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January 2016

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HOSPITAL RATINGS

IS IT A GOOD HOSPITAL?

Accreditation, rating agencies help consumers evaluate their choices

Now more than ever before, patients, families, employers, insurers and the government, are demanding hospitals and physicians deliver on the promise of “high quality” healthcare.

The definition of high quality differs from setting to setting and from day to day. Standards and expectations are constantly being raised, and organizations that fall short are being penalized. All of this is occurring in the background and is, in many cases, invisible to the one person most directly affected by it all: the patient.

Most patients trust that their doctor and hospital deliver more than the minimum in terms of quality. How can patients evaluate hospital quality and make informed choices? One way is to look at ratings conducted by independent, unbiased healthcare quality review organizations.

There are several. One of the best known is The Joint Commission. The Joint Commission conducts regular, unannounced, onsite reviews of healthcare organizations – hospitals, home care agencies, outpatient surgery centers, family care centers, urgent care centers and hospital primary care offices. Most hospitals participate in the this accreditation process to verify quality and safety but also to continually improve and meet Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) requirements.

Other accrediting bodies look at specific types of care or procedures.

Many of these accreditations are voluntary, meaning that a hospital does not have to seek accreditation from them in order to provide the service or be reimbursed for the care provided.

Hospitals that meet the standards set by these organizations earn accreditation. Examples include:

- American College of Radiology for imaging services such as mammography, CT and MRI;
- American College of Pathology, for laboratory services;
- American College of Surgeons for cancer, bariatric surgery, breast care;
- American Society of Hypertension for treatment of high blood pressure;
- Accreditation for Cardiovascular Excellence, for heart care; and
- Society of Cardiovascular Patient Care for heart attack and heart failure care.

An onsite visit, review of patient charts and interviews with physicians, administrators, nurses and others are typically part of the accreditation process.

Many healthcare quality review organizations that offer recommendations to consumers determine ratings based on proprietary
analysis of process of care measures (did the patient receive the recommended treatment in a timely manner) and outcomes data (did the patient improve as expected, were there complications). Data used comes either from government programs (such as the CMS) or from other outside sources such as insurance company groups. Occasionally, the hospital or organization submits the data, in strict adherence to the review agency’s guidelines.

Examples of this type of analysis include CareChex, HealthGrades, Leapfrog Group, the Society of Thoracic Surgeons, the American Heart Association, and the CMS through its HospitalCompare website.

Where does King’s Daughters stand?
Regardless of the ratings agency or accrediting body, King’s Daughters has an outstanding track record for providing safe, quality care. Most recently, KDMC has received No. 1 ranking in the southern Ohio–Huntington–Ashland market and in Kentucky in nine areas from CareChex.

CareChex ranked KDMC No. 1 in the market in patient safety for overall hospital, medical and surgical care; cardiac care; major cardiac surgery; coronary bypass surgery; interventional coronary care; major bowel procedures; pulmonary care; heart attack treatment and heart failure treatment.

Additional CareChex honors received by King’s Daughters are included in the chart, right.

“We believe CareChex provides the most statistically accurate ratings of hospital quality available,” said Richard Ford, M.D., medical staff president and chief medical officer, Procedural/Surgical Services. “Many evaluation services look at only one aspect of care, such as mortality or complication rates,” he said.

CareChex’s methodology looks at the three major components of medical quality— the process of care, outcomes of care and patient satisfaction and, as a result, provides a truer picture of a hospital’s quality.

Processes of care are the actual procedures hospitals use to treat patients for specific medical problems. Research has shown that some processes are more effective than others. For example, CareChex looks at the percentage of heart attack patients who are given aspirin when they arrive at the hospital. Aspirin is an important initial treatment because it can help keep blood clots from forming and dissolve any that have already formed.

CareChex also does a statistical analysis of the outcomes of a hospital’s care. Is the overall mortality rate what you would expect for the types of patients that hospital treats? Is the rate of medical complications average or lower than expected?

Information for the CareChex analysis comes from publicly available databases and includes virtually all general, acute-care, non-federal U.S. hospitals. The 2016 CareChex analysis consists of data from federal fiscal years 2012 through 2014.

Additional quality and safety awards received by King’s Daughters in the past year include:

- Three-star rating (the highest possible) from the Society of Thoracic Surgeons (STS) for coronary artery bypass graft (CABG) procedures
- Three-star rating from STS for aortic valve replacement procedures
- “A” Patient Safety Score from the Leapfrog Group
- American College of Surgeons Commission on Cancer three-year accreditation with commendation. Twenty-one years of continuous accreditation!
- Wellcare of Kentucky primary care quality award
- Most Wired, Hospital and Health Care Networks magazine award for adoption of the Electronic Medical Record (EMR). Fourth award.
- College of American Pathologist laboratory accreditation.
- American Association of Blood Banks.

More information about CareChex can be found online at carechex.com.
New Year = New YOU on YOUR time

Many people do it year and year again: resolve to lose weight and get fit. 2013 can be the year that you finally keep the resolution to get fit and start leading a healthier lifestyle. Now is a better time than ever to get started!

Speaking of time, many resolutions fade because you simply can't fit a trip to the gym in your already demanding schedule. Is working out just another chore added to your ever-growing daily to-do list? Or are you the one who hasn't found time to get to the gym in the first place? No matter what your case may be, it is time to STOP putting off your health and start working for a better you!

One of the biggest challenges faced by those who want to work out and get into better shape is finding the time to go to the gym. In fact, multiple studies have found that people are more likely to quit going to the gym entirely if they feel as though it's a chore and a hassle. Getting fit and healthy really CAN be enjoyable and it should be if you truly intend to follow through with and keep the promise of a healthier, happier you!

People lead busy lives and need their gym to be available to them all the time. The same studies cited above indicated that when people had access to a gym 24 hours a day, they were more likely to stick with their exercise program.

So if having access to a gym 24 hours a day improves the odds of a person sticking with their exercise routine, it makes sense to conclude that choosing the right 24-hour gym guarantees results.

If you're concerned about your health and overall wellness, you need to make it a priority to get to the gym a few times each week. Having the ability to visit your local gym 24 hours a day virtually guarantees that you won't be able to come up with the age-old excuse that the gym is "closed for the day" and that you'll simply have to put it off until tomorrow.

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Anytime Fitness, fits your busy schedule and on-the-go lifestyle. At this local health club, you can exercise anytime of the day or night using your own security-access key/card! That’s 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year. Talk about no more excuses!

The professional, welcoming, and knowledgeable staff at Anytime Fitness are waiting to show you the amazing amenities offered—including the best fitness equipment available! Convenient parking, tanning, private restrooms and showers, personal training, and wellness programs await you at Anytime Fitness. Plus, the club has a friendly and supportive atmosphere, and it is super clean, too!

To help you get started, each new member receives a FREE personal fitness orientation!

Go ahead, stop by and visit the staff at Anytime Fitness, take a tour of the facility, try out the equipment and talk to current members. You'll be glad you did.

We'll customize a program that's right for you, with your needs and goals in mind.

Whether you're new to working out or a fitness regular, we've got the right staff, state-of-the-art equipment, and services to meet your needs. Base memberships range from $35 to $55/month, with flexible terms and pricing options. You can customize your membership to include additional services, such as:
- Anytime Unlimited Tanning
- 1:1 Personal Training
- Small Group Training
- Classes and Boot Camps
- 24/7 Virtual Classes

Let's get started!
Visit during staffed hours or call for an appointment today!

