians were inadequately treating pain in many cases, and that we would do well to learn more about narcotic prescribing (and other methods) and employ that knowledge in the service of helping our patients to be as pain-free as possible. Since that time, the specialty of Pain Management developed and expanded considerably. The belief was promulgated that someone using prescribed narcotics for control of severe pain could not become narcotic addicted.

But in fact, the rate of drug abuse and narcotic overdoses has increased markedly in the past two decades, and in response, the Federal and State authorities in the past few years have tightened regulations on narcotic prescribing. Perhaps as a result, the rate of prescription drug overdose has remained fairly flat since 2010. But these same regulations have had the unintended consequence of creating such a

reluctance to prescribe narcotics among physicians that many patients, now withdrawing from narcotics, resort to street drugs to relieve their pain. The rate of drug overdose death from heroin has sharply increased since 2010, more than wiping out any lives saved from prescription overdoses.

With this in mind I think physicians and patients need to consider a more strategic approach to pain management. In addition to tactics (drugs, physical therapy, cognitive therapy), we should consider strategic questions:

- Do you expect to get married to this drug, or do you expect to use it for only a short time?
- Do you expect to be pain-free and not on drugs soon? How do you see yourself getting there? *How much pain are you prepared to put up with in order to reach that goal?*
- Are your pain medications helping you reach your goal, or are you stuck? Are you willing to consider a gradual reduction in your pain medication, while using other methods to reduce your symptoms?

“No Pain, no gain!” Remember what your athletics coach used to tell you? This attitude surrendered to just “No pain,” in the 1990’s with devastating consequences. It may well be that the strategic approach to being pain-free in many cases will involve the expectation of experiencing moderate degrees of pain for significant periods of time – particularly the pain involved in movement in physical therapy.

Pain does not always mean damage. It may simply be a signal that this is the part of your body that needs to be moved! So discuss pain with your doctor and develop a strategy with tactics that are right for you.

Lawren Hicks, MD
Medical Director
Senior Services



JOHN MUIR
HEALTH

Educational Opportunities

There is no charge to attend our health education events unless otherwise noted. **Registration is required.** Register early - class size is limited. Register on line at johnmuirhealth.com or call 941-7900 option 1.

APRIL — JUNE 2017

Taming Your Cravings - Kathy Napoli, MA, RD

April 6 | 9:30 - 11 a.m. | 941-7900 option 1 | John Muir Medical Center, Concord

June 16 | 9:30 - 11 a.m. | 941-7900 option 1 | Outpatient Center, Walnut Creek

Most food cravings involve social, physiological, and/or environmental cues. Kathy Napoli will discuss the various theories behind food cravings and recommend strategies to help you overcome them.

Banishing the Blues - Alan Brast, Ph.D., C.C.H.T., CSA

April 21 | 9:30 - 11 a.m. | 941-7900 option 1 | Outpatient Center, Walnut Creek

Learn the causes of depression and methods to help minimize or eradicate it. Hear practical and easy-to-learn techniques and suggestions to improve the lives of those who experience this malady. This class addresses reactive repression not mental illness or clinical depression.

Your Aging Eyes - Ed Schroth, ED, Lions Center for the Visually Impaired

May 4 | 9:30 - 11 a.m. | 941-7900 option 1 | John Muir Medical Center, Concord

June 23 | 9:30 - 11 a.m. | 941-7900 option 1 | Outpatient Center, Brentwood

Learn about eye diseases and disorders that affect many people as they age. We will discuss how you can protect your eyes and what devices and community resources are available to help compensate for vision loss.

Preventing Osteoporosis through Nutrition - Kathy Napoli, MA, RD

May 18 | 9:30 - 11 a.m. | 941-7900 option 1 | Wellness Services, Walnut Creek

Can your nutrition and lifestyle help your body "bone up?" For those with a higher risk for bone loss, discover key bone-building nutrients and lifestyle changes, according to the latest research, that will help improve your bone health.

Managing the Impacts of Stress on Your Health - Shell Portner, RN, BSN

June 1 | 9:30 - 11 a.m. | 941-7900 option 1 | John Muir Medical Center, Concord

Learn how practicing basic mindfulness techniques can help reduce stress and manage some of our most common illnesses and symptoms such as chronic pain and gastrointestinal difficulties.

Prescription Pain Medications - are they working for you or against you?

Nina Ferraris, LMFT; Lawren Hicks, MD; Krystal Pong, Pharm.D.

June 20 | 2:30 - 4 p.m. | 941-7900 option 1 | Outpatient Center, Walnut Creek

Our panel will discuss issues with prescription pain medications, what the affect could be on your body, and how they may interact with other medications. They will discuss access to services for detox and rehabilitation as well as how to talk to your doctor about your concerns.

Ongoing Classes

AARP Driver Safety Program

Apr 4 & 6 | 2 - day, 8 hour class | 8:30 a.m. - 1:15 p.m. | John Muir Medical Center, Concord

Apr 22 | refresher class | 8:30 a.m. - 1:15 p.m. | John Muir Medical Center, Walnut Creek

May 9 | refresher class | 8:30 a.m. - 1:15 p.m. | John Muir Medical Center, Concord

May 20 | 1- day, 8 hour class | 8:30 a.m. - 5 p.m. | John Muir Medical Center, Walnut Creek

Jun 17 | refresher class | 8:30 a.m. - 1:15 p.m. | John Muir Medical Center, Walnut Creek

Jun 15 & 22 | 2 - day, 8 hour class | 8:30 a.m. - 1:15 p.m. | John Muir Medical Center, Concord

This Smart Driver classroom course, designed for motorists over age 50, helps drivers refine existing skills and develop safe, defensive driving techniques. Offered in an eight hour or four-and-a-half hour refresher course for those who meet the criteria for renewal. There is a charge for this class. Register online at johnmuirhealth.com or call 941-7900 option 1.

