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Solutions to chronic reflux

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 PHOTO: ADOBE STOCK.

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BE WELL

Test won't sugarcoat results

By Andy Andrews

aandrews@readingeagle.com

In mid-January I attended an eye-opening health network meeting about diet and inflammation at the Keystone Villa at Fleetwood in Maiden Creek Township.



Andy Andrews
Be Well

It seems that stomach health is everything, because dietician Claudia Baumert believes that food is a medicine, allowing the “body to heal itself,” she said.

Some time ago, Baumert recalled seeing a photo of herself that enraged her. She didn't know how she

was so overweight.

“I wasn't comfortable in my skin, and it was not how I wanted to live,” she said. “I was super stressed.”

Baumert admitted to playing a game of “whack-a-mole,” she said, trying conventional ways to treat one problem while another popped up, just like the pests raising their head above the board game as you hit them, one by one, with a mallet. But the pests — in this case, health issues — kept appearing.

She realized, with her inflammation because of that immune-system response, that “food can be a trigger,” Baumert said, especially the wrong food.

Baumert said that she had an autoimmune disorder and celiac disease

for about 20 to 30 years. She had back pain, trouble sleeping, arthritis and fatigue.

“A cluster of things,” she said.

“I thought it was my new normal,” Baumert admitted.

She was emotionally eating, not managing stress in a healthy way. She realized with some research that protein acid-lowering medication, called proton pump inhibitors, or PPIs, such as the drug Prilosec, were the whack-a-mole culprits: Your body doesn't get the nutrients it needs and the PPIs allow yeast overgrowth, creating bad sugar cravings.

Baumert had Vitamin D nutrient deficiencies, she said, and finally realized a need that everybody has to

“take care of yourself,” she said.

Baumert said since she took a test for what foods she could eat and what she couldn't, she lost 35 pounds and went from a size 12 to a size 6. Sugar cravings stopped. She said the test is covered by many insurances under nutritional counseling benefits.

Cost of the test? About \$555, Baumert said.

Find out more about the test by contacting Baumert at www.nutritionvitalityatwork.com.

Contact Special Sections Editor Andy Andrews: 610-371-5080 or aandrews@readingeagle.com.

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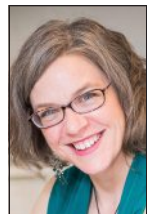


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LIVING WELL

Attitude we choose guides our reactions to stress

The state of the mind and body are unmistakably intertwined. The attitude we choose to possess as scenarios of life unfold correlates with how often we get sick, how fast we heal and how we maintain wellness.



Courtney J. Shober

Prolonged periods of heightened stress and anxiety make daily life more difficult and less enjoyable by muddling clarity of thought and diverting attention away from the things that really matter.

If we don't take steps to regulate stress, it can also greatly increase chances for developing or worsening chronic diseases.

It's become commonplace for a single thought to throw us into a tailspin of wild panic when, typically, we're in no real danger. Though we can't always control our circumstances or the emotions attached to them, we possess the power to choose how to respond in any given situation.

The key to command this frenzied sensation is to discover methods to reclaim mental composure. Curating a personalized set of tools for both immediate aid and preventative maintenance to quiet the chatter of worry or regret swirling around in your overstimulated mind is essential to well-being. Prioritizing time daily to strengthen this practice is necessary to make it an integrative part of a healthy lifestyle.

I called on the Downtown Wellness Berks com-

munity to see what their go-to stress management tools were. Here's how some of the group's affiliates calm their thoughts and become present in the moment:

▪ Melissa Hummel, I-Form Fitness Studio, West Reading: "I step away from all electronics and go for a run."

▪ Barb Dietrich, Oley Valley Organics, Pike Township: "I turn to daily Qigong practice. My body reacts very well to the gentle stretching motions and breathing techniques."

▪ Danielle Nuhfer, Teaching Well, Wyomissing: "Getting in motion and going for a walk or a run any time of year can put me at ease."

▪ Cori White, Our Whole Living Project LLC, Spring Township: "I journal about whatever has me stressed out. Once the thoughts are out of my head and onto the

paper, I can usually see things clearer."

▪ Sherri L. Mathews, Wellness Potential, Muhlenberg Township: "Getting out in nature. Taking a walk in the park with my dog gives me a sense of peace, and the exercise helps relieve tight muscles and brain fog."

▪ Monica Dech, Betula's Botanica, West Reading: "Taking a walk outdoors through the woods or park, as secluded as possible. This really helps to wash away my stress and gives me an energizing boost."

▪ Pam Ellenberger, Bent Limb Farm, Perry Township: "Going to the barn and being with the animals instantly relieves stress."

▪ Henriette Alban, Living in Balance, 103 S. Fifth St.: "Breathing techniques reconnect me with my inner self and sooth the nervous

system."

▪ Crystal Kulpcavage, A Sense of Purpose, Wyomissing: "With a regular meditation each morning, I can always bring myself back to that peaceful place of power."

▪ Sydney Mallatratt, Summit Massage LLC, West Reading: "Meditating and journaling. Recognizing all the good in the world helps me a lot."

▪ Martie Samuel, Farmhouse Kitchen, West Reading: "Closing my eyes, breathing very slowly and very deeply and saying a prayer of gratitude."

▪ Joel Mocerri, Good Life Organics, Cumru Township: "I wake up every morning thankful to be alive and embrace the day ahead. At night, I reflect on my day with gratitude and spend time in prayer."