Monday - Thursday: 10AM to 7PM
Friday: 10AM to 6PM
Saturday: 9AM to 1PM
Sunday: By appointment
Or, call to set up an appointment: 606-326-0033

Already a member with questions about your membership or club events? Contact us at AshlandKY@AnytimeFitness.com.

APRIL RIGGS
MANAGER

I initially joined the Anytime Fitness family as a member and am now thrilled to be fulfilling my passion for helping others as the Club Manager. I came to Anytime Fitness with a formal education and degree in Business Administration but an extensive informal education in wellness and nutrition. My own journey toward better health and wellness has resulted in my losing over 100 pounds and maintaining it for nearly 3 years now. I have worked in the healthcare industry for many years and wanted to continue down a career path of helping others. I am excited to have the opportunity to help others attain better health and wellness with my Anytime Fitness Family!!!

COLE MILLER
MANAGER

I'm very enthusiastic about exercise and excited to be a part of the Anytime Fitness Family. I graduated from Ohio University in Athens with a Bachelor of Science, majoring in Exercise Physiology. I acquired my personal training certification through A.C.E and worked at the Ping Recreation Center during college. I am thrilled to have the opportunity to help others as the Personal Training Manager at the Ashland Anytime Fitness.

KYLE BIAS
STAFF

Exercising has been my passion since high school by doing the fitness program called Insanity and Insanity the Asylum. Everybody has their own fitness journey. Since the first anatomy and physiology class I took in college, I have been fascinated with how exercise changes the human body with a mind body connection. I received an Associate Degree in Science at Ashland Community and Technical College. After my associate, I went straight into my Bachelors in Exercise Science at Morehead State University. I was a part of the Athletic Training crew my senior year being awarded a scholarship to help with modalities on collegiate athletes. I'm a Personal Trainer here at Anytime Fitness and I love the club culture they bring to the fitness world. I enjoy instilling motivation to help people push past their own physical limitations by fueling your mind with positivity towards achieving anything. Exercise is medicine and it can cure anything.

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Resolve to Eat Better, Reduce Cancer Risk

This year, half a million Americans will lose their lives to cancer, and more than 1.6 million men and women will be diagnosed with the illness.

Whether you have a family history of the disease; are currently fighting it, or you’re a cancer survivor, your diet, can make a difference. Regular consumption of some foods can increase your risk of developing cancer, while others may actually help reduce it.

The link between cancer and diet
Not all health problems are avoidable, but you have more control over your health than you may think. Research shows a large percentage of cancer-related deaths are directly linked to lifestyle choices such as smoking, drinking, lack of exercise, and diet.

What you eat — and don’t eat — can have a powerful impact on your health. Without knowing it, you may be eating many foods that fuel cancer, while neglecting foods and nutrients that can help protect you.

Risk Reduction Tip #1: Focus on cancer-fighting fruits and vegetables
Fruits and vegetables are cancer-fighting powerhouses because they have less fat, more fiber, and more cancer-fighting nutrients. These three elements work together to support your immune system and reduce your cancer risk. The easiest first step is to consume five servings of fruit and vegetables every day. Most of us only get half — or less — of the recommended servings.

While there’s no single food you can eat to prevent cancer, a balanced plant-based diet filled with a variety of vegetables, fruits, soy, nuts, whole grains, and beans can help lower your risk. Plant-based foods are rich in nutrients that boost your immune system and help guard against cancer. Fruits and vegetables are the best sources of antioxidants such as beta-carotene, vitamin C, vitamin E, and selenium.

The less processed these plant-based foods are—the less they’ve been cooked, peeled, mixed with other ingredients, stripped of their nutrients, or otherwise altered from the way they came out of the ground—the better.

www.TriStateHealthandWellness.com
**Risk Reduction Tip #2: Fight cancer with fiber**

Another benefit of eating plant-based foods is that it will also increase your fiber intake. Fiber, also called roughage or bulk, is the part of plants (grains, fruits, and vegetables) that your body can’t digest. Fiber plays a key role in keeping your digestive system clean and healthy. It helps keep food moving through your digestive tract, and can move cancer-causing compounds out before they can create harm.

Fiber is found in fruits, vegetables, and whole grains. In general, the more natural and unprocessed the food, the higher it is in fiber. There is no fiber in meat, dairy, sugar, or “white” foods like white bread, white rice, and pastries.

**Tips for adding more cancer-fighting fiber to your diet:**

- Use brown rice instead of white rice
- Substitute whole-grain bread for white bread
- Choose a bran muffin over a croissant or pastry
- Snack on popcorn instead of potato chips
- Eat fresh fruit such as pears, bananas, and unpeeled apples
- Have a baked potato, including the skin, instead of mashed potatoes
- Enjoy fresh carrots, celery, or bell peppers with a hummus or salsa, instead of chips and a sour cream dip
- Use beans instead of ground meat in chili, casseroles, tacos, and even burgers (bean burgers can taste great)
- Drink plenty of water. Fiber absorbs water so the more fiber you add to your diet, the more fluids you should drink. Water is a powerful tool in reducing cancer risk – it stimulates the immune system, removes waste and toxins, and transports nutrients to all of your organs.

**High-fiber, cancer-fighting foods**

**Whole grains:** whole-wheat pasta, raisin bran, barley, oatmeal, oat bran muffins, popcorn, brown rice, whole-grain or whole-wheat bread

**Fruit:** raspberries, apples, pears, strawberries, bananas, blackberries, blueberries, mango, apricots, citrus fruits, dried fruit, prunes, raisins

**Legumes:** lentils, black beans, split peas, lima beans, baked beans, kidney beans, pinto, chick peas, navy beans, black-eyed peas

**Vegetables:** broccoli, spinach, dark green leafy vegetables, peas, artichokes, corn, carrots, tomatoes, Brussels sprouts

**Risk Reduction Tip #3: Cut down on meat**

Research shows that vegetarians are about 50 percent less likely to develop cancer than those who eat meat. So what’s the link between meat and cancer risk? First, meat lacks fiber and other nutrients that have been shown to have cancer-protective properties. What it does have in abundance, however, is fat—often very high levels of saturated fat. High-fat diets have been linked to higher rates of cancer. In the U.S., non-organic meat and poultry may also contain antibiotics and hormones. Depending on how it is prepared, meat can develop carcinogenic compounds.

When you do eat meat, choose healthier proteins such as poultry (organic chicken, turkey), fish (tuna and salmon) and “wild” meats, such as venison and grass-fed bison. Just like vegetables, meats that are minimally processed are healthier. Avoid meats that are cured or smoked, or are high in nitrates, such as bacon. Lunch meats and hot dogs should be on your rare or never list!

**Risk Reduction Tip #4: Choose fats wisely**

A major benefit of cutting down on the amount of meat you eat is that you will automatically cut out a lot of unhealthy fat. Eating a diet high in fat increases your risk for many types of cancer. But cutting out fat entirely isn’t the answer, either. In fact, some types of fat may actually protect against cancer. The trick is to choose your fats wisely and eat them in moderation.

**Fats that increase cancer risk** – The two most damaging fats are saturated fats and trans fats. Saturated fats are found mainly in animal products such as red meat, whole milk dairy products, and eggs. Trans fats, also called partially hydrogenated oils, are created by adding hydrogen to liquid vegetable oils to make them more solid and less likely to spoil, which is handy for food manufacturers, but very bad for you.

