

# In Good Hands

A Free Monthly Newsletter For The Friends and Patients of: **Maryland Spine Institute**

## Why Do Americans Spend More On Health Care But Are SICKER Than Most Of The World?



**M**aryland – An interesting, new study in the May 3, 2006 Journal of the American Medical Association has some experts in the medical community stunned. It found:

Americans spend twice as much on health care yet are generally in poorer health than their peers in England.

This raises the obvious question: Is spending even more money, taking more medications and doing more medical procedures really the answer to good health? The answer may surprise you too...

Dr. Joseph Mercola (MD) recently discussed this study on his very informative website... [www.mercola.com](http://www.mercola.com). And here's what he said:

*"In fact, across all levels of income and education, Americans suffered from higher rates of cancer, diabetes, heart disease, lung disease and stroke than did British patients. What's really compelling and alarming about the study: When scientists created a hypothetical world where Brits suffered from the same lifestyle risks as Americans -- obesity among them -- America still had more health problems. The so-called "experts" claim it's all a big mystery, but it's no surprise at all to me considering so many Americans still put their faith in the hands of multi-national food and drug companies that care far more about profits at the expense of your health."*

### Life Expectancy Falling?

Dr. Mercola also reports, "Americans' life expectancy already falls more than 20 years behind other developed countries; and with U.S. obesity rates on a steady incline, the years may be further trailing."

### Lifestyle Most Important Factor...

And here's what a recent study in the New England Journal Of Medicine had to say about this issue:

"Forecasts of life expectancy are an important component of public policy that influence age-based entitlement programs such as Social Security and Medicare. Although the Social Security Administration recently raised its estimates of how long Americans are going to live in the 21st Century, current trends in obesity in the United States suggest that these estimates may not be accurate. From our analysis of the effect of obesity on longevity, we conclude that the steady rise in life expectancy during the past two centuries may soon come to an end."

### Just how serious is this overweight and obesity issue? Here are some shocking statistics:

- Two-thirds of America's adults are overweight or obese.
- As many as 30 percent of U.S. children are overweight.
- Childhood obesity has more than doubled within the past 25 years.
- Within the past 20 years, childhood diabetes has increased 10-fold.

### Will The Miracles Of Modern Science Save You?

As we look at these stats... one thing becomes blatantly obvious. At least to those with an open mind...

It's obvious that the answer to real health and living a longer (and healthy) life is **NOT** all about science and new medicines.

If it were, we would not see the results of the studies above.

On the contrary... over-reliance on breakthroughs in medicine have helped fuel this fire.

For many, many years, society has had the belief that science trumps everything. In other words... you can eat, drink and do basically whatever you want to your body and the doctor can give you something to fix it.

Far too often, I have heard people make statements like, "I can smoke, drink and eat whatever I want now – I'll just get a bi-pass if I need it later."

Yes – that is an actual quote!

**And many more believe the silver bullet comes in pill form...**

But new wonder drugs rarely turn out to be all they are cracked up to be. Take the relatively new "super-aspirin" Plavix which was supposed to lower the risk of heart attack and stroke.

On the contrary... combining Plavix, the costly "super-aspirin", with regular aspirin proved to be no more effective than aspirin alone for preventing heart disease.

**In fact, the combination nearly doubled the death rate from heart disease among patients who had not had heart attacks but were at risk for them.**

A study on the effects of Plavix divided over 15,000 patients with heart disease into two groups -- one that took Plavix and aspirin, and one that took aspirin with a placebo (*a "fake" drug or "sugar pill"*).

The only major difference was that almost 4% of those who took Plavix and had not had a heart attack died over the course of the study, as opposed to just over 2 % of those who took only aspirin. Stunning.

Plavix, which costs \$3 to \$4 a pill, has made more than \$3 billion in sales since its approval in 2000. When you start to look at all these studies and statistics... you really have to start to wonder about the first rule of medicine... **First, Do No Harm!**

So now we are faced with a very interesting... and deadly... dilemma. Much of society has lost responsibility for their health. The overweight and obesity statistics prove that. And much of the reason for that is the belief that they don't need to be responsible. A new pill or procedure will always be available to save the day.



But when the risk of the "cure" is as bad or worse than the condition... what then?

The answer is simple, but not what many want to hear...

You see, there are always two paths you can choose in life. And we ALWAYS know which one is right. Make no mistake about it – it's ALWAYS as clear as day.

But, even though we ALWAYS know the right path – many times we do not choose it simply because it is just TOO DARN HARD!!!

And the right path is obvious here, too.

The right path is to do all the things you need to do throughout your life to stay healthy and **prevent** diseases and conditions. Come on, you know what they are...

Things like: Eating natural, nutritious foods... not processed chemical "junk".

Drinking plenty of water and cutting out sugar-filled soft drinks (completely).

Exercising often and regularly. Make it part of your life – for the rest of your life. Not just a 2-3 month fad you keep starting and stopping.