▪ Jenny Dillow, Awakened

Aloha Health Coaching, Hamburg: "I rely on my morning practice to get me started each day (stretch, gratitude journal, get some fresh air). I've found that waking up a little earlier to fit in my morning practice really sets my day up for success."

Next Downtown Wellness Berks event is free and open to the public on Wednesday, March 25, from 5 to 8 p.m. at Good Life Companies, 2395 Lancaster Pike, Cumru Township. Learn more about this new healthy lifestyle organization and meet the passionate people involved with the group.


Courtney J. Shober is a certified integrative health coach at www.CourtneyShober.com.

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A Gut Feeling? What is your gut telling you?

In my office, people come in for various services. Three of the most common concerns are unwanted facial hair, acne and rosacea. There are many topical remedies and antibiotics administered for these disorders, but they are mere band-aids that don't address the origin.

The real culprit to these conditions is the unbalanced gut flora called Dysbiosis. There is a definite connection between the gut and skin conditions, and there are many ways to get your gut in better shape.

One way to help boost your good gut flora, is to take quality probiotics. To boost your good bacteria, consume fermented food products such as kimchi, yogurt, tempeh, miso, sauerkraut and kefir.

For those acne sufferers, supplementing with probiotics will often improve acne, as well as eczema and psoriasis. A healthy gut doesn't happen overnight, but with a proper diet and oral probiotics, this can be achieved in no time! Here at Beautiful You by Christine, we are specialists in regenerative skincare, medical cosmetic tattooing and electrolysis permanent hair removal to name a few of our many services.



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LIVING WELL

Protect your children from ultraviolet

With summer just a few months away and kids beginning to venture outside, it is time to start talking about protecting your children from the sun's harmful ultraviolet, or UV, rays.

Children have a higher body surface area than in adults and their skin burns more easily. Adding to that risk is the fact that children tend to spend more time outdoors than adults.

However, keeping your baby out of the sun and older children from getting sunburned can make outdoor activities stressful for parents. It can be frustrating to apply and reapply sunscreen to restless kids, and it is inevitable one of them will get sunscreen in their eyes.

But there are alternatives to messy sunscreen



Daniel Shurman

lotions, such as sun protective clothing, which in recent years has become a growing trend. The clothing provides a comfortable, physical block between skin and the sunlight.

Sun-protective clothing

Sun-protective clothing protects the skin from damaging UV rays and against sunburn. It is manufactured by using a tighter weave or with thread that scatters UV rays and prevents them from hitting the skin.

When it comes to sun protective clothing, the ultraviolet protection fac-

tor, or UPF, indicates how much UV radiation (both UVB and UVA) a fabric allows to reach your skin. For example, a UPF 50 fabric blocks 98 percent of the sun's rays and allows two percent (1/50th) to penetrate, thus reducing your exposure risk significantly.

According to the Skin Cancer Foundation, guidelines on sun protective clothing should be considered:

- **Fit:** Loose-fitting apparel is preferable. Tight clothing can stretch and reduce the level of protection offered, as the fibers pull away from each other and allow more UV light to pass through.

- **UPF:** Some clothing makers provide UPF labels, which indicate exactly how much of the sun's rays the garment can shield. Look for the Skin

Cancer Foundation's Seal of Recommendation whenever you shop.

- **Coverage:** The more skin your child's outfit covers, the better his skin protection. Whenever possible, choose long-sleeved shirts and long pants or skirts. For added protection, choose white clothing to reflect more light and keep your child cooler in the summer heat.

- **Fabric:** A fabric must have a UPF of 30 to qualify for The Skin Cancer Foundation's Seal of Recommendation. A UPF of 30 to 49 offers very good protection, while UPF 50+ rates as excellent.

- **Hats and sunglasses:** Caps with brims that shade the face, scalp, ears and neck are easy to use and give great protection. Sunglasses protect your child's eyes from UV rays,

which can lead to cataracts later in life. Look for sunglasses that wrap around and block as close to 100 percent of both UVA and UVB rays as possible.

Sunscreen lotion

While sunscreen lotion can be messy, it is better than no protection at all. If circumstances require you to use sunscreen on your child, look for a broad-spectrum sunscreen that protects against UVA and UVB light. Mineral sunscreens containing zinc and titanium oxide are preferable. Mineral sunscreens are generally well-tolerated by sensitive skin because their ingredients are not absorbed into the skin itself.

According to the American Academy of Pediatrics, or AAP, babies under 6 months can wear a bit of

sunscreen with a sun protection factor, or SPF, of at least 15 on their face and the back of their hands if there is no other way to keep them out of the sun. But shade is best for the youngest babies.

Children over six months should always wear SPF 15 or higher, according to the AAP. But the American Academy of Dermatology goes even further and recommends an SPF of 30 or higher.

Dr. Daniel Shurman of Pennsylvania Dermatology Partners in Amity Township completed his dermatology training at Thomas Jefferson University. He is fellowship-trained in both Mohs micrographic surgery and procedural dermatology.

LIVING WELL

Have digestive issues? Check out the power of kefir

People who use yogurt but find that it gives them digestive issues might benefit from something like kefir.

The benefits of kefir run deeper than the benefits you and I can yield. In fact, researchers are now finding that kefir can be a powerful food to add to a cancer survivor's diet, especially post-workout.

What is kefir?

