Head to Toe® Health Report...

Dedicated to Your Health!

Winter 2015 Highlights:

> Blue Light Special For Your Eyes
> Non-surgical Treatment For Chronic Foot Pain
> Radio waves to treat pain
> Varicose & Spider Veins

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Tucson Neuropathy Institute™
Specializing in Pain Relief for the Legs & Feet
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Blue Light Special For Your Eyes

If you're like many Americans (not our youngest generation), the term, "blue light," congers up thoughts of store specials at Kmart. However, blue light is an ever-increasing danger to our eye health. Most of us living in Arizona are well aware of the risks of UV rays and the importance of wearing sunglasses, (ideally polarized sunglasses). With the huge emergence of smart phones and tablets in recent years, in conjunction with computer & TV use, our eyes are increasingly exposed to high-energy blue light of the visible spectrum (HEV).

Blue-tech lens and blue light deflector coating protect the eyes from harmful blue light, they assist in filtering in the "good" blue light that we need for circadian rhythm. Another reason to get the "blue light special" added to your eyeglass prescription, is that "bad" blue light exposure increases the probability of developing macular degeneration. Those who have undergone cataract removal surgery are at higher risk, as the natural lens isn't available to filter the "bad" blue light.

In summary, blue light-absorbing lenses have demonstrated significantly better protection against damaging visible light source; either naturally from the sun or artificially from your smartphone, computer or tablet screens; that can cause retinal damage and with prolong exposure lead to macular degeneration. *Clin Experiment Ophthalmol. 2012 Jan-Feb;40;40(1):e87-97.*

Minimally Invasive Treatment for chronic foot pain

While interventional pain Physicians have used Radio Frequency (RF) to treat spinal and peripheral nerves for decades, using this technology to treat foot conditions is still relatively underutilized. RF has been used to successfully treat neuromas and plantar fasciitis and is a minimally invasive office procedure. RF uses radiofrequency energy to disrupt the painful signal and as a result, the nerve no longer transmits pain from the site. The closest comparative treatment to RFNA is cryotherapy (cold therapy). Similar to a shotgun, cryotherapy destroys all nerves in the treated area, including nerves that lead to the activation of muscles. This can lead to loss of muscle function and/or various foot deformities. In contrast, RFNA is more analogous to a sniper rifle, and can isolate sensory fibers from motor fibers, so only sensory (nerves that provide pain sensation) fibers are treated. Radiofrequency is a safe and minimally invasive procedure which often leads to high patient satisfaction and a rapid return to normal activity. *Open Journal of Orthopedics, 2013, 3, 325-330.*

Dr. Shih discusses Acoustic Wave Therapy, Radio Frequency Nerve Ablasion, and laser treatments for toenail fungus on the morning news.

Is it all about the Bass? Accoustic Wave therapy

Accoustic wave therapy, a noninvasive treatment that utilizes sounds waves for healing is not the sonic boom you hear as a rambunctious car pulls up next to you at a stoplight. Accoustic wave therapy, aka Extracorporeal Shockwave Therapy, is a derivative of lithotripsy. Lithotripsy is the mechanical breaking up of kidney stones with sound waves. For years, foot and ankle surgeons have adapted the use of sound waves to treat conditions such as Achilles tendonitis and heel pain (plantar fasciitis).

Accoustic Wave therapy is an outpatient procedure which does not require anesthesia, with typical treatment times less than 15 minutes. Patients can walk immediately following treatment and return to normal activity within a few days of the procedure. Most patients require one treatment session per week for three weeks. Some patients report immediate pain relief after the treatment, although it can take up to four weeks for pain relief to begin. An additional benefit is that both feet can be treated at the same time, no incision – no risk of infection or scar tissue formation. Originally offered at surgical centers or hospital under anesthesia, the treatment is now offered in an office setting and is considerably more cost effective.

Low-energy shock wave therapy appears to be an effective noninvasive treatment for recalcitrant plantar fasciitis with negligible side effects and may lead to the avoidance of surgery. The United States Food and Drug Administration has approved a shock-wave device for therapy for heel pain.
J of Bone Joint Surg, 2002 Mar;84-A(3):335-41.

Knee, hip, and back pain

Similar to the analogy of a flat tire affecting the steering, improper function of your feet can adversely influence your knees, back and hips. Certainly, there could be other internal problems with your knee such as arthritis, ligament injury or tear, or meniscus tear. Regardless, your feet are the foundation for each and every step you take. Over flattening of the arches, also called over pronation can lead to injury of your legs and/or feet. As the song goes, the hip bone is connected to the knee bone, and all of your joints are connected and influence each other. Oftentimes biomechanical orthotics can improve the function of your knee, hip, and back and help to restore normal function while minimizing harmful forces. Emerging evidence suggests orthotics to be an effective non-surgical intervention for rheumatoid arthritis; traditionally a more debilitating type of arthritis. *Curr Opin Rheumatol. 2011 March ; 23(2): 148–155.*

Varicose veins & Spider veins

Varicose veins are enlarged veins that are often blue, purple, or red and oftentimes bulge above the surface of the skin of the legs. Spider veins are similar to varicose veins, but smaller in nature. Varicose veins affect about half of the US population above 50 years of age. Various factors contribute to the development of these veins, including: increasing age hormonal changes, pregnancy, obesity, lack of movement, and sun exposure. Most varicose veins appear in the legs due to the pressure of body weight and the force of gravity.

A type of vein disorder that is extremely life threatening is a DVT, Deep vein thrombosis, which is a blood clot deep in the leg. It often causes calf pain, warmth, redness, and swelling. However, sometimes it has no significant symptoms. If there is suspicion of a DVT, it needs to be evaluated immediately by medical professionals. If the blood clot travels to the lungs, it can lead to death.

Varicose veins can be treated with lifestyle changes and medical treatments. Various treatments may include compression stockings, sclerotherapy – utilizing an injection of a liquid into the vein that causes the vein walks to swell, stick together, and shrink. Laser treatments or endoablation are other treatments that can be utilized for treatment as well. Lastly, surgery may be appropriate in some limited instances.

> Gift of Eyesight Program
Don't toss out your old glasses! Please consider donating them to our Gift of Eyesight Program. We will distribute them to people in need.