



## AOC Newsletter – September 2008

You can't do anything about the length of your life, but you can do something about its width and depth. -Shira Tehrani

### Stem Cells... the future in treating arthritis?

Today, you can't pick up a magazine or newspaper article that doesn't include something on stem cell. Stem cells are cells found in most, if not all, multi-cellular organisms. Stem cells have the remarkable potential to develop into many different cell types in the body. Serving as a sort of the repair system for the body, they can theoretically divide without limit to replenish other cells as long as the person or animal is still alive. When a stem cell divides, each new cell has the potential to become another type of cell with a more specialized function, such as a muscle cell, a red blood cell, or a brain cell. We understand that controversy results when we talk about using stem cells that may not be ours, but what if we use our own stem cells? Here's Mr. Suker's story...



Warren Suker shares a holiday photo taken a few years ago.

Mr. Warren Suker was diagnosed with osteoarthritis and was experiencing pain in his shoulder and knees. On March 20<sup>th</sup>, he underwent percutaneous needle tenotomy with autologous tissue grafting for his shoulder. In this procedure, the tendon is carefully irritated using a small needle followed by an injection

containing a small amount of platelet rich plasma obtained from the patient's blood. The platelet rich plasma contains multiple growth factors which stimulate tendon growth to produce new tendon tissue. Mr. Suker states, this procedure was really a "piece of cake," and the results were extraordinary. He continues, "I noticed improvement in less than one week, and I went from having very limited use of my shoulder to full range of motion."

Based on these results, Mr. Suker was very eager to see if this procedure would be helpful for his knee. After spending more than 21 years in the Army, and serving in more than 50 countries... the physical stress placed on Mr. Suker's knees was relentless. Doctors prescribed a cocktail of medications to help manage the pain—without much relief to his arthritis symptoms. At the recommendation of Dr. Wei and doing a little of his own

research on stem cells, he was eager to have the procedure done. This procedure is called, bone marrow aspirate concentrate or BMAC for short.

"My wife, Carol, is incredibly supportive. We hope for an increase in the life of my knees, and a decrease in the number of pills that I need to take to manage my pain," said Mr. Suker.

Dr. Wei explained that the stem cells would be extracted from Mr. Suker's own bone marrow and then injected into his knee. He anticipates that the stem cells will regenerate lost cartilage—extending the natural life of his knee. "This procedure was a little more involved, but just the same," says Suker. "I walked out of the office following the procedure, ate lunch, went home to rest, and was moving actively within one week. Although it could be as long as six months, before I know if the stem cells are doing the job, I am looking forward to having the other knee done." Mr. Suker follows, "The procedure was easier than I thought, no unbearable pain, and I was conscious and relatively comfortable the entire time."

It's been about three weeks since Mr. Suker had this procedure, and he has resumed his normal activities. He walks two miles a day and uses the stairs instead of taking an elevator to help strengthen his joints.

If you would like more information on the BMAC procedure, contact our office at 301-694-5800.

### So, Are you experiencing symptoms like this?

Chronic tendonitis is one of the most common musculoskeletal problems. If the normal smooth gliding motion of your tendon is impaired, the tendon becomes inflamed and movement is painful. Since tendonitis is due to inflammation, the old thinking has been that reducing inflammation is the best approach. As a result, anti-inflammatory drugs, cortisone injections and even surgery have been the traditional treatment modalities. Surgery obviously has many down sides... six to eight week recovery period, healing time of the incision, anesthesia risks, and the high cost associated with the procedure.

Betty Hykes from Waynesboro, Maryland says, "I couldn't raise my right arm. It was near impossible for me to dress myself, or clean, or cook. Dr. Wei told me

about a new procedure that would help to get some mobility back. I was a little reluctant because I have COPD and I am on oxygen 24 hours a day. So, I'm a little apprehensive about procedures that might include any type of anesthesia. But, this procedure didn't require you to go under anesthesia, and the entire procedure only took about an hour. Following the procedure I went to physical therapy. It's been over one month and I would say that I can see a 50 percent improvement in how well I can use my arm now. The procedure wasn't painful or uncomfortable and I would recommend this to anyone who might be considering surgery. As a result, I am able to enjoy the activities I wasn't able to do previously."

Mrs. Jane Pannier was experiencing shoulder pain for almost a year and eventually found it difficult to move her arm without severe pain. She scheduled an appointment with Dr. Wei. Unable to take oral medications, and after being treating with several courses of cortisone injections and physical therapy she still did not find relief. Dr. Wei suggested she try percutaneous tenotomy with autologous tissue grafting.

Mrs. Pannier states, "It's been almost three months since the procedure and I have very minimal pain. I have almost 100 percent mobility back, and there is no scar, no



Dr. Wei and Mrs. Jane Pannier

surgery, or other effects that surgery can cause." She continues, "There is a very noticeable difference in regaining my mobility, and I recommend this procedure to anyone who might be experiencing similar symptoms."