Kefir is actually fermented milk and is very similar to yogurt, providing many health benefits. It was first created in the north Caucasus Mountains and is extremely popular across Northern and Eastern Europe. Other countries, such as Russia, have also been utilizing kefir for centuries.



Matt Weik

Many consider it to be a more powerful and healthier version of yogurt.

For starters, kefir is very easily digested and provides the body with protein, vitamins, minerals and healthy bacteria (probiotics). Using kefir as part of your diet can help build a healthy digestive system, improved immunity and promote regular bowel movements. Kefir can be found at just about any grocery store.

On average (depending on the brand), 6 ounces of kefir contains 100 calories,

7 grams of carbohydrates, 6 grams of protein and 4 grams of fat.

Post-workout nutrition

The benefits of exercise can improve the lives of everyone. However, for cancer patients and survivors, the treatments used often times leave them with digestion issues. This can make it extremely hard to consume products with dairy, including things like whey protein that includes lactose.

The good news is, those who suffer from lactose intolerances are generally able to tolerate kefir.

Some research is even touting kefir as being able to protect the body against certain forms of cancer.

This can be especially important not only for those who already went through treatment, but also for the general public who are looking to be proactive and preventative.

Researchers came up with a beverage that they tested on 52 cancer survivors post-workout to see how their body reacted and if they could manage drinking the beverage containing kefir. The beverage also included things such as fruit, natural sweeteners and other natural ingredients to aid in post-workout recovery without the use of something such as whey protein. The participants were not initially told what all was in the beverage until after they

first tasted the product.

When given the beverage, the cancer survivors were asked to rate the beverage on its appearance, aroma, taste, mouth feel, overall liking, their physical and psychological feelings and if they would purchase this beverage if it were made available for purchase. Following the initial tasting, the researchers then explained to the participants the benefits of kefir and asked them to sample the beverage again and answer the same set of questions as before.

The results of the study showed that the kefir-based drink was highly accepted and liked by all participants. They admitted that the beverage is

something they would purchase if available. While the overall scores were a little higher in the second round of testing, the scores from the initial were still high and showed an overall liking of the beverage even without knowing what was in it and the health benefits associated with consuming a beverage with kefir. Sources:

Matt Weik, owner of Weik Fitness LLC, Lower Heidelberg Township, is a fitness expert and author. His work, featured in fitness magazines and many websites, can be found on www.weikfitness.com.

LIVING WELL

Cardiologists need to help patients improve quality of life, not just heart function

Most individuals would not relate their cardiac health with their mental health; however, this could lead to significant physical and mental health problems.

The field of cardiac psychology specializes in the prevention of heart disease by incorporating strategies that address the emotional and behavioral barriers to lifestyle changes associated with heart disease. The field aims to enhance the recovery process by providing healthy coping skills to manage these changes.

Addressing these changes is beneficial throughout the cardiac patient's lifes-



Ashley Borgatta

pan, through prevention, pre-surgery, post-surgery and rehabilitation with emphasis on quality-of-life outcomes.

Research shows that approximately 13 to 38% of implantable cardioverter-defibrillators, or ICD, patients experience anxiety, while 24 to 48% experience significant depression symptoms. These rates increase based on the patient's experience and proximity with ICD shocks. The closer a patient is to a pre-

vious shock, the more likely they are to experience anxiety of being shocked again. However, even six months post-shock, the anxiety still remains elevated, causing immediate and long-term negative effects on patient's disease-specific quality of life.

For patients with intermittent atrial fibrillation, or A-fib, approximately 54% report psychological stress as the most common trigger, with worsened severity of depression and anxiety being associated with an increase of A-fib symptoms. As these anxiety symptoms increase, there is a direct relationship to increases in

both outpatient clinics and hospital visits for symptom management. That means the psychological well-being of cardiac patients strongly influences symptom severity and health care utilization.

Cardiologists need to work with their patients on improving quality of life, not just heart functionality. While many of these concerns can be addressed by the cardiologist, other concerns will require a referral for more extensive psychosocial treatment. Patients with an ICD should receive ICD-specific education, aiming to help patients understand why they have an ICD and how it protects

them. The goal is to debunk any myths about the causes of ICD shocks, such as exercising. Patients should also receive training and education on relaxation/stress management techniques or coping skills. These aim to assist patients in reducing their ongoing hypervigilance post-shock or irregular heartbeat and reduce general stress and anxiety.

Cardiac psychologists would also employ the use of cognitive techniques, which help patients identify their attitudes and beliefs about themselves, their health, any cardiac device they may have and the future. This would help pa-

tients to identify their feelings about surviving cardiac disease.

Lastly, patients should participate in group discussions and peer social support in order to share their experiences and to be exposed to similar views and feelings about cardiac well-being.

Ashley Borgatta is a licensed clinical social worker at Ampersand Integrative Wellness in Spring Township. Visit www.ampersandintegrative.com.

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WEIGHT MANAGEMENT

No shame, no blame

Tower Health opens weight loss center focused on practical Healthy Teens program

By **Marylouise Sholly**
Reading Eagle correspondent

If you think it's difficult to be overweight as an adult, you haven't been overweight as a child.

Children are embarrassed by extra pounds to the point where they prefer to stay away from other kids, to be home-schooled and to stay inside much of the time, said one area pediatrician.

They may even be ashamed to be seen, while ridicule or bullying because of their weight could be part of their lives.