**Fats that decrease cancer risk** – The best fats are unsaturated fats that come from plant sources and are liquid at room temperature. This includes olive oil, canola oil, nuts, and avocados. Also focus on omega-3 fatty acids, which fight inflammation and support brain and heart health. Good sources include salmon, tuna, and flaxseeds.
There is No Time Better than the Present to Seek Help

To reduce the negative consequences of substance abuse, it is important for individuals who need treatment to receive services as soon as possible. However, the length of time between first use of a substance to treatment entry for abuse of that substance can be substantial.

Research emphasizes the importance of early diagnosis and intervention, and indicates that the duration of use before starting treatment is related to the length of time it takes treatment admissions to achieve abstinence.

Unfortunately, waiting several years to seek treatment can have devastating results on an individual's physical health and overall well-being. After several years of usage a person can be at a higher risk of suffering irreversible damage, than if they had sought out early treatment.

Professional, trusted and local help is available.

The experienced team at Family Guidance Center is dedicated to providing support and helping to develop plans for family, friends, and co-workers who have loved ones or children that suffer from addiction problems such as alcoholism and substance abuse. Addictions of all types seem to be progressive in nature and the effectiveness of early interventions and programs has been established.

Whether it is drug addiction, gambling, food disorders, or alcohol abuse, professional interventionists play an integral part in helping you to develop strategies and a plan for treatment of a teen or adult in your life who is in need of help. An intervention is an education process aimed at stopping the chaos and crisis that is so common in the life of an alcoholic or addict.

Interventions work.

When guided by a professional, almost all intervention teams that may include parents, friends, and co-workers are effective and result in the addicted person entering a therapeutic treatment program. A well-executed intervention process aims to move the addicted youth or adult from the cycle of crisis and provide motivation to immediately begin taking steps toward recovery, which may include entering a detox center and receiving medical care, therapy, and behavioral counseling.

Addiction affects the entire family.

Many times a family member or loved one of an addicted person feels like he or she is "going crazy." They do not know what to believe from the addicted person. It is very common for the addicted person to try and cover up his/her drinking and or drug usage. Loved ones become unsure of their own feelings. Sometimes friends and family will find themselves trying to cover for the addicted person; keeping themselves in denial about the seriousness of what is going on around them.
Frozen from fear
Fear of change, fear of rocking the boat, fear of making the addicted person angry, fear of confronting the addicted person. Being frozen in fear is not a healthy or happy way to live.

As much as you might want these problems to go away, they simply won't without help!

Progression of Addiction
Addictions of all types seem to be progressive in nature. Although at times the substance abuser might seem to be gaining some control over his/her problem, the problem only gets worse over time. Almost never better. Sometimes under pressure from family, work, or legal problems the addicted person can be frightened into short periods of control. These periods are usually brief.

Behaviors and Substance Abuse
Addiction is not a moral issue. Though some of the behaviors exhibited through addiction are devastating, it needs to be understood that in most cases it is the disease of addiction that causes people to act out in destructive behaviors. Some examples of acting out behaviors are: lying, verbal or physical abuse, stealing, emotional distance, low self esteem, little or no self motivation, and mood swings.

Most of these behaviors are lessened or vanish after someone has received help and is working in a recovery program.

Early intervention is important and help is available.
Intervention help for drug and alcohol addiction is effective for teen and adults. The Family Guidance Center can help families plan strategies to help loved ones who suffer from addiction. Early intervention programs involving a team of men and women, who may be family members, friends, or co-workers, can help the addict overcome their destructive behavior. The experienced team at Family Guidance Center can help your loved one out of the cycle of abuse and ensure they are getting the most from the various programs and tools available to help them beat the addiction and live a full and productive life.

For more information on intervention plans and other family services available at the Family Guidance Center, please call 740-532-7855. There’s no better time than now to make the call that could save your loved one’s life. Help is Here.

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Our greatest goal is to give you the healthy, straight, beautiful smile that you‘ve always wanted. We understand that choosing to receive orthodontic care is a big decision, and we respect your reasons for wanting to improve the way you look and feel. Our practice will work with you every step of the way to make sure that your orthodontic care is as rewarding as possible. Our practice utilizes the latest technology, offering a variety of safe and gentle treatment options to give you the customized, individual care you deserve.

**Every smile starts with an initial consultation!**
Your initial consultation will give you the opportunity to meet our team, learn more about orthodontics, receive a complete initial exam, and find out which treatment options will best meet your needs. During your initial consultation, we will:

- Review your dental and medical history forms
- Provide a complete oral exam, with X-rays, to determine whether treatment is necessary
- Help you create a customized treatment plan
- Discuss all financial information, insurance options, and payment plans

Our team will be glad to answer any questions you may have, and we will provide all of the information that you need to determine which treatment is right for you. Please contact our practice to schedule your initial consultation.

**What happens after the initial consultation?**
You’re one step closer to achieving the smile you’ve always wanted! After your consultation, we will schedule your first appointment and your doctor will place your new orthodontic appliance. This appointment generally takes about an hour, and during this time our team will be available to make sure that you are as comfortable as possible.

**Scheduling Appointments**
Visiting the orthodontist about every four to eight weeks is an important part of your orthodontic treatment. Our practice will work with you to make sure that your appointments are as convenient as possible. When scheduling appointments, please let us know what days and times work best for you.

We understand that “life happens”! If you’re running late or need to reschedule, please let us know and we will do everything we can to accommodate you. When you’re ready to schedule your first appointment, contact our practice and our friendly scheduling coordinator will assist you. We’re looking forward to working with you.

Visiting the dentist during orthodontic treatment is very important that you continue to visit your family dentist once every six months, even during your orthodontic treatment, for teeth cleanings and routine dental checkups. If extra dental care is needed, we will be happy to coordinate with your family dentist to make sure that you are receiving the best care possible.

---

**Everyone deserves to have a functional, beautiful smile.**
At Brace Yourself Orthodontics, you‘ll receive state-of-the-art orthodontic treatment in an environment that is comfortable and compassionate. From your first phone call to your final appointment, you’ll notice our outstanding customer service and commitment to quality of care.

- Dr. Jay Parekh has years of experience and hands-on training in the best and most effective orthodontic treatments including traditional braces, In-Ovation®, Invisalign®, clear aligners, and surgical orthodontics.
- You are an individual with unique goals and needs, and you’ll never receive “cookie-cutter” braces. Our doctor creates custom care plans, ensuring your optimal result.
- Our friendly staff is here to make your experience with us a positive one. If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to ask- that’s why we’re here!
Focus on Prevention and Early Detection in 2016

Screening Mammogram
Screening mammograms are performed on patients who are asymptomatic (has no breast complaints) and meet the criteria for a mammogram. These criteria are generally age (over the age of 40), and family history of breast cancer. A screening mammogram usually involves imaging of both breasts.

If you experience unusual tenderness, pain, nipple discharge or notice a lump in your breast (even if you are in your early twenties), contact your personal physician immediately and come in for a diagnostic evaluation. The best treatment for breast disease is early detection.

- Women 20 years of age and older should perform breast self-examinations monthly
- Women 20-39 should have a physical examination of the breast every three years, performed by a healthcare professional such as a physician.
- Women 40 and older should have a physical examination of the breast every one to two years.
- Women 40 and older should have a mammogram every year.

Call the Our Lady of Bellefonte Hospital Women’s Center at (606) 836-PINK for an appointment.

