

inspire

YOUR HEALTH, YOUR LIFE

ECOTHERAPY: Walk Away From Your Worries

HEALTH TIPS FOR
NAILS, SKIN AND SUN

SHAKING SODIUM
OUT OF YOUR DIET



IF YOUR **Nails** COULD TALK

It's normal to clip the occasional hangnail or catch your fingertip in a door. However, you should keep an eye out for the following nail symptoms that could point to more serious medical conditions:

- **Darkened cuticles and colored streaks** that develop on nails are called Hutchinson's nail sign. They can indicate that you have melanoma, the most aggressive form of skin cancer.
- **Splinter hemorrhages** are red streaks in the nail bed and may signal an infected heart valve, especially if you haven't injured your nail recently.
- Heart conditions and lung diseases can cause **clubbing of the fingernails**. Clubbing symptoms include softening of the nail beds, bulging fingertips and increased nail curvature.
- **Brittle nails** and nails that split away from the skin can be signs of an underactive or overactive thyroid. They can also signal the development of psoriasis, a skin disease that causes redness and irritation.

If your nails exhibit any of these signs or if they don't look normal to you, don't hesitate to contact your medical provider.

Source: National Library of Medicine

Know Your **ABCDEs**

Detecting skin cancer doesn't require a complicated screening or exam. One of the best ways to detect melanoma early is by checking your skin once a month for one or more of these features:

- **ASYMMETRY** — The mole or birthmark has mismatched parts.
- **BORDER** — The edges of the spot are blurred, notched, jagged or irregular.
- **COLOR** — The color changes throughout the mole and may contain shades of brown, black, and — less frequently — white, red, pink or blue.
- **DIAMETER** — The mole or birthmark is wider than a quarter of an inch.
- **EVOLVING** — The color, size or shape of the spot changes over time.

Use both a full-length mirror and a hand-held mirror to check your entire body, including areas that are difficult to see. Ask your doctor about any concerning developments.

Source: American Cancer Society

Sun PROTECTION



Protect your eyes and skin from sun damage all year round by:

applying sunscreen with an sun protection factor (SPF) of 30 or greater to all exposed skin areas

wearing sunglasses that block 99 percent or more of the sun's ultraviolet (UV) rays



dressing in clothes that cover more of your skin, especially if their labels display a UV protection factor (UPF) of 30 or higher

choosing hats with brims that are at least three inches wide



Source: Skin Cancer Foundation

DEEP DIVE INTO WOUND CARE

Some of the basic principles of wound healing have been known since 2000 B.C.

If you lived in ancient Egypt, chances are good any wounds you experienced would be painted green. In addition to the color representing life, green paint contained copper, which killed bacteria in the wound and fought infection. Fortunately, wound care therapies have grown by leaps and bounds in the intervening years.

HEALING WITH OXYGEN

While the concept of wound healing was introduced more than 4,000 years ago, modern wound care treatments weren't developed until the 20th century. Perhaps one of the most important advances is hyperbaric oxygen therapy.

The first time hyperbaric oxygen therapy was used in the United States, it wasn't to heal wounds — it was to treat the flu. It lit a spark in the minds of physicians, however, and a few decades later the U.S. Navy used it to treat its divers suffering from

decompression sickness. Hyperbaric oxygen therapy is good for slow-healing wounds because it is typically done in a pressurized chamber or room, which allows the blood to carry more oxygen.

OTHER THERAPIES

Modern wound care treatments benefit a wide range of people, including those with pressure or radiation sores, slow-healing surgical wounds, foot ulcers, or other nonhealing wounds, such as those due to diabetes. In addition to hyperbaric oxygen therapy, other wound care treatments include:

- artificial skin grafts
- compression stockings to improve blood flow
- debridement, which removes dead skin and tissue
- negative pressure therapy
- ultrasound waves

Your doctor can determine the best treatment method for your wound.



GET BACK TO THE LIFE YOU LOVE!



Jeffrey Cole, M.D.

The DeKalb Regional Medical Center Wound Care Clinic provides specialized treatment for chronic or nonhealing sores or wounds that have not significantly improved after

conventional treatments.

“Associated with inadequate circulation, poorly functioning veins and immobility, nonhealing wounds contribute to lower quality of life and may lead to amputations,” says Jeffrey Cole, M.D., board-certified General Surgeon and Medical Director of Wound Care. “When wounds persist, a specialized approach is required for healing.