It doesn't have to be that way, because help can be found at the new Tower Health Weight Loss Surgery and Wellness Center, 1220 Broadcasting Road, Spring Township. There, the Healthy Teens program addresses those issues and makes prevention a priority.

"A lot of times people with obesity are just blamed, but obesity is a chronic disease and we take away that blame," said Dr. Renee Riddle, a pediatrician and director of Tower Health's Healthy Teens program.

The Healthy Teens program is one of only a few programs in the state for

young people and focuses on developing realistic plans to reach a healthier weight through education and support.

Dr. Stephan Myers is the medical director for the Weight Loss Surgery and Wellness Center.

The specialized facility can give clients all the weight loss care they need in one location, Myers said.

The new wellness center has a teaching kitchen, a free clothing closet to supplement patient's clothing while they're losing weight, and a new fitness center.

5-2-1-zero to success

The medical staff is specially trained and certified in obesity medicine.

"If we can get kids early, before they go into adulthood obese, hopefully we can change the pattern of their lives," Riddle said. "If we can intervene, we can change that future and reduce all those secondary health issues that come about because of obesity."

Building confidence in the youth and keeping their motivation high will help them be successful, Riddle said.

"They need to be in an environment that supports them, not judges them," Riddle said.

"They need to be in an environment that supports them, not judges them," she said. "We want to give them the tools to modify their lifestyle."

When looking at diet and healthy behaviors, nu-



COURTESY OF TOWER HEALTH

The new Tower Health Weight Loss and Wellness Center, which opened in October, has a teaching kitchen, a free clothing closet to supplement patient's clothing while they're losing weight and a fitness center.

tritionists have a few numbers for teens to follow: 5-2-1-zero.

That translates to five servings of fruits and veg-

etables per day, less than two hours of screen time per day, one hour of physical activity and zero sugary beverages.

Sugary drinks like carbonated sodas are relatively easy to cut from your diet, Riddle said, and at the same

time, have a high impact. The amount of sugar in a beverage can be higher than the sugar content of some baked goods.

Tailored treatment

When Riddle speaks with teens and adolescents who come to the clinic, many agree that giving up sugary beverages and not eating out as often would be two of the easiest habits to give up.

The program doesn't have a set curriculum, but seeks to help each client individually.

"At the initial interview,

we see where they're at, and what they're struggling with, then set up a plan to see what works for them," Riddle said.

That might include blood work, speaking with a psychologist, or working with a dietician to re-structure some eating attitudes.

Reasons for being overweight may vary from individual to individual, but obesity is still a chronic disease, Riddle said.

Interest in the healthy teen program is high, Riddle said.

Initially, the program was offered to 13- to 17-year-

olds, but now is open to any age.

No set time limit exists with the flexible program, Riddle said, and follow-up visits may be a part of the plan, too, just as they would be with any chronic disease.

Researchers have projected that by the year 2030, nearly one in two adults will be obese and nearly one in four will be severely obese.

Since 1990, the prevalence of obesity in the United States has doubled.

"There is a much greater chance of being obese now than 30 years ago," Riddle said. "When I first started



COURTESY OF TOWER HEALTH

The Healthy Teens Program at the new Tower Health Weight Loss and Wellness Center is one of only a few programs in the state for young people and focuses on developing realistic plans to reach a healthier weight through education and support. To reach the center, call 866-988-4377.

training, you rarely heard of Type 2 diabetes in young kids, but that's changed. We're seeing younger and younger kids with diabetes."

Reasons may include a diet high in sugar, fat and salt; more highly processed foods; a sedentary lifestyle; bigger portions; and snacking throughout the day.

Early intervention

Teens have a better chance of modifying their lifestyle and therefore,

their weight, if they are reached early; in not, they may go into adulthood being obese.

"We stress that it isn't appearance, but their health that we're concerned about," Riddle said. "We do begin with checking their level of interest because it is a tough change to make. We sort of help them get ready to change their lifestyle patterns."

As a pediatrician, Riddle will conduct a moti-

vational interview to see where the kids are at, how motivated they may be to change habits, and what exactly they are willing to change.

"It has to be very specific," Riddle said. "We can't just say 'eat better.' It has to be something like 'eat one vegetable today.'"

"If they see some success, they become more motivated," Riddle said. "I can't make suggestions that are un-doable because that would be just setting

them up to fail."

The surgery option

Bariatric surgery might be a consideration.

While there's no current age minimum for bariatric surgery, at Reading, this weight-loss surgery is not performed on anyone younger than 15.

"Even with bariatric surgery, they won't be successful without lifestyle changes," Riddle said.

Anyone considering the surgery would have to

meet minimum requirements, such as a body mass index greater than 35.

Another angle of obesity is that no one wants to talk about it, and that's not helping, Riddle said.

"For too long, people have been afraid to bring it up, because they didn't want to embarrass anyone, but we're not afraid to tell people if they have high blood pressure, and there are health consequences to obesity, too," Riddle said. "You can do it

in a nice way, like saying: 'I see you're struggling with your weight.'"

In the future, the Tower Health center hopes to add more group gatherings for their teen program, such as sessions on healthy cooking or an exercise area, where teens can feel comfortable exercising with other teens who share their concerns.

Contact *Marylouise Sholly*: specialsections@readingeagle.com.

