

## **Chronic Pain – No One Talk About**

Chronic pain is one of the topics we need to discuss with our family and friends, yet no one does.

- 50 percent of older adults who live on their own suffer from chronic pain.
- At least 75 percent of the elderly in care facilities suffer from chronic pain.
- Chronic pain is largely undertreated, with serious health consequences, including depression, anxiety, decreased mobility, social isolation, and poor sleep.

For chronic pain, ill served by opioids, recognize first that you need more protein than healthy people and likely are eating less while skipping breakfast and then eating lots of empty carbohydrates. You also likely need to heal your gut.

### **Taking Control of Chronic Pain**

- Heal your gut – key to reducing inflammation
- Quit all processed sugar and minimize natural sugar – think berries instead of apples
- Have your physician test for candida overgrowth, parasites, and mineral deficiencies
- Get up early – going to bed early is a result and is part of healing your gut!
- Protein at every meal, especially breakfast – just the opposite of what most people do!
  - 90+ grams per day
  - Include plant based – see handout with plant protein sources
  - Grass-fed and finished beef, free range chicken and eggs, cold water wild caught fish
- Reduce inflammation with turmeric, DHA, ALA, coconut oil, probiotics and magnesium
- Move - build up to walking, or equivalent, 30 minutes a day
- And, that is so you can then do stretching, weight training, and other movements

### **Alternative Therapies for Chronic Pain**

People are hesitant to discuss, much less try, therapies considered outside the norm, though if you or a family member “has tried everything”, in addition to the above, please explore these and other options beyond pain medications:

- Acupuncture
- Biofeedback
- Chiropractic care
- Egoscue Method - Movement
- Feldenkrais Method - Movement
- Hypnotherapy
- Inversion Table
- Medical marijuana – CBD oil
- Meditation
- Myofascial Release Therapy
- Tai Chi - Movement
- TENS Unit – Quell – super TENS
- Trigger Point Injections
- Yoga - Movement

### **Constipation**

Many people who are taking pain medications suffer from another topic we don't discuss – debilitating constipation. One solution is to build up to taking 1 tablespoon a day of the “miracle mix” of sunflower, sesame and flax seeds, ground up and sprinkled on salads or in soups. Alternatively, or in combination, building up to a higher dose of Vitamin C and of course the do-everything mineral magnesium, can relieve constipation.

Getting in balance results in being regular. This is especially important for the elderly to prevent dangerous infections, including E.coli and C. diff (Clostridium difficile).

## Depression, Anxiety, Stress, Sleep Disorders

Even people not in chronic pain suffer with depression, anxiety, stress and trouble sleeping. Consider these ideas to discuss with your physician:

- **Aerobic exercise** – the best thing you can do for depression
- **Heal your gut** – better absorb nutrients and keep nasties out of your blood stream
- **Support your thyroid\*** – get your “daily dose of dulse” (seaweed)
  - **Vitamin B<sub>2</sub>** – riboflavin needed to pull iodine from bloodstream to thyroid – 50 mg/day
  - **Iodine** – sea veggies, salt water fish or supplement – 150-300 mcg/day
  - **Tyrosine** – from protein - red meat, chicken, fish or supplement – 500 mg 2x/day
    - Thyroid hormone** – Thyroid pulls tyrosine and iodine from your blood stream, converts tyrosine and adds 1, 2, 3, or 4 iodine atoms, creating mostly T<sub>4</sub>, the storage form, ready to be converted to T<sub>3</sub>, the active form, and releases all into bloodstream
  - **Selenium** – sardines, shellfish, grass-fed beef or supplement - 200 mcg/day
  - **Iron** – iron percolate or iron glycinate – if on a statin or hypothyroid - 25 mg/day
  - **Zinc** – if zinc low, can impair both senses of taste and smell – 25 mg/day
    - T<sub>4</sub> to T<sub>3</sub>** – conversion needs selenium, zinc and iron to strip off an iodine atom
  - **Vitamin A** – needed to move free T<sub>3</sub> into cells - 5,000 -10,000 IU/day
- **Yoga** – movement to release tension in the body to ease the mind
- **Folate** – L-5-MTHF - natural form of Vitamin B<sub>9</sub> found in foods – 800 mcg/day
  - One of the most potent nutrients for depression
  - Supports methylation, DNA replication and improved mood, sleep and appetite
  - 40% have a genetic variation that prevents use of folic acid, synthetic Vitamin B<sub>9</sub>
- **5HTP (5-Hydroxytryptophan)** – begin at 50 mg/day and build up to 300 mg/day
  - Precursor to serotonin needed for restorative sleep
  - As with all supplements, check with physician or pharmacist for drug interactions
- **GABA** - (Gamma-Aminobutyric Acid) - natural Valium – 200 mg/day
  - L-theanine – crosses the blood brain barrier to generate GABA
  - Tea - highest concentrations of L-theanine found in the buds and young leaves
  - Probiotics – one strain, bifidobacterium dentium, secretes large amounts of GABA
- **Niacinamide** – non-flushing form of niacin, vitamin B<sub>3</sub> - for anxiety – 200 mg/day
- **Magnesium\*\*** – helps with everything, from depression to leg cramps
- **Vitamin D<sub>3</sub>\*\*** – takes months to refill your tank
- **Vitamin B<sub>12</sub>\*\*** – natural methyl form needed for nervous system health. B12 needed for the pituitary to produce thyroid stimulating hormone
- **CoQ10** – for energy

\* If you or a loved one has thyroid dysfunction, please get the book [The Thyroid Connection](#) by Amy Myers for her detailed plan.

\*\* See Strategies for Caring for Our Brains handout for recommended dosages.

Please consult your physician before beginning exercise, fasting, changing any medications, or taking supplements.