Osteoporosis Screening (DEXA Scan)
Osteoporosis is the thinning and weakening of the bones that happens naturally as we age, but other factors such as medications and family history can increase the likelihood of this “silent disease.” Screening for osteoporosis is much easier than trying to reverse bone loss once it has occurred.

Bone densitometry, using an advanced technology called DEXA (Dual Energy X-Ray Absorptiometry), safely, accurately and painlessly measures bone mineral density, which helps determine a person’s risk of developing osteoporosis and future fractures. People over age 65, those that smoke, and those with a history of fractures in the family are encouraged to have a DEXA scan. Also, people with poor nutrition or those who have experienced excessive weight loss are encouraged as well.

A DEXA scan can be conducted at the Our Lady of Bellefonte Hospital Women’s Center. Call (606) 836-PINK to learn more.

Heart/Calcium Score
A heart scan is an evaluation of the coronary arteries for calcified plaque. The blood vessels of the body develop fatty deposits and the body will convert these deposits to calcium; this is the body’s defense mechanism against soft plaque. Soft plaque can break free or cause a blockage, which can result in a stroke or heart attack. The amount of calcium is quantitatively determined for each artery and a total score is determined. The “total score” is an indication of the risk for coronary artery stenosis.

Calcium scoring tests are performed at Our Lady of Bellefonte Hospital. Call (606) 833-3999 for more information.

CORONARY CTA
With the 64-slice Lightspeed CT scan, the radiology professionals at Our Lady of Bellefonte Hospital can view clear, highly-detailed images of the heart and coronary arteries in a matter of seconds. In fact, this highly sophisticated machine can capture images of a beating heart in just five heartbeats, an organ in one second, and an entire body scan in 10 seconds. Those interested in a coronary CTA should talk to their physicians to find out if a coronary CTA is recommended. Or, call (606) 833-9326 to learn more.

Lung CT
Lung cancer is the number one cancer killer in the United States. This year, 221,280 people are expected to die from lung cancer. New research suggests that screening a high risk population for lung cancer can drastically reduce the number of mortalities from this disease. A CT scan is a useful test to identify and screen for lung cancers. The cancers are identified in their early stages at which they can be treated. The CT scan can detect very small masses in the lung. By detecting cancerous tumors at an early stage, an individual’s survival rate may be significantly improved.

If you are considering a lung CT, call (606) 833-3999 for more information.

Today, health-conscious men and women are taking charge of their health. They know that early diagnosis could save their lives. And now, using state-of-the-art technology and board-certified physicians, people can be screened for some of the most prevalent and deadly diseases without a doctor’s order. Talk to your doctor about the options available at Our Lady of Bellefonte Hospital.
WHY CAN’T YOU HEAR ME?

Denial in the Face of Hearing Loss

By Holly Brady, Office Manager

People are willing to admit they need help seeing – check out all the people who wear glasses or contacts. Need help seeing or reading – no big deal. People readily acknowledge the need and do something about it.

In the same vein, someone with a back injury will confess that they can’t lift, pull, tug or put undue stress on their spine for fear of suffering further injury. And we all understand. But when it comes to hearing, it’s different story. Not only do we try to hide our hearing loss from others, we hide it from ourselves. Denial it’s called. In fact, people come into my office every day telling me they have suffered hearing trouble for three, four, even 10 years.

Why do they suffer – literally in silence – for so long? Because there is a stigma attached to hearing loss. As a society, we have somehow come to believe that people who can no longer hear well are disabled, old, decrepit, falling apart. It’s not just society that thinks this way; it’s the individual with hearing loss who believes it!

As a result, we deceive ourselves and those around us. People with hearing loss will employ every strategy possible to hide it. They fake it, acting as though they’ve heard and understood what was said and, often, ask a close companion later to tell them what they missed. People develop lip-reading skills that allow them to piece together a conversation, building upon the little bit they do hear.

Sometimes, they just give up and resign themselves to social isolation because, truth be told, faking the ability to hear is mentally, emotionally and physically exhausting.

Why not a hearing aid?

Hearing aids can make a huge difference in someone’s ability to enjoy and participate in life. Yet, people with hearing problems will delay, or refuse, wearing one to hide their secret. A visible hearing aid? For some people, it’s like wearing a handicapped parking placard around their necks. No thanks.

Oh how wrong they are. Today, hearing aid technology is smaller, more accurate and more invisible than ever. Gone are the big devices that loop over the top of the ear and squawk with feedback. Small, discreet aids provide great amplification and are barely noticeable.

Dr. Ann Rhoten Au.D., CCC/A is an independent audiologist in Lexington. If you know someone suffering with soft sound sensitivity, assure them there is help. With nearly three decades of experience, Dr. Rhoten offers the knowledge and the professional service each patient needs.

www.TriStateHealthandWellness.com
Aside from the perceived stigma of hearing loss, there are financial concerns. Health insurance doesn’t typically cover the cost of hearing aids, leaving the patient and family responsible for the full cost. It can be a worry for some, especially if they’ve known others who purchased hearing aids that were not right for them.

**Who can afford to buy hearing aids that don’t fit me properly or that don’t feel right? No one!**

At Kentucky Audiology and Tinnitus Services, we offer a no-obligation Flex Trial program that allows patients to try out their hearing aids to make sure they feel right, fit right and work right. Besides the significant financial investment, there are so many choices, it can be quite overwhelming.

How do you know what is best for you at the best price? At Kentucky Audiology & Tinnitus Services, we have several methods that help us determine the most appropriate make and model for your unique listening needs. Before prescribing any device, we take into consideration the results of the comprehensive hearing assessment as well as the case history and a hearing handicap inventory that assesses what situations you experience the most difficulty. Using these tools allows us to select the most appropriate technology for you.

Nonetheless, patients sometimes need to experience wearing a hearing aid in order to make the best decision for their situation. The most convincing and powerful tool is to experience amplification in your own environment and experience the benefits first hand. No matter what make or model you ultimately choose and no matter where you purchase hearing aids, there is always a 30-day trial period, so even if you don’t get to “test drive” your hearing aid prior to a purchase, if you are dissatisfied for any reason, they can be exchanged or returned.

Unfortunately, most hearing aid manufacturers only provide demo models at their premium price products. While this is very helpful, not everyone needs, or can afford, a top-of-the-line device. Unitron, a small Canadian manufacturer has turned the hearing aid world “on its ear” by offering Flex-Trial.

The Flex-Trial program allows the audiologist to program demonstration hearing aids to any level of technology, from economy to premium. With a total of five technology levels, and based upon your history, and unique hearing needs, the audiologist will recommend the technology level most appropriate for you and program the devices for you to take home.

This allows you to try the device in all the situations in which you have trouble and make an informed decision about which technology provides you with the most benefit. Most people try one to two different levels of technology, but there are five levels from which to choose.

Once the best fit is determined, patients can purchase their hearing aids with confidence in the devices’ ability to significantly improve their lives. If you, a family member, friend or co-worker would like to experience better hearing with no cost or obligation, please contact the office for your “test drive” with a Flex-Trial. 859-554-5384.

**Kentucky Audiology and Tinnitus Services, PLLC (KATS)**
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372 Diederich Blvd
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The Pain in Your Leg and Back May Be Caused by Sciatica

Laura C. Reese, D.O.
Board Certified, Orthopedic Surgeon

You exert yourself just a little too much when lifting something heavy. Or perhaps you're involved in an accident or fall that impacts your low back and nearby areas. Or maybe you simply sit for too many hours of the day. Regardless of the initial stressor, you know you've injured something in or around your back, because all of the sudden, you find yourself in a lot of pain.