HOLISTIC HEALTH

Finding a natural path

Downtown Wellness Berks helps those who seek alternative health care



LAUREN A. LITTLE – READING EAGLE

Downtown Wellness Berks program chairwoman Courtney Shober works with other group members at Farmhouse Kitchen in West Reading.



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By Susan L. Pena

Reading Eagle correspondent

If you're looking for a mainstream, or allopathic, physician, there are many ways to find one — through a referral from your family doctor, from your health insurance plan's network, or from various directories — and it's easy to check their credentials.

But when seeking practitioners in naturopathic, holistic, integrative and non-Western health care, the search is not so straightforward.

A group of Berks County practitioners in these fields are beginning to solve that problem with Downtown Wellness Berks, or DWB, an organization officially started in November 2018 to create a network of local affiliates, including both practitioners and suppliers of related products such as organic and locally sourced foods. It will share resources, hold informational events and provide a directory for people seeking to live a healthier life.

DWB is the brainchild of

Courtney Shober, a certified integrative health coach and other local practitioners who gathered around the Farmhouse Kitchen, a restaurant in West Reading owned by Martie Samuel.

'Gold standard'

Shober calls the restaurant "the gold standard when it comes to clean eating," and it has become a gathering place not only for dining, but for learning about healthful food.

Shober, as the Farmhouse Kitchen's educational coordinator, has been facilitating speakers and moderating panel discussions at the "Farmhouse Classroom" in the restaurant since returning to Berks County three years ago after a 10-year absence.

The 2001 Schuylkill Valley High School graduate had earned a bachelor's degree in music industry studies and worked in that field in the New York City area. Finding herself dissatisfied with her career, she decided to make a change, focusing on helping others achieve a health-

ier life. She enrolled in the Institute for Integrative Nutrition in New York and earned her certification.

When her husband was hired as a teacher in the Reading School District, they moved into the GoggleWorks Apartments in Reading, and Shober embarked on her new career. She quickly found many friends and colleagues in various integrative health fields in the area, and began inviting them to speak at the Farmhouse events.

It was at these events that she and her colleagues saw how hungry their audiences were for information on how to find various healers and places to shop for healthful, organic foods.

Social Innovations

Around 2017, they started discussing how they could help with this problem, and, thanks to a suggestion by another of their colleagues, naturopathic practitioner Dr. Henriette Alban, Living in Balance, 103 S. Fifth St., they came up with a plan to establish Humanitarian So-



LAUREN A. LITTLE – READING EAGLE

On Penn Avenue in West Reading, Downtown Wellness Berks members, from left, Crystal Kulpcavage from A Sense of Purpose, Jen Dillow from Awakened Aloha Health Coaching, Farmhouse Kitchen owner Marti Samuel, Henriette Alban of Living in Balance, Sherri Mathews of Wellness Potential, program chair Courtney Shober, Freya Oostingh of BioLogic Nutrition, Pam Ellenberger of Bent Limb Farm, Sydney Mallatratt of Summit Massage and Monica Dech of Betulah's Botanical.

cial Innovations, a Bethlehem, Northampton County nonprofit, as their fiscal sponsor. They applied for support and were accepted.

They have 21 affiliates who pay \$120 a year to be part of DWB, which has a website, www.downtownwellnessberks.com, where the affiliates are listed with their contact information and a bit about who they are and what they offer.

"These are basically pre-vetted businesses with a shared philosophy and set of values," Shober said. "We have spent the past year building a strong foundation, clarifying our mission and establishing committees. Next we will hold community events, probably starting with a 'Meet the Affiliates' night."

Jennifer Dillow, who started Awakened Aloha Health Coaching in Hamburg five years ago, is part of the core group who cre-

ated DWB.

A Pottsville native who started out as an X-ray technician and taught high school biology, Dillow switched careers when she had her own health problems and was unable to find relief from allopathic physicians.

'Aha' moment

While studying at the University of Edinburgh in Scotland, she saw that "they have a more proactive approach to health care" and were open to Eastern and Western medicine. She called this her "Aha!" moment, and decided to learn about integrative medicine.

She began integrated health coaching about 20 years ago, and is working on a doctorate in natural medicine from Quantum University in Honolulu, Hawaii.

In addition to her own practice, Dillow works for Dr. Jeffrey L. Marrongelle,

a nationally known doctor of integrative medicine and owner of Bio Energymed Metabolic Institute, with offices in Schuylkill Haven, Schuylkill County and Fogelsville, Lehigh County.

"I've seen a lot of people who don't have something major going on," she said, "but they have chronic fatigue, weight gain where they can't seem to lose any pounds and hormone imbalance. There's lots of stress, and that wreaks havoc on your body. It affects the pancreas and the thyroid. Once that starts, it sets you up for the perfect storm: the metabolism is off, and all the hormones are affected.

"Many people have forgotten what it feels like to feel good. Their body has adapted to accommodate the stress."

Dillow, who is affiliated with Culture Shock Performing Arts Center, a dance studio in Hamburg,

DOWNTOWN WELLNESS BERKS AFFILIATES

Wellness Potential, Muhlenberg Township, owner Sherri Mathews; wellness coaching.

SoulRevCo, West Reading, owner Alli Snyder; personal development.

E3 Health and Wellness Center, Wyomissing, owner Whitney George; nutritional counseling.

The Restorative Center/Tula Yoga Center, Exeter Township, owners Sue and Mark Siegrist; acupuncture, yoga, many wellness modalities.

