



Asheville Integrative Medicine



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Healthy Notes

Spring 2008

Oxygen-The Most Essential Nutrient

By Dr. Sharon Willingham

No vitamin C? Scurvy in 3 months. No vitamin D? Osteoporosis in 3 decades. No oxygen? Death or brain damage in 3 to 10 minutes. This simple fact makes oxygen our most essential nutrient.

Vitamin C and Vitamin D are easily supplied by choosing specific foods or pills. However, how can you increase your oxygen?

Breathe more oxygen, right? Not totally. Room air contains enough oxygen (at a 21% concentration) to fill most of the oxygen binding sites inside our red blood cells. Breathing even 100% oxygen only fills the few remaining sites and increases the blood level of oxygen by merely a small percentage. Although this can be life saving in many instances, it is insufficient in others.

Thousands of people every year are affected by an event or condition that causes some body tissues to live in a perpetually-low oxygen state. This includes many people who have had an injury, a surgical wound or skin graft, plastic surgery, a limb reattachment, radiation therapy, burns, head trauma, or poisoning. Recent studies suggest it is also true for some people who have had a stroke, who have cerebral palsy, or who have autism or chronic viruses. In each of these challenges there are cells around the area of injury that are not getting enough oxygen to function well. They are not dead, but they have too little of the most essential of nutrients to do their jobs. They are, so to speak, on idle.

Cells in areas of low oxygen can be given a new lease on life by getting the oxygen to them in a different way. In the same way that forcing carbonation into a can of flavored water can create a bubbly soda, oxygen can be encouraged to "dissolve" into body fluids, and thereby nourish all of the body tissues more deeply. This is accomplished by increasing the pressure under which the oxygen is breathed.

Pressure is provided by placing the person in an above-normal pressure chamber, or "Hyperbaric" oxygen chamber. The chamber is sealed and the pressure inside is slowly increased to a level appropriate for the person's condition. Extra oxygen is usually supplied, but may not be necessary for results. A treatment session will usually require an hour or more to accomplish; (continued, pg. 2)

Allergy Suffers now have an option that's nothing to sneeze at!

By Dawn Crowley, RN, BSN

Coming soon to an outdoors near you: Allergy Season. Springtime tends to be the time of year when most allergy sufferers notice a symptom increase, although some people do have allergic reactions all year.

What is an allergy, anyway? Medically speaking, an allergy is an exaggerated immune reaction by one's immune system, to something that is usually harmless to other people. There are several reasons the immune system over-reacts to common and harmless things like pollen, mold spores, and pet dander; and at AIM, we treat ALL the reasons. Allergies can be inhalant (airborne particles) or food related, and can cover a gamut of symptoms, ranging from hay fever, sinusitis, chronic bronchitis, itching, headaches, bloating, coughing, sneezing, and even muscle and joint pains. And the best news? Allergies are painlessly treated.

The immune system in the human body protects us from things that may be harmful, such as bacteria, viruses, or other foreign substances. Like a police force, the immune system, takes serious note of repeat-offender substances, forming antibodies to things we are often exposed to. The IgE antibodies then attach to the cells lining the nose and sinuses, "staking out" those areas until the offending particles to return. When they are identified, the antibodies apprehend the allergen. This "arrest" results in the release of histamines, which is like calling into dispatch for backup. Histamine causes itching and swelling along the nose, eyes, sinuses and airways.

When immune system overreacts in this fashion, it malfunctions because of nutritional deficiencies and/or a buildup of toxic metals and other man-made pollutants. Proper immune function can be restored by supplementing deficient minerals, by removing toxins, and by desensitizing the immune system to specific allergens (the repeat offenders who have a "criminal record" are literally recorded). Allergy testing, by skin sensitivity or blood work, can identify what triggers your immune system the most, identifying particular allergens. (continued, pg. 2)





Oxygen-The Most Essential Nutrient

(continued) the frequency depends upon the condition being addressed. Some conditions require only a few treatments; others respond best to ongoing sessions.

Not long ago, Hyperbaric Oxygen chambers were only available in a few specialized facilities, usually hospitals. They were used primarily to treat deep sea divers who surfaced too quickly, resulting in “the Bends”. These individuals would be pressurized back to their dive pressure, and then be decompressed at a slower rate. Gradually, other applications were discovered. It is now widely accepted that Hyperbaric Oxygen Therapy, often called HBOT, can facilitate improvement in a variety of conditions, even years after the problem first occurred.