Is it sciatica? And if it is, what do you do?
The diagnosis of sciatica means that there is irritation of the sciatic nerve. The sciatic nerve transfers information to and from your brain. The brain sends messages to the muscles, and the nerve transmits signals back about pain and sensations. The sciatic nerve is quite large, in fact, it is the largest peripheral nerve in the body.

The sciatic nerve is formed from the lower segments of the spinal cord; it is made up from the lumbar and sacral nerve roots from the spine. It exits the lower part of the spinal cord, passes behind the hip joint, and runs down the back of the thigh.

The sciatic nerve, like most other nerves, performs two basic functions: first, it sends signals to your muscles from the brain; and second, it collects sensory information from the legs and passes this back to your brain.

Conditions such as sciatica that affect the nerve will alter these normal functions.

The usual symptoms of sciatica include:
- Electric shock pain down the leg
- Numbness & tingling sensations
- Muscle weakness

In addition, patients with sciatica may notice a worsening of their symptoms with maneuvers such as squatting or coughing. These maneuvers can increase pressure around the nerve and magnify the symptoms of sciatica.

Treatment is initially aimed at addressing the inflammation associated with sciatica. Rest, anti-inflammatory medications (such as Motrin or Celebrex), and muscle relaxers are often good places to start. Some patients require a more powerful anti-inflammatory treatment and are given oral steroid medications. These steroids do have potential side-effects, but the powerful anti-inflammatory effect can be helpful in the treatment of sciatica.

Once the pain subsides, exercises and physical therapy are helpful. Many people find that heat packs and ice packs soothe the muscles that are painful in sciatica. Some doctors may prescribe an epidural steroid injection that can deliver anti-inflammatory medication directly to the inflamed area around the nerves.

Surgical treatment of sciatica is not usually needed, but in individuals who undergo the above treatments, and have persistent symptoms, surgery may be considered. The surgical procedure is one that allows more room for the nerve in the area being compressed. This may mean removing the ruptured disc, opening up the bone around the nerve, or a combination of both.

Most people (80-90%) fully recover from sciatica without surgery. In most cases the nerve is not permanently damaged, and individuals recover in the 3-week to 3-month time frame.

Is sciatica causing your pain? Your risks for developing sciatica increase if you are between the ages of 30-50, live a sedentary lifestyle (this includes sitting at a desk and computer for hours during the work day), frequently lift heavy objects, participate in walking or running on a daily basis, are pregnant, or have diabetes. If you are experiencing pain in your lower back that continues down your leg, you may in fact be experiencing the symptoms of sciatica.

For more information or if you have any concerns about your pain, please call our office today! There are treatments available and you can live pain free!
Peripheral neuropathy, a result of damage to your peripheral nerves, often causes weakness, numbness and pain, usually in your hands and feet. It can also affect other areas of your body.

Your peripheral nervous system sends information from your brain and spinal cord (central nervous system) to the rest of your body. Peripheral neuropathy can result from traumatic injuries, infections, metabolic problems, inherited causes and exposure to toxins. One of the most common causes is diabetes mellitus.

People with peripheral neuropathy generally describe the pain as stabbing or burning. Often, there's tingling. In many cases, symptoms improve, especially if caused by a treatable underlying condition. Medications can reduce the pain of peripheral neuropathy.

Signs and symptoms of peripheral neuropathy may include:
- Gradual onset of numbness and tingling in your feet or hands, which may spread upward into your legs and arms
- Sharp, jabbing or burning pain
- Extreme sensitivity to touch
- Lack of coordination and falling
- Muscle weakness or paralysis if motor nerves are affected

If autonomic nerves are affected, signs and symptoms may include:
- Heat intolerance and altered sweating
- Bowel, bladder or digestive problems
- Changes in blood pressure, causing dizziness or lightheadedness

Peripheral neuropathy risk factors include:
- Diabetes mellitus, especially if your sugar levels are poorly controlled
- Alcohol abuse
- Vitamin deficiencies, particularly B vitamins
- Infections, such as Lyme disease, shingles (varicella-zoster), Epstein-Barr virus, hepatitis C and HIV

- Autoimmune diseases, such as rheumatoid arthritis and lupus, in which your immune system attacks your own tissues
- Kidney, liver or thyroid disorders
- Exposure to toxins
- Repetitive motion, such as those performed for certain jobs
- Family history of neuropathy

Treatment goals are to manage the condition causing your neuropathy and to relieve symptoms. If your lab tests indicate no underlying condition, your doctor may recommend watchful waiting to see if your neuropathy improves. If exposure to toxins or alcohol is causing your conditions, your doctor will recommend avoiding those substances.

Medications used to relieve peripheral neuropathy pain include: over-the-counter pain relievers, opioids, anti-seizure medications, Capsaicin cream, and antidepressants.

Your doctor also may prescribe medication to treat the underlying condition that's causing the neuropathy. For example, medications to reduce your immune system's reaction, such as prednisone, cyclosporine (Neoral, Sandimmune, others), mycophenolate mofetil (CellCept) and azathioprine (Azasan, Imuran), may help people with peripheral neuropathy associated with autoimmune conditions.

Intravenous immunoglobulin is a mainstay of treatment for chronic inflammatory demyelinating polyneuropathy and other inflammatory neuropathy.

www.TriStateHealthandWellness.com
Various therapies and procedures may help ease the signs and symptoms of peripheral neuropathy.

If you have muscle weakness, physical therapy can help improve your movements. You may also need hand or foot braces, a cane, a walker, or a wheelchair. If you have neuropathies caused by pressure on nerves, such as pressure from tumors, you may need surgery to reduce the pressure.

Here are suggestions to help you manage peripheral neuropathy:

- Take care of your feet, especially if you have diabetes. Check daily for blisters, cuts or calluses. Wear soft, loose cotton socks and padded shoes. You can use a semicircular hoop, which is available in medical supply stores, to keep bedcovers off hot or sensitive feet.
- Exercise. Ask your doctor about an exercise routine. Regular exercise, such as walking three times a week, may reduce neuropathy pain, improve your muscle strength and help control blood sugar levels. Gentle routines such as yoga and tai chi might also help.
- Quit smoking. Cigarette smoking can affect circulation, increasing the risk of foot problems and other neuropathy complications.
- Eat healthy meals. Healthy eating is especially important to ensure that you get essential vitamins and minerals. Emphasize low-fat meats and dairy products and include lots of fruits, vegetables and whole grains in your diet.
- Avoid excessive alcohol. Alcohol may worsen peripheral neuropathy.
- Monitor your blood glucose levels. If you have diabetes, monitoring your blood glucose levels will help keep your blood glucose under control and may help improve your neuropathy.

The best way to prevent peripheral neuropathy is to manage medical condition that put you at risk, such as diabetes, alcoholism or rheumatoid arthritis.

Make healthy lifestyle choices, for example:

- Eat a diet rich in fruits, vegetables, whole grains and lean protein to keep nerves healthy. Protect against vitamin B-12 deficiency by eating meats, fish, eggs, low-fat dairy foods and fortified cereals. If you’re vegetarian or vegan, fortified cereals are a good source of vitamin B-12, but also talk to your doctor about B-12 supplements.
- Exercise regularly. With your doctor’s okay, try to get at least 30 minutes to one hour of exercise at least three times a week.
- Avoid factors that may cause nerve damage, including repetitive motions, cramped positions, exposure to toxic chemicals, smoking and overindulging in alcohol.