Living in Balance, Reading, owner Dr. Henriette Alban; naturopathy and emotional health.

Betulah's Botanica, West Reading, owner Monica Dech; handmade soaps and personal care products.

Wholesome Food Farm, Alburtis, owners Pam and Bill Moseley; high-quality pastured meats and farm store.

Every Body Pilates, West Reading, owner Lisa Priebe; fitness classes.

BioLogic Nutrition, Wyomissing, owner Freya Oostingh; nutritional therapy, RESTART program.

Summit Massage LLC, Reading, owner Sydney Mallatratt; body work, massage, reiki.

Our Whole Living, Shillington, owners Cori White and Kari Eyer; counseling and family therapy.

I Form Fitness Studio, West Reading, owners David Twiford and Melissa Hummel; personal training and fitness classes.

Awakened Aloha Health Coaching, Hamburg, owner Jennifer Dillow; health coaching.

Teaching Well, Wyomissing, owner Danielle Nuhfer; mindfulness training and stress management for teachers and students.

BT Health Services, Orwigsburg, owner Buddy Touchinsky; functional and lifestyle

medicine, genetic testing and chiropractic.

Healthy Habits Natural Market, Orwigsburg, Schuylkill County; health food and local and organic products.

Farmhouse Kitchen, West Reading, owner Martie Samuel; healthy organic restaurant and wellness classes.

Good Life Organics, Cumru Township, owner Joel Mocer; healthy food and juice bar, health food store.

Oley Valley Organics, Pike Township, owners Barb and Mike Dietrich; health food store, local and organic products.

A Sense of Purpose, Wyomissing, owner Crystal Kulpcavage; personal and professional development coaching.

Courtney Shober Holistic Health, Reading, owner Courtney Shober; integrative health coach.

— Susan L. Pena

encourages clients to do yoga and take classes in the studio, as well as to walk in nature or simply bounce on a trampoline for a while to reduce stress.

She also counsels them, over a six-month period, on healthy eating, the use of essential oils and other tools to maintain their well-being. Each client receives a personalized plan to help them reach their goals. If they wish, she also refers them to specialists in other modalities.

When Dillow was in the process of trying to connect local organic farmers with local eateries, she reached out to Samuel at Farmhouse Kitchen, and stumbled on the community of like-minded people there. She brought in her friend, Crystal Kulpcavage, whose solo practice, A Sense of Purpose, Wyomissing, coaches people in transition.

"I help people design and achieve meaningful lives and meaningful careers," Kulpcavage said. "No matter how well you eat, how much you exercise or care for your body, you'll have difficulty sustaining physical health if something is wrong in your heart and

soul.

"We all have an inner craving to be proud of who we are and what we're doing with our time in this world. My specialty is to help people with their professional wellness."

Inner fears

She said many people want to make a major change in their careers, but inner fears and other barriers keep them stuck. She first helps them with healing practices and character-building practices, developing self-esteem and confidence, and looking at their strengths and weakness and how to improve the latter.

Then she and the client work on setting goals that are both achievable and meaningful. She gives the client support, accountability and motivation as they work together for a minimum of six months.

Kulpcavage said on of her clients, within four months, resigned from a career with which she was unhappy, decided what business to start, got her first paying client, moved across the country, quit smoking and grieved the loss of her father.

Another client, after 35 years in a corporation and many failed attempts at starting a business, within six months retired, chose a business he was proud of and got it off the ground and running. Two years later, he is set to make \$500,000 in revenue.

Kulpcavage said she was a software engineer for 12 years, and found herself unsatisfied after some major life-changing events. She went through a program similar to what she does now and added a certification in professional coaching to her bachelor's degree in computer science and her MBA.

When she started coming with Dillow to the Farmhouse Kitchen, she was elated to hear about DWB and got on board.

"I've wanted this for a long time," Kulpcavage said. "There just wasn't a great place to find out what kind of practitioner people needed to help them. We can refer people. We all understand each other and can match clients with the right practitioner."

Contact Susan L. Pena: specialsections@readingeagle.com.

ORGAN TRANSPLANTS

Shorter waits, more hope

Medical professionals, organizations work to make life-saving surgery available and quicker

Karen L. Chandler

Reading Eagle correspondent

With some studies showing the waiting list for organ transplants on the rise, area doctors confirm the reasons for the wait are many and complex.

Reports note that, in 2018 alone, there were 113,000 people waiting for organs nationally and 5,800 individuals died while they were on the list.

Progress made in the field of medicine is simultaneously giving potential candidates hope, but also may lengthen wait times for transplants.

“As the field of transplant has evolved, more patients are candidates for these lifesaving procedures,” said Dr. David Reich, medical director of the Tower Health Transplant Institute. “Many who would have been considered too high risk for transplant because of complicating medical factors are now able to be safely transplanted.

“Even though 2019 was the ninth consecutive year of increased deceased donors in the U.S., and transplants from living donors also established a new record in 2019, the supply is still inadequate to meet the rising need,” Reich said.

A national problem

Dr. Zakiyah Kadry, chief of the division of transplant at the Penn State Health Milton S. Hershey Medical Center, confirms that the organ shortage is a national problem and is being addressed by various entities, including the Trump administration.

Kadry said: “I’m glad to see such efforts, as each donor has the power to potentially save several lives.”