Currently, HBOT is ‘officially’ approved for conditions such as cyanide or carbon monoxide poisoning, smoke inhalation, decompression sickness (the Bends), crush injuries, poor wound healing, tissue damage from radiation, skin grafts and limb reattachments. in stroke, autism, multiple sclerosis, plastic surgery, heart attack, near drowning, sports injuries, Lyme disease, head trauma and other conditions.

Results of HBOT depend on the individual and their specific problem. Not everyone achieves the desired result and studies are underway to help decide who will have the best outcomes. However, results are often remarkable. Healing time can improve, spasticity can be reduced or disappear, the ability to perform tasks can be regained or appear for the first time, inflammation can improve, and other symptoms can disappear. As one example, the World Federation of Neurology has devised a specific protocol for the use of HBOT in the treatment of some types of strokes.

Further research and also the development of soft-sided portable chambers that supply a lower level of pressure (at a much improved price) have resulted in HBOT being applied in many more conditions. These so-called “mild hyperbaric” chambers are appearing in physician offices, outpatient facilities, and even in homes. They are being used to improve outcomes in most of the areas mentioned above as “off-label”, as well as in performance, sports injuries, and wellness. Although there are few contraindications to HBOT, it is important that you be assessed by a physician to determine the appropriateness of adding HBOT to your care plan.

Do you know someone who has a deeper need for more of this most essential nutrient?



Portable Chambers available at AIM

“Indications are expanding and HBOT is now being used “off-label” “



Allergy Suffers now have an option that’s nothing to sneeze at!

By Dawn Crowley, RN, BSN



(continued) The “desensitization” process involves introducing the body’s immune system to tiny amounts of what is triggering the allergic reaction, then gradually increasing those amounts until the immune system learns to “ignore” these particular substances. These tiny amounts of allergens can be introduced to the body by injecting them beneath the skin (ouch!), or by allowing them to absorb through the mucosal tissue under the tongue, which is AIM’s preferred method.

Sublingual Immuno-Therapy (SLIT) is better than injections for a number of reasons, one of which is that the drops are taken three times per day, and *desensitization to allergens occurs much faster than with weekly injections*. Also, injections can also cause a localized reaction at the injection site which can be uncomfortable, and in rare cases a dangerous immune reaction not limited to the injection site. For this reason, injections require a visit to the doctor for each treatment, *but sublingual treatments do not*. Also, sublingual desensitization has *never* caused the aforementioned dangerous allergic reaction, called anaphylaxis. Talk to your practitioner about allergy testing and treatment.



Light Therapy

Light is essential for life and has been used throughout the ages as a healing modality. In recent years the most promising application of light for healing has come from light-emitting diodes (LED) that deliver red and invisible infrared wavelengths of the light spectrum. This kind of light therapy has also been given the name “phototherapy”, “photon therapy”, and “photodynamic therapy”.

LED’s are the tiny ultra efficient bulbs that were developed as an offshoot of laser technology by NASA to speed up healing in space-traveling astronauts. LED’s can deliver the same healing wavelengths of lasers but they can do so in a safer, gentler, more convenient and cost effective manner than their laser cousins. Research has established that it is the light itself at specific wavelengths that are therapeutic rather than the thermal (heat) effects of the light.

In the past decade the Food and Drug Administration has approved various LED devices for the purposes of increasing local circulation, the reduction of pain, and for relieving muscular tension and spasms. Research by NASA, the U.S. military, the Mayo Clinic, the National Cancer Institute, and prominent national and international universities have demonstrated a wide range of effective clinical applications for red and infrared LED’s including: accelerated healing of wounds, improvement of diabetic neuropathy, repair of damaged retinas, and even eradication of brain tumors when used in conjunction with light-sensitive chemotherapies.

The most common and effective application of red and infrared LED’s are with skin and musculoskeletal health problems. Dr. Harry Whelan, professor of neurology and a leading LED researcher at the Medical College of Wisconsin has shown that skin and muscle cells grown in culture grow 150 to 200 percent faster than controls when exposed to infrared LED’s. The U.S. military’s research with the lights reported a 40 percent improvement in servicemen’s musculoskeletal training injuries when treated with LED’s. On submarines the LED’s were reported to increase crewmember’s laceration healing by 50% compared to controls.

Other ailments that have responded well to red and infrared diode light therapy are tendonitis, carpal tunnel syndrome, venous ulcers, third

“skin and muscle cells grown in culture grow 150 to 200 percent faster than controls”

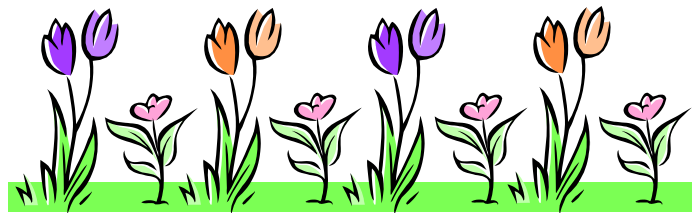
degree burns, cartilage damage, herniated disc, osteoarthritis, and myofascial pain.