If you have peripheral neuropathy caused by injury or damage to your spinal cord, neurosurgeon Ondrej Choutka, M.D., may be able to help.

Neurosurgeon Ondrej Choutka, M.D., specializes in the surgical treatment of neurological disorders and disease, including cerebral aneurysm, skull base surgery, arterial venous malformation, brain tumors, trigeminal neuralgia, peripheral nerves, stroke and Moyamoya disease. His office can be reached by calling (606) 329-1770.
Bio-identical Hormone Replacement Therapy (BHRT) is the process of restoring and maintaining hormone balance with hormones that are biologically identical to hormones produced by the human body. BHRT is commonly used to treat menopausal symptoms such as hot flashes, vaginal dryness, mood swings, sleep disorders, decreased libido, and an increased risk of fractures due to osteoporosis.

The use of hormones that are structurally identical to those found in the body has seen a steady increase. These hormones are known as bio-identical hormones. Many believe that bio-identical hormones have fewer side effects than synthetic hormones. The synthetic hormones contain side chains that alter their chemical structure in relation to hormones found in the body. The goals of BHRT include relief from symptoms due to decreasing hormone production, protection from conditions that natural hormones usually protect against, and the establishment of hormonal balance. The hormones are primarily derived from the yam and soybean plants before being altered in the lab to create the bio-identical hormones. BHRT has been used for over 40 years in Europe and has been extensively studied.

Bio-identical hormones have been available and used in hormone treatments for decades. They can be custom compounded to match each patient’s unique needs and body chemistry, instead of the "one size fits all" approach used with off-the-shelf hormones.
Hormone therapy requires appropriate testing, examination and discussion of symptoms with a healthcare practitioner. The pharmacists at Boyd County Pharmacy can answer your questions about bioidentical hormones and how BHRT can help with hormone imbalances such as:

- Premenstrual Syndrome (PMS)
- Infertility
- Postpartum Depression
- Menopause and Perimenopause
- Female Sexual Dysfunction
- Testosterone Deficiency
- Osteoporosis
- Chronic Fatigue
- Fibromyalgia
- Endometriosis
- Andropause (Male Menopause)
- Hypothyroidism
- Hypoadrenalism

Hormone replacement therapy via medications made in a compound pharmacy, specifically targeted for particular chemical deficiencies can help balance hormone levels within the body. Nutritional supplements can also help the body to regulate/process and restore hormones.

Bio-identical hormones compounding is available at Boyd County Pharmacy. The use of bio-identical hormones continues to increase in popularity. The idea of replacing the body's hormones with identical hormones seems logical although larger studies need to be done on their safety, efficacy, and long-term effects. As with any other medication, caution must be exercised in using bio-identical hormones in hormone replacement therapy, which is why it is important to always talk to your doctor and pharmacist about any concerns you might have.

Boyd County Pharmacy offers various compounded medications and supplements. Unlike off-the-shelf medications, our prescriptions are compounded to meet your specific and individual needs, as directed by your physician. We employ state-of-the-art technology and meet or exceed the industry’s strictest quality and safety standards.

No two people are exactly the same internally, which is where the benefit of being able to tailor the exact amount of each hormone needed for individuals is most beneficial. For more information about hormone compounding and the conditions that can be treated using hormone replacement therapies, please call Boyd County Pharmacy at 606-929-5301, or speak to your primary care physician.
Feel Absolutely, Positively Right Before You Buy

At Kentucky Audiology and Tinnitus Services, we believe the only way to know which hearing aid is right for you is to experience the benefits in your day-to-day life.

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1517 Nicholasville Road #202
Lexington, KY 40503

Ann L. Rhoten, Au.D., CCC/A
Doctor of Audiology
http://kytinnitus.treatment.com/
Comprehensive Eye Care for the New Year

Each year many people lose vision due to progressive diseases or conditions of the eye. Often there are no symptoms indicating something is wrong, or vision loss occurs so gradually that it is not readily noticeable to a patient. Consequently, it is important to regularly schedule a comprehensive eye exam with an experienced, knowledgeable Ophthalmologist.

In general, periodic eye exams are suggested to keep your eyes healthy. However, if you have any of these risk factors for eye problems, you may need to see your eye doctor more frequently:

- Family history of eye problems
- African American
- Have diabetes
- Personal history of eye injury that required medical or surgical care

The American Academy of Ophthalmology recommends the following eye exam schedules:

Infants

A pediatrician, family physician, nurse practitioner or physician’s assistant should examine a newborn’s eyes for general health in the nursery. By 6 months of age, all infants should be screened for ocular health by a health care professional (ophthalmologist, primary care provider, family physician, pediatrician or other health care professionals) or a trained screener.

An infant should receive a comprehensive eye evaluation whenever questions arise about his or her eye health. No infant is too young for an eye examination.

Before Age 5

Since it is possible for your child to have a serious vision problem without being aware of it, your child should have his or her eyes screened at age 3 and 5 by an eye care professional for eye conditions such as:

- Strabismus (crossed eyes)
- Amblyopia (lazy eye)
- Posis (dropping of the upper eyelid)
- Refractive errors (nearsightedness, farsightedness and astigmatism)

Puberty to Age 39

Most young people have healthy eyes, but still need to take care of their vision by wearing protective eyewear when working in dangerous areas, playing sports, doing woodwork or yard work, working with chemicals or taking part in other activities that could cause eye injury.

Have a complete eye exam at least once between the ages of 20 and 29 and at least twice between the ages of 30 and 39.

You should also be aware of symptoms that could indicate a problem. See an eye doctor promptly if you experience any eye problems such as:

- Visual changes or pain
- Flashes of light
- Seeing spots or ghost-like images
- Dark spot appears in vision
- Lines and edges appear distorted or wavy
- Dry eyes with itching and burning

Ages 40 to 64

Even the young adult and middle age groups can be affected by eye problems, so preventive measures should be taken to protect eyes from injury and detect disease early.

Schedule a comprehensive eye evaluation with your eye doctor every 2 to 4 years.

65 and Older

Seniors 65 and older should have comprehensive eye evaluations by their eye doctor every 1 to 2 years to assess eye health and diagnose any eye conditions, such as cataracts, glaucoma and age-related macular degeneration.

A comprehensive eye exam has the potential to last about an hour depending on the tests performed that are needed to examine your eyes. These exams may act as the entry point to more advanced sub-specialty care for patients needing additional medical or surgical services.

Here are some common vision tests you might have during your comprehensive eye exam:

- Visual Acuity Test: One of the primary tests in any comprehensive eye exam, this test will measure how much you can see using an eye chart.
- Retinoscopy: This test will determine your approximate eyeglass prescription. Your doctor will be able to get close to your prescription by judging how light reflects from your eye while flipping lenses in front of your eye.
- Refraction: This determines your exact eyeglass prescription using an instrument known as a phoropter that allows him to show you a series of lens choices, and then will ask you which lenses look clearer. This will continue until your doctor narrows down the lens power and reaches your true prescription.
- Pupil Dilation: Your doctor may need to enlarge your pupil using eye drops in order to see more of the internal structures of your eyes.
- Visual Field Test: This test checks for blind spots in your peripheral vision.
- Color Blindness Test: Besides just checking if any color blindness is hereditary, this test can also determine other possible eye health issues that could be causing your color blindness.
- Cover Test: This test can indicate if you have a binocular vision problem that causes eye strain or amblyopia, also known as “lazy eye”.
- Autorefractors and Aberrometers: These will automatically determine your eyeglass prescription by accurately focusing light on your retina to determine the lens power.
- Slit-Lamp Examination: The slit lamp, or biomicroscope, gives your doctor a highly magnified view of the internal structures of your eye to determine eye health and look for signs of infection.
- The Glaucoma Test: Typically, your doctor will perform a “puff-of-air” test, or non-contact tonometry (NCT), that literally puffs a tiny bit of air at your eye to see how the eye resists to the air. This will allow the machine to calculate your intraocular pressure, which helps determine if you are at risk of developing glaucoma.