Percutaneous needle tenotomy with autologous tissue grafting is a relatively new procedure, in which platelet rich plasma may stimulate tendon growth to produce new tendon tissue. This is an outpatient procedure using a local anesthetic. Post-procedure care consists of complete rest for three days followed by modified rest for another four days, then a slow and careful resumption of normal activities.

Jan Borg from Greencastle, Pennsylvania adds, "Dr. Wei told me about a new procedure that could help relieve the pain in my Achilles tendon that would not involve surgery. Because he had successfully treated my previous arthritis problems, I was open to try it. The pain in my foot was affecting my daily activities and my overseas travel. I could barely walk. After a blood test and the treatment which only lasted one hour, I was finished. I got off the table and was able to stand up right away with no pain. I was so surprised. I was cautioned to take it easy, and after about two weeks I was back to my full routine. I was gardening, walking, and enjoying life!"

For more information on tendonitis visit [www.tendonitis-treatment-tips.com](http://www.tendonitis-treatment-tips.com) to find out if you might be a candidate for this procedure.

## Hurricanes 101

A hurricane is a fierce storm with strong winds rotating around a moving center of low atmospheric pressure.

Hurricane season lasts from June 1<sup>st</sup> through November 30<sup>th</sup>. Although rare, hurricanes have formed in the Atlantic as early as March or as late as December.

Thirty-six percent of all U.S. hurricanes hit Florida, and seventy-six percent of Category 4 or higher hurricanes hit Florida or Texas.

Why name a hurricane? It's much easier to remember a storm by its name than by its longitude and latitude. It's also easier to use names when you have more than one storm you are tracking. This is especially important in relaying messages between weather stations and ships or in ship to ship communications. Also, it's much easier to say "Hurricane Jane" or "Hurricane Camille" when documenting historical weather records.

Because storms know no boundaries as far as geographical countries, names have been given some international flair. Names are agreed upon during the World Meteorological Organization by all the nations involved. There are two lists—one for the Atlantic Ocean and one for the Eastern Pacific Ocean. These lists are rotated year by year. As a result, names in 2001 will also be used again in 2007. Some exceptions to this rule is storms in the Central and Western Pacific Ocean are not rotated on an annual basis, and if a storm is a category 5, the name is permanently retired.

Did you know...

- Hurricanes rotate counter-clockwise in the northern hemisphere.
- The average ocean water temperature to fuel a hurricane is about 84 degrees.
- Wind speeds must be 73 miles per hour or more to become a hurricane.
- The word hurricane is regional -- applying to tropical cyclones in the north Atlantic Ocean, parts of the northeast Pacific Ocean and parts of the south Pacific Ocean.
- A typhoon is the same thing as a hurricane, but occurs in the northwest Pacific Ocean.

**Are you nervous that an unsteady economy could topple your finances? Don't panic! These steps can help you stay steady in turbulent times.**

**Do get out of debt ASAP.** One of your best investments in difficult times is to pay down your credit card and high-interest debt as soon as possible. And, if you've been playing the balance transfer game, look out: those zero- or low-interest balance transfer offers are likely to become a thing of the past as credit card issuers tighten their belts.

**Do increase your cash stash.** A great way to protect yourself in uncertain times is to have a cash cushion of three to six months' income in case of emergencies. When that car repair or other emergency comes up, you won't have to charge it and increase your revolving debt.

**Don't rely on credit for daily needs.** It's a scary trend: more and more people charging essentials like groceries, gasoline and health care costs. If this sounds like you, this is a serious red flag that your lifestyle is out of balance with your income. Take steps today to downgrade your lifestyle (downsize your house or car) or increase your income (get a roommate, start your own business) and get your finances in balance. Financial experts recommend spending no more than 36 percent of your pretax income on all debts—including your mortgage.

**Do closely review your debt statements.** Many credit card issuers are raising interest rates and hiking fees (5.5 percent increase projected this year)—and lowering credit limits—so keep a close eye on your loan terms. If your rate gets hiked, don't accept the change as final. Call the issuer and ask why the increase happened and whether you can reverse it. A simple phone call could save you hundreds in interest payments.



## **FRIED GREEN TOMATOES, MOZZARELLA, AND BASIL**

A great way to use your surplus garden tomatoes.

2 pounds green tomatoes (about 4 medium),  
cut into 1/4-inch-thick slices  
1/2 cup yellow cornmeal  
1 pound sliced bacon, cooked until crisp,  
reserving 1/3 cup drippings, drained on paper towels  
8 large slices firm white sandwich bread  
3/4 pound fresh mozzarella, cut into 1/4-inch slices  
24 fresh basil leaves, washed well and spun dry

Preheat broiler. In a small bowl coat 4 tomato slices evenly with cornmeal and season with salt. In a 10-12 inch heavy skillet heat 1/4 cup reserved bacon drippings over moderate heat until hot, but not smoking, and cook tomatoes until golden brown on both sides, about 5 minutes, transferring them as cooked to paper towels to drain. Coat and cook

remaining tomatoes in same manner, using additional drippings if necessary.