Statistics show the number of wait list candidates has skyrocketed from 30,000 in



COURTESY OF TOWER HEALTH

From left, Tower Health physicians Dr. Gary Xiao, director of hepato-pancreato-biliary surgery and surgical director of liver transplant; Dr. Stephen Guy, surgical director of kidney transplant and the living donor program; David Reich, medical director of the Tower Health Transplant Institute; and Dr. Karthik Ranganna, serving as medical director of kidney transplant, cover a spectrum of specialties.



COURTESY OF TOWER HEALTH

Reich is the medical director of the Tower Health Transplant Institute.

that awareness and education about transplants have greatly increased in the period, and the number of transplant centers has grown.

“Back in 1992, a lot fewer treatment centers existed and a lot fewer people were educated about organ transplant as a treatment option,” she said. “For these reasons, a lot of people who would be

1992 to about 120,000 in 2014, a change Reich attributes in part to the science of transplants evolving over the decades.

Patients considered too high a risk in the 1990s can now be safely transplanted, he said.

Kadry said that awareness and education about transplants have greatly increased in the period, and the number of transplant centers has grown.

“Back in 1992, a lot fewer treatment centers existed and a lot fewer people were educated about organ transplant as a treatment option,” she said. “For these reasons, a lot of people who would be

listed for transplant today would not have been back then, and many died from their disease as a result. Demand for organ transplant has grown drastically because it is widely recognized as a successful treatment.”

Greater need

Changes in the health of the population have also created a greater need for transplants, adding to the drastic increase in the wait list over the last decades, Reich noted.

The U.S. obesity epidemic is fueling the need for liver donations as fatty liver disease and potentially cirrhosis in obese patients cause liver failure.

Reich also confirms that liver cancer is one of the few cancers on the rise in the country, adding to the need for liver transplants.

While some potential recipients hesitant to receive organs with a disease curable after the transplant or donated by a donor addicted

to drugs, Reich explains misconceptions about tainted organs result in valuable donations going unused.

“If I or a loved one needed a transplant, I would sign up for all these types of donor options without hesitation,” he said.

Kadry explains that transplant centers need to do a better job of educating patients on the risks and benefits of donations from someone with a curable disease, noting that in many cases treatments are available to make the organ a viable option, especially those with imminent life-threatening conditions.

New antiviral medications that cure almost all cases of hepatitis C are being used to cure recipients of organs that carry the disease.

“This relatively new approach is an excellent strategy to safely increase transplants, and many programs have started doing this as a standard practice,” Reich said.

Other efforts are on the rise to reduce the gap between the need and the supply of donations.

Valuable time

Advances in technology used to keep circulation moving in donated organs to keep them in better condition after the donation should help, providing valuable time between the donation surgery and the potential transplant, Reich said.

“The new devices permit transplant teams to test donor organs after the donation surgery to determine whether they are safe to transplant, to employ reconditioning interventions for those that aren’t otherwise transplantable, and to store the organs for a longer time and thus increase the opportunities to transplant them,” he said.

With U.S. clinical trials already begun, Reich confirms



COURTESY OF TOWER HEALTH

Reich consults with a patient.

the devices are in use in Europe and have already made a positive impact on transplant surgeries.

Studies list Pennsylvania as No. 20 on the list of longest wait times in the U.S., a position that both Reich and Kadry attribute to the state’s history and awareness of transplantation and the high number of transplant facilities available.

“Some patients come to list in Pennsylvania because of the state’s high level of expertise in transplantation and because wait times are shorter than some other places,” Reich said. “Pennsylvania also has the highest donation rates and numbers of donors in the U.S., fueling many transplants. We also share many organs out of state.”

Gift of Life

The Gift of Life Donor Program’s region, which serves 11.2 million people across the eastern half of Pennsylvania, southern New Jersey and Delaware, has seen a 10 percent reduction on its waiting list in the last five years, according to spokeswoman Karen Muldoon Geus.

She reports that in 2019, Gift of Life broke national records for the coordination of the most organ donors at 664 and most life-saving organ transplants at 1,865.

And increasing the number of people willing to become donors is a critical part of reducing wait times.

Kadry notes that health issues affecting the general population reduce the number of

potential donors, including living donors, who during pre-donation screening are alerted to health issues, making them unable to donate.

“It’s worth noting that about half of the kidney transplants we perform at Penn State Health Milton S. Hershey Medical Center involve living donors,” she said. “Also, Hershey Medical Center is the only United Network for Organ Sharing-certified live donor liver transplant center in central Pennsylvania.”

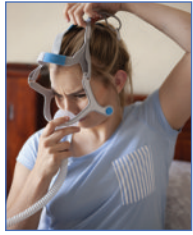
The decision to become an organ donor can be difficult, Reich said.

He said: “One of the larger barriers to donation is a lack of planning. People should consider whether they want to donate and make their wishes known to family and friends, so there isn’t confusion at the time of illness and death.”

Gift of Life Donor spokeswoman Geus noted that one organ donor can save the lives of up to eight people and a tissue donor can improve the lives of more than 75 others.

“This life-saving work would not be possible without our community, the dedicated health care professionals and generous and compassionate people of this region,” she said. “The Reading area boasts a number of excellent transplant centers.”

Contact Karen L. Chandler: specialsections@readingeagle.com.



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ACID REFLUX

Surgery might be solution for sufferers of chronic reflux

By Susan L. Pena

Reading Eagle correspondent

Gastroesophageal reflux disease, or GERD, has been on the rise in the United States for quite some time, especially as the population ages.