If anything abnormal is discovered during the comprehensive eye exam, the Ophthalmologist can recommend treatment that is best for your condition. As with any other health problem, the earlier an eye problem is detected the better the treatment results can be and the less likely the problem will end in vision loss.

If you have any concerns about your vision and eye health, our friendly staff and knowledgeable care team is here to answer any questions you might have.
Are Your Shoes Causing You Pain and Making You Fat?

By Dr. Brian K. Bailey, Podiatric Physician & Surgeon

Foot pain can be a serious problem that can keep you tied to your recliner and TV. And it can cause you to give up on exercise. Are your feet making you fat?

Ever wonder how much damage you are doing when you walk round in shoes that don’t fit proper or ones that weren’t made for the task at hand? The shoes you wear can make you feel slim, sexy, and stylish—and they can leave you wincing in pain.

A recent survey found that people reported pain in their feet more often than any other part of the body. More than toothaches, knee problems, and even back pain. With 72% of Americans not exercising because of foot pain, a Podiatrist can provide tips to alleviate foot pain and get you back to exercising.

Aching feet can keep you from exercising, which can lead to weight gain. Being overweight can stress your bones and muscles, and put extra stress on your feet and ankles. This can cause tendon inflammation in your feet, pain in your heels or toes, and other foot problems. Yet, a recent study on foot pain found that people only visit a doctor when the problem impacts their lifestyle, causes extreme pain, or requires surgery.

If being overweight is the source of your foot pain, you don’t have to wait around to exercise. Try low-impact activities like swimming or biking. Get help from a nutritionist to make healthier food choices and shed a few pounds. And make an appointment to see a podiatrist. In many cases, new orthotic shoes can help get you back on your feet without surgery.

Many Americans rank their feet as the body part of lowest importance, yet the one that causes them the most pain and discomfort. Therefore, it is critical that people pay attention to their feet and wear proper shoes to eliminate and prevent further pain and health problems.

Most people would agree that, like having a good mattress, good shoes are important to one’s well being, since many hours are spent bearing weight on them. Yet people frequently buy ill-fitted shoes for fashion, price, or other reasons, and then keep wearing the shoes till they are worn out, because they have just become “broken in.”

If you are one of the many Americans who avoid exercise due to foot problems, visit a Podiatrist today. There’s no reason to continue living in discomfort and missing out on activities due to foot pain.

Through a thorough assessment the proper footwear or custom inserts can be recommended to alleviate or eliminate foot, knee, and back pain.

As the country’s obesity rates continue to soar, this makes treating foot pain imperative, schedule a consultation with a Podiatrist to help determine the proper footwear and get you back on your feet. Once fitted with proper shoes, you will be amazed at how quickly the pounds fall off!

Let a Podiatrist guide you to feel better and live better in 2015. Call today for a foot analysis to see how you can get moving.

Podiatrist is carefully trained to evaluate your pain, pinpoint problems, and recommend customized solutions. We can help people with a variety of problems and conditions, including:

- Anyone whose feet hurt
- Those living with arthritis and diabetes
- People whose doctors recommend special shoes or inserts as part of their treatment plan
- People with hard-to-fit feet
- Walkers and runners
- People who stand all day for work
- People who are experiencing back pain or pain in their joints
- Athletes looking for a competitive edge

_____

Body-Mind-Spirit Podiatric Center, PLLC

500 14th Street, Ashland, Kentucky, 41101
Phone (606) 324-FOOT

www.TriStateHealthandWellness.com
Parking Creates New Prospects in the New Year

By Whitney Lowe, Ashland in Motion Executive Director

In the New Year community members will notice something missing from downtown Ashland sidewalks: parking meters. Downtown Ashland continues to grow and as an effort to further ignite development, the City of Ashland will reinstate a new on-street parking policy that growing downtowns near and far have already implemented.

Parking Policy Creates Prospects
Several downtowns and cities across the United States are restructuring parking policies, some even doing away with parking minimums or eliminating parking all together as an effort to enhance environments and stimulate growth. Though eliminating parking (or in downtown Ashland’s case, setting a limit on available on-street parking time) may seem counterintuitive, the reality is that it’s working.

According to the Urban Transportation Showcase Program, a case study focused on sustainable transportation throughout the United States and Canada, researchers found that when restrictive parking policies were implemented, positive results followed:

“In many cases, managing parking effectively can increase property values, enhance business opportunities, mitigate developer impacts, provide opportunities for active and sustainable transportation and improve traffic circulation.

Parking lots and parking spaces often do little to enhance economic activity, encourage active and sustainable transportation, or provide additional tax revenues to local governments. Rather, businesses can benefit by supporting better infrastructure for pedestrians, cyclists and transit users.”

Parking P’s & Q’s
How exactly will downtown Ashland be impacted by the new parking policy? Well, here are the facts:

- The new parking policy will apply to on-street parking located within Ashland’s central business district
- The central business district encompasses 13th Street to 18th Street and Front Street near the Ohio River back to Central Avenue
- On-street parking spaces will have 2-hour parking limits
- First time offenders will receive a free warning and subsequent parking violations will begin at $10, which will rise in $10 increments for repeat offenses
- Downtown patrons are invited to utilize the free parking lot located on the corner of 14th Street and Winchester Avenue next to the Paramount Arts Center

Perks of Parking Enforcement
- With the elimination of parking meters, downtown sidewalks will have expanded room for walking and biking, inviting the community to reinvent the way they utilize downtown space
- Encourages active transportation, which establishes healthier habits, strengthens the community and of course is much better for the environment
- Increased pedestrian traffic has the potential to significantly enhance economic opportunities for downtown businesses
- Parking enforcement prevents “roosting,” or the habit of parking vehicles for extended periods of time, which often is a deterrent to potential downtown patrons and shoppers
- Downtowns that have revised their minimum parking standards or eliminated parking mandates have found that historic buildings that were once being demolished to accommodate parking lots are now being restored, thus making the area more appealing
- As parking codes and policies change, the use of public transportation increases, generating more revenue for cities and thus building better communities
Ohio Means Jobs Provides Valuable Support, Guidance for Job Seekers

Ask any job seeker and they will tell you how hard it is to find a good-paying job these days. The competition is tough, jobs are scarcer and employers demand more skills, knowledge and abilities than ever before.

Although the unemployment rate in Lawrence County has fallen to 5.1 percent, if you are in the job market, you know first-hand how difficult the job search can be. But you do not have to go it alone. Ohio Means Jobs — Lawrence County One Stop is here for you!

OMJ — Lawrence County works every day to connect job seekers and employers. By bringing together business, government and the community into a collaborative unit, OMJ — Lawrence County helps create a more-skilled and better-trained workforce.

The collaboration results in more successful employers, increased tax revenues generated by new or better jobs for previously unemployed or underemployed individuals, and improved social services through reduced reliance on public assistance.