Reduce stress in your life and take some time to "smell the roses." Life is short – enjoy it NOW!!!

Start maintaining your health through regular Chiropractic care. Don't always wait for the pain to get help... an ounce of prevention is truly worth a pound of cure!

This "to-do" list may seem daunting and long. It may seem a little time consuming. But, you have to admit, losing your health is not such a pleasant option.

Just remember – you always know the right path. Don't wimp out because it seems too darn hard.

**... Don't forget, if you ever have any questions or concerns about your health, talk to us. Contact us with your, questions. We're here to help!**

**Welcome New Patients!**

Bill Amoss; Elkridge, MD  
Joan Block; Randallstown, MD  
Mike Delovich; Berlin, MD  
Tom Dvorak; Fallston, MD  
Teresa L'Heureux; Owings Mills, MD  
Julie Lloyd; Bel Air, MD  
Joann Mai; Forest Hill, MD  
Tom O'Donnell; Baltimore, MD  
Chris Phelps; Baltimore, MD  
Ann Peters; Jacksonville, MD  
Charlene Pierpoint; Bel Air, MD  
Chuck Seabrese; Baltimore, MD  
Christian Sherman; Bel Air, MD  
Bill Tallagsen; Essex, MD  
Candi Wall; Eldersburg, MD  
Derek Woodward; Abingdon, MD

We respect your privacy by only including names with permission.

*Inspirational Story Of The Month –  
(Names And Details Have Been Changed To Protect Privacy.) [Story courtesy of Dr. Ben Altadonna]*

## **Riches In A Far Away Land...**

Many, many moons ago, there was an ancient Persian by the name of Al Hafed. Al Hafed owned a very large farm with orchards, grain fields and gardens.

He was a contented and wealthy man - contented because he was wealthy, and wealthy because he was contented. One day this old farmer was visited by an ancient Buddhist priest, and he sat down by Al Hafed's fire and told that old farmer how this world of ours was made.

### **Congeaed Drop Of Sunlight...**

During that story, he told Al Hafed how diamonds were "a congealed drop of sunlight" and the most precious of all the minerals. And the old priest told Al Hafed that if he had a handful of diamonds he could purchase a whole country, and with a mine of diamonds he could place his children upon thrones through the influence of their great wealth.

Al Hafed heard all about diamonds and how much they were worth, and went to his bed that night a poor man - not that he had lost anything, but poor because he was discontented and discontented because he thought he was poor. He said, "I want a mine of diamonds!" So he lay awake all night, and early in the morning, he left his farm in search of his fortune.

Al Hafed searched every corner of the earth for what he thought would finally make him happy and complete... his very own diamond mine. After years and years of disappointment, a broken, exhausted, old Al Hafed cast himself into the sea and sunk beneath the foamy waves. But that's not where this story ends...

While Al Hafed was away, the new owner of his farm took his camel out for a drink. As the camel drank, his eye was caught by a brilliant sparkle from the river running through Al Hafed's old land. Yes, that sparkle was a diamond...and... one of the biggest diamond mines known to man was unearthed right in Al Hafed's old backyard.

**Moral of the story:** Instead of searching in far away lands, if Al Hafed would have stayed at home and looked in his own backyard... he would have discovered "acres of diamonds." What does this story have to do with you? Quite a bit. It actually holds the key to you living a happy, healthy life.

**Here's why:** Al Hafed made two of the most common mistakes that have plagued man and woman kind since the beginning of time... and still do today.

**The first is obvious:** He went in search of happiness and riches in a foreign land when everything he needed to make his wildest dreams come true could be found at home. Right in his own back yard.

**The second and less obvious:** He destroyed all the great things in his life in search of something he THOUGHT would be better. The old... "**The Grass Is Always Greener On The Other Side Of The Fence**"

The sad truth is... many of my patients are guilty of the exact two mistakes. How? They fail to realize true health can ONLY be found in ONE PLACE. And that ONE PLACE is from within. The minute they have an ache, pain or health problem – they go looking in foreign lands for a cure... when the only real solution is located right in their own back yard. The foreign lands I'm talking about are the often misuses of drugs and surgery.

Sure, there are many health problems that require drugs and/or surgery. But many do not. It is a well-known fact that drugs are often over-prescribed and that not all surgeries are absolutely necessary, which leads us to the second problem...

### **Destroying All The Great Things You Already Have In Search Of Something Better**

It is also well-known that many of the drugs and surgeries used to treat a condition can often lead to conditions WORSE than what they were intended to treat. You've gone directly from the frying pan into the fire. It is not uncommon for you to end up with kidney disease or bleeding ulcers from common, over-the-counter medications taken because you had MINOR aches and pains.

**The bottom line is:** Your health "acres of diamonds" are also located right in your own back yard. The safest and most effective way to combat aches and pains and stay healthy... for a lifetime... is by eating right, exercising, reducing stress...and... regular Chiropractic care. No matter what any slick T.V. commercials tell you... there are no shortcuts and you will NEVER find the true solution to your aches, pains or health problems in a pill.