Dr. Whelan believes the LED’s work by increasing the energy inside cells by boosting a key energy-producing enzyme in cells. Other LED researchers have noted that certain infrared wavelengths stimulate the local release of nitric oxide, thereby enhancing increased blood flow to an area. The infrared lights healing effects are also attributable to the specific light wavelength’s ability to stimulate the production of collagen, increase RNA and DNA synthesis, reduce the excitability of nervous tissues, increase lymphatic drainage, and stimulate healing neural processes.

Light therapy is safe with no negative side effects reported to date, although with improper use there is a remote chance of superficial burns. Some units come with a disclaimer to not use them with pregnant women or cancer patients. Treatments usually range from a few minutes to 25 minutes at a time, and usually several times per week. The LED therapeutic devices can be found in the offices of physicians, trainers, and physical therapist but they are also available retail. Units vary by specific wavelengths available and by the power that the light is delivered.

The future appears bright for red and infrared LED therapy. This developing technology promises an effective, non-pharmacological, non-surgical alternative to many health problems that have previously been either difficult to treat or dependent on drugs and surgery.

Anne Walch, MHS, PA-C



Dr. Willingham and John Paul McNeil, PA are available to speak to your group or organization on a multitude of topics. For information or to schedule a talk, please contact Beth at 828-210-0188.

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Friends,

John Wilson Jr. MD and Matt Young DDS recruited me to help them rid our public water supply of a controversial additive – fluoride. We took it to City Council and were far outnumbered by a highly-organized pro-fluoride lobby, but the issue is far from dead. I share with you my letter published last week in the Mountain Xpress. Best in Health,

James Biddle MD



Second thoughts on fluoride by James Biddle in Vol. 14 / Iss. 30 on 02/20/2008

Q: Which one is the pioneer? A: The dude with the arrow in his back.

At City Council on Feb. 12, three of us had the audacity to question the dogma of a fluoridated water supply. I haven't been spanked so hard since my daddy had a belt in his hand. The good news is: We have seen those with the bows, and they are not savages. They love this community. They are thoughtful, professional, respectful, dedicated and passionate. They protect the health of this population, and believe it is best for us to have fluoride in our water. They showed up (en masse) to defend that belief, in service to the greater good.

In one analogy, we got massacred at the OK Council Corral. However, it was just the first skirmish, and here we still stand. We cannot go away; we are obliged by conscience. We have seen the opposition, and it is impressive. Most were amicable, neighborly, scholarly in defending their turf. Only a few arrows were launched. Dr. Dunn said we used “junk science.” Perhaps Scientific American did also, since their eight-page article this month, “Second Thoughts on Fluoride,” said that a 2006 report by the National Research Council “concluded that fluoride can subtly alter endocrine function, especially in the thyroid,” as well as [listing] other numerous health concerns.

In another analogy, the process of social-scientific consensus took one step forward on a long journey. For example, in 1864, after Ignaz Semmelweis, M.D., had doctors wash their hands after cadaver dissections and before delivering babies, deaths from “childbed fever” dropped dramatically, but he was ostracized and it took 25 to 30 years for hand washing to become medical standard-of-care. In 1928, after George Papanicolaou, M.D., scraped cells from a cervix [in an attempt] to decrease cancer deaths, he was vilified, and it took 25 to 30 years for Pap smears to become the medical standard-of-care. In 1982, after Barry Marshall, M.D., showed that ulcers were caused by H. pylori infection rather than just stress, he was ridiculed, and it has taken 25 to 30 years for curing ulcers with antibiotics to become the medical standard-of-care (while Marshall won the Nobel Prize in 2005).

“I encourage you to research the topic and write letters to all of the local publications, as well as the City Council members.”

In *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, it is noted that new ideas are first ignored, then ridiculed, then vehemently attacked, then finally accepted as obvious, and then claimed to be the establishment's own all along. It looks like the fluoride story is just now moving from ridicule to attack, so it'll get more intense soon. It is the nature of things, even among good-hearted folks.

Declassified documents confirm that fluoride got into our water supply due to the 1943 politics of defusing the liability of fluoride toxicity generated from the Manhattan Project in creating the atomic bomb. Sorry to sound like a left-wing (or right-wing), conspiratorial nutjob, but sometimes history is odder than fiction.