If you’re a job seeker, the professional staff at OMJ — Lawrence County One Stop can guide you through the puzzle that is the modern-day job search, providing assistance with online search tools, writing resumes, completing applications and interviewing.

Are your skills a little rusty? Need to learn some new ones? OMJ — Lawrence County One Stop provides specialized training for adults, youth and older workers.

Aiding dislocated workers and individuals with barriers to employment is of the highest priority at OMJ — Lawrence County.

Recognizing that Gulf War-era II veterans have experienced significant obstacles in obtaining employment following discharge, we are proud to offer priority service to U.S. Military Veterans and eligible spouses. Veterans and their eligible spouses are strongly encouraged to use OMJ services.

OMJ — Lawrence County provides individualized assessment to help its clients identify jobs in high demand in Ohio, understand careers, determine jobs that best fit the existing skill set and interests, and develop a career path to achieve a future that is stable, financially rewarding and personally fulfilling.

The One Stop can provide training in computer and academic skills; development of teamwork skills; occupation-specific skills; and applied problem solving. Individuals without a high school diploma can earn their GED (graduate equivalency diploma) through the One Stop.

The One Stop is a comprehensive system for adults, youth and families in providing services and information as well as social support, including training in life skills, budgeting and money management, family counseling and development of personal communication skills.

Many of the services are free and open to the public. However, to get the most out of OMJ — Lawrence County One Stop, including attending classes or working with a career coach, registration is required. Registration with employment services gives to job seekers access to Job Net and Ohio Works database of available jobs as well as the filing of unemployment claims.

For more information about Ohio Means Jobs — Lawrence County One Stop, or to begin the process of working together, call the office at (740) 532-3140. The office is located at 120 N. Third St., Ironton.
From Physical Pain to Spiritual Healing: FINDING A NEW PURPOSE AFTER A TRAGIC ACCIDENT

By John Van der Werff, DDS

I have always believed God smiled on my life, and He has led me in some incredible ways. Dentistry has been my passion since 8th grade. I began my career as a dentist in 1982. At the same time, I married a Christian woman, and God later blessed us with two sons. Even when we struggled financially, by trusting and believing Him, God provided for our needs. I was living a life that did not have an exciting story, but in an instant, my story changed.

There are some days in our lives which, when they have come to an end, will have changed us forever. This was one of those days. As I skied down that Northern California slope on that cold, clear morning, I caught an edge with my ski and found myself sliding backward down the mountainside. I tried to stop by kicking my boots into the snow. Nothing happened. Finally, after what seemed like minutes of sliding out of control, I stopped. But I was unable to move.

A ski patrolman came up to me and asked if I was alright. I told him I felt fine, but I could not move. In my mind, I assumed I would be taken to the ski lodge and simply drive home after a brief rest. But I assumed wrong.

I was soon on my way to a hospital by ambulance, then airlifted to a hospital in Redding, California. After x-rays and an MRI, it was determined I had damaged my spinal cord. A halo was placed to stabilize my neck and surgery was planned to permanently stabilize the area. The next day, vertebrae C4-C6 were surgically fused together and a metal splint was placed to further support the fracture.

I had become... a quadriplegic.

"He will call on me, and I will answer him..." (Psalm 91:15a, NIV 2011).

As I lay in the hospital, I realized I had lost my physical abilities. How could God allow such a tragedy to happen to me? He promised to take care of me. I asked God why He was not healing me. God’s only response was an unmistakable silence. I wondered, deep in my heart, if God was even there. I no longer felt His presence, and I no longer even sensed there was a God who cared. From time to time, I would have my pity parties, leading to a season of deep depression. In the midst of my dark night, God said nothing at all.

It reminded me of Job. God blessed him, then took away his wealth, his family and his health for no apparent reason. God did not talk to Job while he was suffering.

Job would ask God "Why?" and there was silence. God has His reasons for doing things that we may not be able to understand.

I met with a psychologist, asking him what I could do to deal with the depression, while avoiding taking medication. He told me, "Instead of asking 'Why', perhaps you should consider asking 'What can I do now?' Consider what you have and take things one day at a time," said the kind psychologist.

So I started taking it one day at a time. And in the midst of what I considered to be His silence, God seamlessly took care of things at home. Friends brought dinner every night for my family. My wife was offered a full-time position so we would have health insurance and income. Friends built a wheelchair ramp to our house without charging us. It was apparent we were surrounded by the support of so many in our Christian community. Even in the midst of going through the "valley of death," God provided.

"I will be with him in trouble, I will deliver him and honor him" (Psalm 91:15b, NIV 2011).

So what next? How does one move on, when a lifelong dream and plan to practice dentistry was now impossible? I was too young to retire, and I certainly did not want to sit around feeling sorry for myself. Deep inside, I felt I still had much to live for. If this was God’s purpose, what doors would He open?

I talked to friends and considered my experience. I determined to help people with jaw pain and temporomandibular disorders. The California Department of Rehabilitation agreed to pay for part of my re-education, and I was on my way. In January 2004, I started a new practice limited to orofacial pain.

I still struggle to forgive God for what had happened on that distant ski slope. One day, I watched a video on the internet of Nick Vujicic. He was born without any arms or legs. I listened as he shared his personal story, telling others what God was doing in his life. I began to see more clearly how God could use my story as a way of encouraging others. There is more to my suffering than me... God had more in mind. Through tears, I was able to forgive God and thank Him for what He had allowed to happen. God was patient through my period of doubting, and He wept with me as I worked through my suffering.

When you go through the "valley of death" in your own personal life, God will be patient with you. And He will weep with you as you work through your own suffering. The lies we tell ourselves need to be substituted with His truth. God is present, loves us, takes care of us and has a purpose for what is happening—in every circumstance, in every trial, in every tribulation. As we forgive, we begin to heal and even start to see what God has done for His purpose and glory.

And the silence of God? If you have experienced that silence, perhaps you have also come to a new appreciation for the silence Jesus felt when He was on the cross, asking why God had forsaken Him.

"With long life I will satisfy him and show him my salvation" (Psalm 91:16, NIV 2011).

I have come to embrace the truth that God may not completely heal me physically, but He has provided emotional and spiritual healing. If we allow Him, He does that for all of us, no matter what we have been through. Romans 8:18 reminds us that our current suffering represents a temporary circumstance when seen in the light of eternity. I find my greatest source of happiness in knowing where I am going and understanding God’s purpose for my life. As Paul reminds us in 2 Corinthians 12, God is all we need.

God prepares all of us for our journeys through life. And we all have tests and challenges in our lives. Even in the midst of His apparent quietness, God loves and takes care of us. Asking "why" questions and thinking about what you have lost will lead to despair. God can help us trade despair for peace. Although it is not always easy, focusing on today and the future, looking for a purpose, looking for God’s lessons, being thankful and anticipating His coming can help restore and maintain that sense of peace.

As happened to me on that day in 2003, circumstances can happen that can change our lives in a dramatic way. Choosing to respond by trusting God allows Him to use us for His purpose and His glory. As Psalm 91 promises, God takes care of those He loves.

"Because he loves me," says the Lord, "I will rescue him; I will protect him, for he acknowledges my name" (Psalm 91:14, NIV 2011).

Editor’s Note: This article has been excerpted from the spring 2014 edition of Today’s Christian Doctor, a publication of Christian Medical & Dental Associations. To read the article in its entirety, visit www.cmda.org/tcd.
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