According to the National Center for Biotechnology Information, GERD has increasingly affected younger people, especially those in the 30-to-39 age bracket.

The condition, caused by stomach acid escaping back into the esophagus, can become chronic and, if untreated, can lead to Barrett's esophagus, a pre-cancer resulting from ulcers and scarring. According to mayoclinic.org, it is estimated that 18 to 28 percent of people in North America suffer from GERD. It's difficult to get an accurate figure because many people who have GERD don't seek treatment until there is a serious problem.



Dr. David Tichansky

Risk factors for GERD include obesity, hiatal hernia, pregnancy, connective-tissue disorders such as scleroderma and delayed stomach emptying. It can be aggravated by smoking, alcohol, coffee, large meals or late-night meals, medicines such as aspirin and an array of foods.

People with GERD can be treated with proton pump inhibitors, or PPIs, such as Prilosec, and they can alleviate the symptoms by avoiding the aggravating substances and behaviors and by elevating the upper body to sleep.

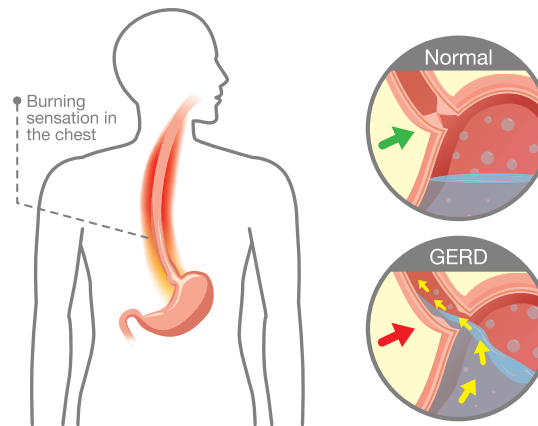
Some consider surgery

But "there are some patients in whom PPIs do not provide enough relief, who then consider surgery as an

extra measure," said Dr. David Tichansky, chairman of the Department of Surgery at the Reading Hospital-Tower Health. "Also, patients who have had progression of Barrett's disease . . . while on PPIs may consider surgery."

Tichansky said that Nissen Fundoplication is the most common operation performed for GERD. In this procedure, the upper stomach is wrapped around itself and the lower esophagus, creating a high-pressure area that keeps acid and food from getting into the esophagus.

In the past, such surgery involved a large incision, which caused pain and a long recovery, but now it is performed laparoscopically, through a camera. This allows patients to get out of bed the day of the operation and to spend only one night in the hospital. They can resume their usual activities in a couple of weeks.



ADOBE STOCK

"The only non-dietary restriction is no lifting objects greater than 20 pounds for four weeks," he said. "After surgery, most surgeons will recommend patients stay on a liquid diet for two weeks, and then a puree diet for another three or four weeks.

Most patients come off their PPI during that time, according to Tichansky, and only a small percentage of patients need to resume the medication.

According to the Medical University of South Carolina website, patients can also lie flat in bed, eat late at night and other things they couldn't do before after recovering from the surgery.

Some risks

Tichansky said that there are some risks in Nissen Fundoplication, as in any surgery, such as bleeding, infection, blood clots, getting a hernia in the wound

or having an anesthetic complication.

"For Nissen Fundoplication, these are all low (1 or 2 out of 100)," he said. "The biggest risk is injury to the already irritated esophagus and stomach during the surgical manipulation. Again, the risk is minimal. Long-term, patients may feel bloating, recurrent reflux or inability to belch or vomit.

"For patients who have failed to get relief on PPI therapy, the risks of Nissen Fundoplication are typically worth the benefits that can come from having the surgery. People with morbid obesity may get more reflux benefit from a gastric bypass procedure. People who cannot follow the dietary restrictions post-operatively should not get either procedure."

Contact Susan L. Pena: specialsections@readingeagle.com.

HEALTHY BITES

Monitor what you eat, drink to fight reflux

For some people, acid reflux is an annoyance that comes on every once in a while, so it does not seem like a big deal.

However, this acid, wearing on the digestive tract, can cause serious damage over time.

To curb reflux, look out for these in your diet:

Major foods: Citrus,



Emily Wunder

Keep this list in mind

chocolate, fried foods, tomatoes and tomato-containing foods such as marinara sauce all make this list.

Drinks: Coffee is a well-known culprit, but caffeinated tea can also trigger acid reflux. Try a caffeine-free tea. However, if this does not help,

next time you have acid reflux to see if you can pinpoint which foods are causing you distress and then work to replace them in your diet.

Drinks: Coffee is a well-known culprit, but caffeinated tea can also trigger acid reflux. Try a caffeine-free tea. However, if this does not help,

it may be time to reduce your coffee and tea intake. While carbonated drinks are sometimes a go-to for easing the stomach, the bubbles as well as the caffeine that some have can actually contribute to reflux. And alcohol can cause the body to produce the gastric acid that contributes to reflux.

While these foods and drinks can all be very tasty, figuring out what is causing your acid reflux and removing them will be well worth it for the long-term health of your digestive tract.

Emily Wunder is a registered dietitian and licensed dietitian/

nutritionist. She is a Berks County native and is a regional wellness director with Eurest/Compass Group out of New Jersey. The website is www.healthier-taste.com. Contact her at emilywunderRD@gmail.com.



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