On a baking sheet broil one side of bread slices about 3 inches from heat until golden. Make sandwiches by layering, on un-toasted sides of bread, mozzarella, basil, tomatoes, and bacon. Top with remaining bread slices, toasted sides up. **Makes 4 sandwiches**

## **Tips To Making Relationships Last**

February 1st, 2008 by Felix Ker

- ANNIVERSARIES - Always celebrate! –each year together is a triumph!
- APPRECIATION - Let each other know how much you appreciate each other. You may already know but hearing it from each other is always better.
- BEST FRIENDS - Be best friends preferably before being boyfriend-girlfriend.
- CHANGING EACH OTHER - Don't marry a round peg and expect it to fit into a square hole. You'll never change each other.
- COMPLIMENTS - Always compliment each other.
- DATE - Keep doing things that you both enjoy, do them together. Make time and continue to date to keep the romance - look good, smell good to maintain physical attraction.
- DIFFERENCES - Celebrate differences, accept differences, and appreciate them.
- FIGHTS - Fight with the aim to resolve the issue. Don't outdo each other. Choose your battles, and make sure the fight will be worth it and that something will change in the relationship as a result of the fight.
- FLAWS - Know that the perfect person does not exist.
- FUN - Have fun together! This means keeping the fun and spontaneity that was there in the early days.
- GOALS - Make sure you have similar goals.
- GRUDGES - Quit tabulating grudges. Discuss it, then trash it, don't recycle it.
- KEEPING IT HOT – Keep it hot: Always have skin contact.
- HONESTY - Don't lie or hide things, the problem will only get bigger.
- IDENTITY - Don't lose your personality - that's why he/she fell in love with you.
- INDEPENDENCE - Having your own income means you're the boss in your life.
- LISTEN – Listen and hear what each other are saying.
- LOVE AND HUG - It all boils down to your love, chemistry and respect for each other. A hug can be far better more intimate than a kiss.
- NEEDS - Be good to yourself, and be good to your partner. Be attentive and sensitive to each other's needs, and never take your partner for granted.
- PRIORITIES - If one says it's important, then it is! Prioritize each other among other things!
- SUPPORT AND TALK - Support each other's dream. Tell each other stories. Life goes by so fast and it's easy to see how easily couples can grow apart.

## ***Wei's World***

September is a bittersweet month. The traffic on Route 15 at Motter Avenue gets worse signifying the beginning of a new school year. When we're young and in school, we don't realize how good we have it. You go to class, you study, you have fun, and somebody else pays the bills. Little wonder that so many young people wind up being professional students!

But reality eventually sets in. School is sort of the appetizer before the main course... work. Our oldest child, Becky, is working in the real world. We're proud of her. She is supporting herself after graduating from college. Jeffrey, our second child is back at NYU hoping to make a big splash on Broadway someday. If anybody can do it, he can. Benji is a senior in high school and preparing for college. And little Emily (not so little anymore) is in the 7<sup>th</sup> grade. Seeing them reminds me of when I was their age. It was a different time then. After school, we would do our homework and then play until dark, coming home when our mothers yelled for us. We didn't lock our doors. When I was a kid, for a time we had the Sealtest milkman bring us fresh milk "with cream on top" and the eggman would bring us farm fresh eggs.

It's not like that any more. A lot is being said in this presidential campaign about the need to put the past behind us and move forward. I think it might be better to move backward in time in many ways. This country is a poorer, less civil, less livable, and less admirable country than it was 40 to 50 years ago. The childhood my kids had and have – a house filled with technological marvels, in which they are prisoners, never chased outside and told to roam in the neighborhood, play in the woods, and be home before dark; out in their own yard only with a wary adult watcher's eye, shuffled to and from supervised activities... I had no computer, no flat screen TV, no special summer camp. I had the playground, the fence behind our house that led to the backs of stores and factories, a trek up the hill to the local dump where my friends and I could always find something "useful." We traveled by foot or by bike through the whole neighborhood, wandering into and out of friend's houses, playing softball, making Pinewood Derby cars in the Cub Scouts...

Compared to my kids, I think I had the better deal.



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### **What has research done for you lately?**

As you know, people with arthritis are often confronted with pain every day, and it limits their ability to lead a full and active life.

An estimated 40 million Americans have some form of arthritis or other rheumatic condition. That number is expected to climb to 59.9 million by the year 2020. Arthritis affects women in greater numbers than men, particularly women over 45 years of age. It is the leading cause of disability in this country, but it is not, as many people think, an inevitable part of growing older. Research has offered a better understanding of arthritis and the effective ways to prevent it and its complications. **Call our research department at 888 71-STUDY or 301-624-1164 to find out if you qualify for one of our studies.**