**Know this:** Staying healthy is YOUR ACRES OF DIAMONDS. If you lose your health... you lose everything. Nothing else matters. If you don't believe me, just think about Christopher Reeves. I bet he would have given up ALL his riches and fame to be able to get out of his wheelchair and walk... just like you can... just for one day.

All the money in the world wasn't able to help him one bit. Think about it. I also bet Christopher Reeves (and millions just like him) never gave one thought to the importance of his health... until he lost it.

**That's the real purpose of this month's newsletter and this story.** To serve as a reminder that all the money in the world... even the most precious mineral on earth... is *useless* without your health. And, the purpose of this story is to make sure you think about what you have BEFORE you lose it. **And take action to keep it.**

***We love helping our patients and their friends and relatives through their tough times and getting them feeling better!***

***We are here to help you stay feeling better and looking younger! Don't be a stranger. Call us, and we will assist you in putting together a customized maintenance plan. It's not a luxury anymore! With our low monthly payment plan, it's less expensive to maintain your good health! You really can afford Chiropractic & Physical Therapy care! Don't wait until you can no longer move!***

## **IMPORTANT**

This section is usually where I place some interesting (& often times useless facts), but Ed Woods made a request on 5/31/06 (about 1 hour before I submitted this newsletter for publication and mailing (thanks a lot Ed, I WAS done with this project! ☺). Ed told me a story (unfortunately very true) about a family friend who just this past weekend accidentally killed his 18 month old child by backing his car over the child. This broke my heart as it did Ed's so I agreed to devote this entire back page to SUMMER SAFETY.

Summer time is a very different time of year, there is much more outdoor activity... and much more opportunity for accidents & injuries. I dug up an OLD newsletter from a year or two ago where I addressed this topic, and I decided to add to it:

### **SUMMER'S HERE... HERE ARE SOME HELPFUL TIPS!**

- 1. Sunscreens:** Sunscreens often contain Titanium Dioxide, which has been clinically proven to be toxic. This chemical has been named by the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) as a "potential occupational carcinogen".
- 2. Sunburns:** Aloe is a cost-effective, natural way to treat a variety of summer ailments. It can be used topically for sunburns (1<sup>st</sup> & 2<sup>nd</sup> degree), mosquito bites, bee stings, rashes from poisonous plants. You can get Aloe directly from the plant itself (best choice) by simply cutting the leaves and apply the gel generously, or you can purchase an Aloe lotion or gel. Be careful to purchase the highest percentage of Aloe available. Be aware that topical use can trigger rare allergic reactions and may delay wound healing. Always contact a medical professional if you notice significant blistering. Also, seek medical help for any burn beyond 2<sup>nd</sup> degree. Do NOT put ice on sunburn.
- 3. Earaches:** Pools, the ocean, ponds... Kids (and adults) will spend a lot of time in them as the temperatures continue to rise. And here comes the ear aches. Your ears produce *cerumen* (ear wax), which is intended to protect your ear from water and infection. When you go under water, some of the water often goes behind the wax (between the wax and the ear drum). As you go under water more and more, the pressure increases under water and pushes the wax inward, and may create a "blockage" and significant pressure and pain. What should you do? DON'T grab for the Q-tips! You will likely impact the wax more and create more pressure and pain. You don't need to run to the local "Doc in a Box", who will send you to the drug store for an "ear wax removal kit". Simply get some hydrogen peroxide and gently pour it in your ear, hold it there for 5 minutes and gently rinse with luke-warm water. Take a Q-tip and GENTLY "twist" in your ear, careful NOT to go deep and impact any remaining wax. Several applications may be necessary.
- 4. Accidents / Injuries:** It's almost inevitable, with a significant increase of outdoor activities (biking, swimming...) there are going to be accidents & injuries. Please keep in mind MOST accidents & injuries are PREVENTABLE, remember an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of gold (I believe that is how that saying goes). Always be cautious with swimming after eating meals. Swimming (or any activity within approximately 40 minutes) after eating even a small meal could create a tragedy. What happens is the stomach & intestines have a job to do when you eat. This job required neurological activity and blood to "digest" the food you just ate. Guess what? Swimming (& other activities) also require blood. What can happen is your muscles will have to share the blood and may cause muscle cramping which can debilitate (almost paralyze) you with pain. You (or your children) are a significant drowning risk at that point. Also, NO running on the pool deck or diving in shallow water (less than 8 feet deep from the side or less than 12 feet deep with a diving board). Please be mindful of children and pets while operating motor vehicles (cars, trucks, ATVs...). Pets like to lay in the sun or sometimes hide in the shade, children may run to you... PLEASE be over cautious, children and pets do not understand the dangers, we do. GENERAL RULE OF THUMB WITH INJURIES: Use ICE immediately, then call our office, or 911 (if necessary). If you sustain even a "minor" injury call us & get checked out immediately, don't delay.

***Have a Fun & Safe Summer!***