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PAINNEWS

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DIABETES AND NERVE DAMAGE



PATIENTS WITH DIABETES HAVE AN INCREASED RISK OF DIABETIC NEUROPATHY AND OTHER COMPLICATIONS IF THEY FAIL TO REGULATE THEIR BLOOD SUGAR.

This risk can increase around the holidays when candy and other sugary treats are in abundance. While Halloween, Thanksgiving, and other seasonal festivities are just around the corner, patients should not have to worry about regulating their diabetes. Instead, they should be focusing their attention on having some fun with family and friends!

The spine and pain care specialists at Southwest Spine & Pain Center understand candy and other desserts are temptations that can be hard to ignore, but they're here to assure patients that practicing a few simple management techniques can help protect their overall health and wellbeing. Before diving into some of these techniques, it is important patients realize how serious diabetic neuropathy can be.

First and foremost, if your blood sugar levels begin to run too high, you may develop nerve damage in your lower extremities. This condition causes a partial or complete loss of sensation in the feet, as well as numbness, tingling, and a burning pain in the toes.

While this may seem more bothersome than life threatening, losing sensation in your feet can have serious repercussions. If you develop blisters, ulcers, cuts, bruises, or calluses, you may not notice them right away, delaying treatment. Over time, these untreated ailments may progress and develop infections, putting you at risk of an amputation, either above or below the knee.

The bottom line? It's important to get your diabetes under control regardless of the circumstances (i.e. holidays or other special occasions). Consider the following health tips to keep your blood sugar low:

- *Instead of handing out candy during Halloween, consider small packets of pretzels, peanuts, and other sugar-free treats to prevent you from overeating the Halloween candy you purchased.*
- *In place of food, buy inexpensive toys, like glow sticks and small toy cars, to hand out to kids during Halloween.*
- *For other holidays, like Thanksgiving, Christmas, and Hanukkah, try to bring your own dessert to a holiday function that contains less or no sugar.*
- *Before a holiday party, try to eat fruit and other food items that naturally produce sugar to help kick your cravings.*

If you already suffer from diabetic neuropathy, talk to your Southwest Spine & Pain Care physician today about interventional therapies that can help manage your pain symptoms. Treatment may require a combination of therapies, such as prescription medications, capsaicin creams, lidocaine patches, acupuncture, and behavioral health therapy. To learn more about pain care for diabetic neuropathy, talk to your spine and pain care physician today!

CHRONIC PAIN & THE BRAIN



Chronic pain is known for its debilitating physical symptoms, some of which include muscular pain and cramping, joint pain, sensitivity to touch, headache, fatigue, and more. Over the years, however, various research studies have found that physical pain and emotional pain may share a connection.

A number of psychologists who have specialties in chronic pain have commented on the role played by anxiety, stress, and depression in chronic pain syndromes. It is believed that all three conditions (i.e. anxiety, stress, and depression) have physical repercussions if not managed through counseling or behavioral therapy. One psychologist in particular, Dr. Susan Babel, a specialist in trauma-induced depression, believes emotional pain can cause physical discomfort in the body.

Her research concludes that stress causes physical pain in the body primarily from the constriction of essential muscles and nerves.

When someone is experiencing emotional distress, they set off signals in the brain asking the body to resolve what is occurring. As a result, your body produces physical pain symptoms, which act as distress signals, re-telling your brain something is wrong.

The behavioral health therapist at Southwest Spine & Pain Center, Dr. Jared DuPree, is all too familiar with these situations. As the Director of Behavioral Health & Wellness Services for Southwest Spine & Pain, Dr. DuPree has experience in clinical work and research related to integrative healthcare, medical family therapy, corporate wellness, and biopsychosocial models of care for more than 12 years.

Although he recognizes not all pain is caused by emotional stress or trauma, he knows behavioral health issues can significantly impact a chronic pain patient's overall health and wellbeing. Part of his job as a credentialed behavioral health therapist requires the coordination of his patient's care with the practice's spine and pain care specialists. Utilizing spine and pain care therapies in conjunction with behavioral health techniques helps patients live quality and highly functional lives.

The team at Southwest Spine & Pain Center also realizes there is a shortage of credentialed individuals willing to listen to and support patients struggling with pain. They want to combat this stigma by encouraging patients to address their emotional and physical health issues head-on instead of burying them deep within themselves. Patients wanting help for their emotional traumas may be skeptical about what to expect during their first appointment with a behavioral health therapist.

Chronic pain can have a major impact on the brain, and the relationship between the two should not be taken lightly. If you're experiencing depression, anxiety, insomnia, loss of appetite, and other emotional pain symptoms, talk to a specialist at Southwest Spine & Pain Center about our behavioral health services.





ANTI-INFLAMMATORY

Ingredients for Thanksgiving

Thanksgiving is approaching quickly, which likely means you'll soon be eating traditional fall foods. While this may sound like a food lover's dream, patients with arthritis, fibromyalgia, and other chronic pain syndromes generally have mixed feelings about these food items that can be full of hidden fats, starches, and carbohydrates. Unfortunately, the traditional Thanksgiving meal and other fall goodies can increase inflammation in the body, resulting in widespread muscle fatigue and pain.

To avoid these side effects, chronic pain patients may want to consider swapping out some of the traditional fall food items for anti-inflammatory foods like these Thanksgiving dinner alternatives:

ROASTED SWEET POTATOES

INSTEAD OF LOADED SWEET POTATO CASSEROLE

Instead of eating a loaded sweet potato casserole made with brown sugar, marshmallows, and heaps of butter, opt for a lightly seasoned and roasted sweet potato dish. Sweet potatoes contain fiber and antioxidants that can help combat pain and inflammation.

CRANBERRY PUREE

INSTEAD OF HEAVY TURKEY GRAVY

Heavy, traditional turkey gravy is high in saturated fat, which can increase joint inflammation and pain. If you want to give your turkey some moisture, reach for a cranberry puree sauce instead of turkey gravy. Cranberries contain vital nutrients and antioxidants to fight inflammation and pain.

WHOLE GRAIN STUFFING

INSTEAD OF WHITE BREAD STUFFING

What is Thanksgiving without stuffing? Most stuffing recipes call for white bread and lots of butter, which can cause inflammation and pain. To avoid pain flare-ups, try making a whole-grain bread stuffing with a low-sodium chicken broth and lots of vegetables. The end result will be a savory side dish that doesn't cause physical discomfort.

To download these recipes, please visit: <http://bit.ly/PainFreeThanksgiving>.

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