Advance Health Care Directives - Suzanne Leib, LMFT

Apr 5 | 9:30 - 11:30 a.m. | 941-7900 option 1 | John Muir Medical Center, Concord

Apr 26 | 9:30 - 11:30 a.m. | 941-7900 option 1 | Outpatient Center, Tice Valley/Rossmoor

May 30 | 6 - 8 p.m. | 941-7900 option 1 | Outpatient Center, Walnut Creek

All adults, regardless of age, need to understand how they can have control over their own life and death decisions. Learn the choices you or your family may face due to an accident or serious illness. This is an opportunity to clarify your choices and make sure they will be carried out should you become unable to make your own health care decisions. Required documents will be provided.

Catch Yourself - Fall Prevention to Maintain Your Independence

June 5, 7, 9, 12 | 2 - 3:30 p.m. | 798-8788 | Pleasant Hill Community Center*

June 16, 19, 23, 26 | 12:30 - 2 p.m. | 941-7900 option 1 | Outpatient Center, Pleasanton

This four-session class series raises awareness about falls by practicing techniques in class. Learn how to improve your strength and balance, simplify your environment, and identify fall risks. Classes will cover home safety strategies, exercise techniques, medication management, and other ways to decrease your risk of falling. Wear comfortable shoes and clothing. Plan to attend all four classes. If you have taken this class in the past 12 months, and feel you still need fall prevention information, we ask you to follow up with your primary care doctor or call Wellness Services 941-7900 option 1.

*There will be a fee for the Pleasant Hill Community Center class.

Welcome to Medicare - Health Insurance Counseling & Advocacy Program

Apr 12, May 17, Jun 14 | 7 - 9:30 p.m. | 941-7900 option 1 | John Muir Medical Center, Walnut Creek

This course is for those new to Medicare, or soon to enroll, who want to understand the many benefits available. Learn about health benefits, drug coverage and how to supplement your coverage. HICAP does not sell or endorse insurance products. Register online at johnmuirhealth.com or call 941-7900 option 1.

Memory Screening - What's Your Memory Fitness?

Apr 11, May 9, Jun 13 | morning appointments | 947-3300

Apr 12, May 10, Jun 14 | afternoon appointments | 947-3300

Outpatient Centers: Brentwood | Pleasanton | Tice Valley/Rossmoor | Walnut Creek

Many people notice changes in their memory as they grow older. If you are 65 or older and have a John Muir Health primary care physician, Senior Services, in partnership with John Muir Health Neurosciences Institute, offers a free individual memory screening to help determine if your memory is functioning at a level that is typical for a person your age. This is a screening and not a diagnostic exam. Screenings are offered on the specific dates and times at the three locations listed. Call for a 30 minute appointment.



Senior Services
 1450 Treat Blvd
 Walnut Creek, CA 94597

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

Change in information? If you have a change in address or wish to be removed from our mailing list, please notify us at (925) 947-3300 or seniorservices@johnmuirhealth.com

John Muir Health Senior Services

Senior Services offers a wide range of services for John Muir Health seniors including resources, information, assessment services, and educational programs. We help older adults, their families, and those who care for them. Our goal is to help older adults keep their independence and enjoy the best possible quality of life. **(925) 947-3300**

Outpatient Center, Brentwood
 2400 Balfour Road, Suite 201
 Brentwood

Outpatient Center, Pleasanton
 5860 Owens Drive, 2nd Floor
 Pleasanton

Outpatient Center, Tice Valley/Rossmoor
 1220 Rossmoor Parkway, Suite 100
 Walnut Creek

Outpatient Center, Walnut Creek
 1450 Treat Boulevard, 2nd Floor
 Walnut Creek

Walk to Wellness Challenge

Physical activity is one of the most important things that you can do to improve your health. Regular walking can lower your body weight and reduce your risk of serious health problems like heart disease, stroke, diabetes and more.

This seven week Walk to Wellness Challenge is designed to help you get active and find the fun in fitness. Participants who attend five out of seven group walking sessions at one of the John Muir Health Outpatient Centers below will be entered into a drawing to win an exciting raffle prize.

When: Every Wed., April 5 – May 17

Time: 12:30 p.m. – 1:00 p.m.

Cost: Free

Meeting Locations:

John Muir Health Outpatient Center
 1450 Treat Blvd, Walnut Creek
 Wellness Services (lobby)

John Muir Health Outpatient Center
 5860 Owens Dr., Pleasanton
 Wellness Services (lobby)

Schedule:

- 5 minute warm up stretch
- 20 minute group walk
- 5 minute cool down stretch

What to bring:

- Comfortable walking shoes, water bottle.
- No registration required.

All ages and fitness levels are welcome!

PROGRAM LOCATIONS

John Muir Medical Center, Concord
 2540 East St., Concord
 (925) 682-8200

John Muir Medical Center, Walnut Creek
 1601 Ygnacio Valley Rd., Walnut Creek
 (925) 939-3000

Outpatient Center, Brentwood
 2400 Balfour Rd., Brentwood
 (925) 308-8100

Outpatient Center, Pleasanton
 5860 Owens Dr., Pleasanton
 (925) 224-0800

Outpatient Center, Tice Valley/Rossmoor
 1220 Rossmoor Pkwy., Walnut Creek
 (925) 939-1220

Outpatient Center, Walnut Creek
 1450 Treat Blvd., Walnut Creek

Pleasant Hill Community Center
 320 Civic Drive, Pleasant Hill
 (925) 798- 8788

Wellness Services, Walnut Creek
 1656 N. California Blvd., Ste 100
 Walnut Creek
 (925) 941-7900 option 1