

PAINNEWS

KNOWING WHEN TREATMENT IS "RISKY"

5 QUESTIONS TO ASK YOUR
HEALTHCARE PROVIDER

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You’ve probably been in a similar situation; Your doctor prescribes you medication and after talking to two friends—one who has significant pain relief from it and the other who has stopped taking it because it didn’t help—you are unsure what to do. Especially in pain management, treatment varies from patient to patient. The efficacy of treatment depends on the patient (medical history, physical/mental condition, etc.) and through careful assessments, a recommended treatment plan is designed by your healthcare provider.

Part of the Food and Drug Administration’s (FDA) responsibility is ensuring the safety and efficacy of new drugs. This includes reviewing research studies on specific conditions. Long-term side effects, however, take longer than the FDA is given to approve a medication. For instance, a drug may be taken off the market because of problems that patients run into years after taking the drug.

Unfortunately, we don’t always know what side effects will develop until we try a medication. Even when a doctor tells you that you are twice as likely to experience a certain side effect, it doesn’t mean that it will actually happen. It could mean that you are part of the 10 of every 10,000 patients with the side effect instead of the five out of every 10,000 patients.

Making a decision to take a medication or not should be decided between you and your doctor. Consider asking these questions:

1. Were the treatment studies for this medication done on people with my condition?
2. How many participants were involved in the studies?
3. Were there risk factors due to gender, age, race, or other medical conditions higher in any groups of people?
4. What are the most common side effects of this medication?
5. What are the known long-term risks of this medication?

At Southwest Spine and Pain Center, our pain specialists will never prescribe a treatment for our patients unless there is an expected benefit. Only after a thorough assessment of the patient’s medical history and physical health, will we recommend treatments. Our providers are here to answer every question, give our patients as much information as possible, and provide a list of treatment alternatives.



THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN DIAGNOSTIC AND THERAPEUTIC BLOCKS

If you ever hear your physician use the term ‘diagnostic’ or ‘therapeutic,’ you probably wouldn’t think anything of it. However, these two terms mean two very different things. At Southwest Spine and Pain Center, one of our primary goals is to deliver the best form of treatment to all of our patients. Because pain is such a subjective experience, we offer strategies that allow us to choose a treatment that best suits the patient’s individual needs.

A diagnostic therapy involves numbing the area of the

patient’s spine thought to be involved in the generation of pain. A medial branch block is a procedure where an anesthetic is injected near the medial nerves around the facet joint of the spine. If a patient feels immediate pain relief after the injection, it is determined that the facet joint is the source of the patient’s pain.

If the medial branch block is successful in defining the pain source, a more permanent pain relief solution is utilized. A radiofrequency ablation is typically used for long-term pain relief. For this treatment, a heating method is used to interrupt the pain signals sent to and from the brain, providing the patient with adequate pain relief.

If you suffer from undiagnosed back pain, talk to a Southwest Spine and Pain Center physician about diagnostic and therapeutic treatments that could help give you solutions to your pain!

SEPTEMBER IS PAIN AWARENESS MONTH

Across the nation, September is distinguished as Pain Awareness Month to increase awareness about the effects of pain. Southwest Spine and Pain Center continuously takes the time to educate patients, loved ones, friends, and family about available treatment options and resources to help alleviate pain.

One of the most notorious side effects of chronic pain is stress. Chronic pain strains relationships, eating habits, and mobility, leaving sufferers feeling hopeless and alone. As a patient at Southwest Spine and Pain Center, your condition needs are all met, as our committed pain specialists provide an array of treatment options. If you suffer from chronic pain and stress, start managing it before it manages you!

Increase physical activity. Exercise releases endorphins, which can improve your mood.

Limit habit-forming activities. Limit alcohol, quit smoking, and set a healthy diet!

Prepare. Have the resources necessary to overcome a stressful event.

View. Envision your life as a positive challenge, not a

negative one.

Work with others. Voice your stress with loved ones, as they can help you solve a difficult situation.

Set goals. Work with your friends and family to set attainable goals weekly, monthly, and yearly.

Socialize. Plan social events or start a fun hobby. Keep yourself busy with friends and family who make you feel good and relaxed, as these emotions are essential to getting refocused.

Sleep. Lack of sleep makes a stressful day harder.

Write. Jotting down your feelings can be refreshing—like a mini therapy session. Allow your stress and frustration to come out on paper, not your loved ones.

Set limits. Chronic pain limits what we can and cannot do. Don’t overdo anything and instead, be organized and plan ahead.



BUTTERNUT SQUASH POSOLE

TOTAL TIME: 40 mins

SERVES: 4

FROM: <http://www.foodnetwork.com/recipes/butternut-squash-posole.html>

INGREDIENTS

- 2 tbs. vegetable oil
- 1 tbs. chili powder
- 1 small butternut squash, peeled, seeded, and cut into ¾-in cubes (about 4 cups)
- 1 poblano chile pepper
- 1 tsp dried oregano
- 2 cloves garlic, chopped
- Salt to taste
- 1 15-oz. can (no-salt-added) tomato puree
- 1 15-oz. cans hominy, drained and rinsed
- 1 avocado, diced
- Fresh salsa, for topping (optional)

DIRECTIONS

1. Heat the vegetable oil in large Dutch oven (or large pot) over medium-high heat.
2. Stir in chili powder. Add squash, poblano, oregano, cumin, garlic, and ½ tsp. salt and cook, stirring frequently, until the poblano softens—about 5 minutes.
3. Add 5 cups water, tomato puree, and ½ tsp. salt; cover and bring to simmer.
4. Uncover and cook until the squash is tender—about 15 minutes.
5. Add the hominy during the last 2 minutes of cooking.
6. Season the posole with salt and divide among bowls. Top with avocado and salsa. Sprinkle oregano and enjoy!

NUTRITION

Calories 415; Fat 16g (Saturated 2g); Cholesterol 0mg; Sodium 1,451mg; Carbohydrate 76g; Fiber 17g; Protein 9g

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