For over 50 years, mercury in teething powders caused pink disease or acrodynia, killing one-in-500 babies, before the mercury was removed in 1948. How long will we wait to remove fluoride from our water? Since I practice “anti-aging medicine,” I plan to be around to see it happen. How about you?

— James Biddle, M.D. Asheville

“Future Doc” on URTV, Channel 20

March 12th – Hyperbaric Oxygen Therapy

March 19th – Sustainable Nutrition

March 26th – Fibromyalgia

April 2nd – (Rerun) Fluoride

April 9th – (Rerun) Hyperbaric Oxygen Therapy

Please contact AIM at 828-252-5545 if you would like to be a part of the studio audience!





Chelation Therapy Clinical Trial Available at AIM

If you (or anyone you know) are over 50 years of age, do not smoke, and have suffered a heart attack more than 6 weeks ago, you may be eligible to participate in a groundbreaking new study.

TACT, the Trial to Access Chelation Therapy, is a clinical trial sponsored by the National Institutes of Health. This trial involves doctors nation-wide who will test the effectiveness of an alternative therapy for the treatment of coronary heart disease.

As a patient you will receive 28 months of treatment and participate in 32 months of follow-up. Participation is at no charge and you will receive vitamin and mineral supplements.

If you are interested in taking part or would like more information about this trial, please contact Asheville Integrative Medicine at 828-252-5545.

Please join us in welcoming Dr. O'Brien to our practice.

Dr. O'Brien is a board-certified pediatrician who will be seeing both adult and child patients.

Dr. O'Brien graduated from Calcutta Medical College, University of Calcutta, in 1980 with an MBBS degree (Bachelor of Medicine and Bachelor of Surgery), which is equivalent to an MD degree. She completed a rotating internship in 1981 followed by a one year house-staff ship in Pediatrics in 1982 through Calcutta Medical College. After coming to the US, she completed a residency in Pediatrics in Chicago, Illinois in 1987. Dr. O'Brien has also earned a Master of Public Health degree with a focus on Maternal and Child Health in 1995 from University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. She is currently working for the CDSA, Children's Developmental Services Agency, in Asheville and Boone, North Carolina; while pursuing a naturopathic degree for medical doctors..

Her focus is women and children's health issues: namely, prevention of illness and promotion of health. She is particularly interested in nutrition, environmental toxins and energy medicine. She will be an asset with the increasing number of children we are seeing here at AIM. Please remember to tell others, as you spread the word of Dr. O'Brien's arrival, that we serve primarily as consultants to you and to your health care provider. Please be aware that we are not a primary care provider (our office is not available after hours and we do not have hospital admitting privileges).

Integrative Medicine Lecture Series in Horse Shoe

John Paul McNeil, PA of Asheville Integrative Medicine AT Etowah is presenting a series of lectures at Niche in Horse Shoe. The next presentation will be on Saturday, April 5th at 10:00AM.

Mark your calendars and join us at Niche the first Saturday of each month at 10:00AM.

Call the Etowah office for more information. 828-691-6545





Nutrients Etc wants you to “Get Your Greens On” in March!

We have several green products for your good health:

Chlorella (Source Naturals) may enhance health naturally by supporting the immune system and promoting energy, vitality, and natural cleansing. \$14.99

Earth’s Promise (Enzymatic Therapy) The “goodness of **Green**” –a nutrient-rich supplement from green fruits & vegetables is available in both “elderberry” and “strawberry/kiwi” flavors. This green powder is easy to mix into your morning smoothie or juice, and is delicious even mixed with water for an afternoon pick-me-up. Single serving pouch \$2.39; 14 servings \$18.99

Garden Veggies (Nature’s Way) is a handy option for those who prefer the convenience of a capsule. Each Garden Veggies capsule contains a full spectrum of phytonutrients taken from 12 whole vegetables. \$13.99

Organic Food Bar “Active Greens” is a high energy, great tasting meal on-the-go. It’s loaded with healthy raw foods, like almond butter, dates, and brown rice protein, also several green foods, including: wheat & barley grass juice powders, organic spirulina and sprouts. \$3.49



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Would YOU like to work at AIM?????

If you or anyone you know would be interested in interning at Asheville Integrative Medicine, please call Beth or Rachel at 252-5545. We are looking for someone with marketing skills, the ability to write well, the ability to multi-task and doesn’t mind a fast pace! So, if you would like to learn about what goes on behind the scenes at a busy medical practice give us a call. Thank you