With treatments available, including debridement, dressing selection, special shoes, hyperbaric oxygen therapy and patient education, the DeKalb Regional Wound Care Clinic can help you return to the life you love.



Dr. Cole is an independent member of the medical staff at DeKalb Regional Medical Center.



If you or a loved one has a nonhealing wound, contact the DeKalb Regional Medical Center Wound Care Clinic to learn about ways our wound care specialists can help. Call (256) 997-2526.

Fast Fact

One interesting — and effective — early wound care treatment was honey. Used by both the ancient Egyptians and Indians thousands of years ago, honey has antibacterial properties and is still part of some wound care treatments today.



OUTDOOR RX

Whether you prefer exercising outdoors, meditating in a natural setting or simply working in your garden, ecotherapy — healing time spent in the natural world — offers something for everyone.

In the 1980s, Harvard University biologist Edward O. Wilson, PhD, presented a concept called “biophilia” in which he argued that humans have an innate love of and connection to nature. Today, scientific research shows that connection has numerous positive effects on our health.

A slightly unconventional practice called ecotherapy is becoming more commonly used as part of mental health treatment in the United States. Used to treat many conditions, including depression and anxiety, ecotherapy works to address a wide variety of stressors through outdoor activities including adventure therapy, meditating in nature, working in gardens and on farms, playing with animals and getting involved in conservation activities.

CALL OF THE WILD

Have you ever been sitting at your desk at work and noticed you felt completely unable to focus? Next time that happens, try taking a walk outside. Even a brief period spent experiencing the sights and sounds of plants and animals improves your ability to concentrate and renews your reserves of patience.

This phenomenon of directed attention fatigue is similar to attention deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), present in both children and adults. While spending time in natural environments benefits

everyone, researchers believe people with ADHD may especially see results.

LEAVE YOUR TROUBLES OUTSIDE

Approximately 85 percent of Americans don’t have access to forests, according to the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation, but everyone can reap the benefits of being in nature. Spending time in a park or garden, or strolling down a sidewalk lined with trees, provides some of the same benefits as walking through a traditional forest — inner calm and feelings of well-being.

About 350 million people suffer from depression worldwide. Treatment options for most are psychotherapy, medication or a combination of both. Ecotherapy is a treatment option that most people can access at little to no cost.

Researchers at the University of Essex found a walk in a park improved feelings of depression in about three-fourths of participants, and 90 percent felt a higher level of esteem.

Ready to take a walk for better health? Talk with your doctor about the potential benefit of getting outside and enjoying green spaces.

MORE MELATONIN

When you were younger, did your parents ever send you outside to run around and exhaust yourself? Apparently, they were on the right track. This approach works for adults, too, but it isn't just the exercise that makes you sleep better at night.

Experiencing natural light and its fluctuations prompts your body to produce melatonin, a hormone that helps your body maintain a healthy sleep cycle. Adequate sleep is important — not only for feeling rested but also for things like concentration, proper judgment and memory.

When your body produces enough melatonin, you're more likely to sleep deeply through the night. A good night's sleep allows your brain to process the things you learned and did that day, consolidating memories and allowing you to retain new information.

TAKE A FOREST BATH

Don't worry — you don't need a swimsuit or towel for this adventure. Forest bathing, also known as shinrin-yoku, is a Japanese healing method that refers to the act of simply spending time in the forest. It's not hiking or adventuring with any real destination in mind. You aren't trying to get somewhere. You're there to absorb the experience of being in nature.

The concept of shinrin-yoku is an important part of preventive healthcare in Japan and South Korea today and is supported by extensive research.

Known benefits include:

- better mood
- better sleep
- higher energy levels
- improved healing after surgery or illness
- lower blood pressure
- lower stress levels

Whether forest therapy is offered near you or not, you can practice shinrin-yoku on your own. Find a park or hiking trail nearby, ideally where you can be covered by a tree canopy, and set aside some time to meander and be present in the greenery that surrounds you.



Q



A

Andrew Hester, M.D., board-certified Orthopedic Surgeon, is now providing full-time orthopedic care in DeKalb County at DeKalb Orthopedics and Sports Medicine.

Living the Dream

Q. How long have you been practicing? How did you get started in medicine?

A: I have been practicing for seven years total. I spent five years in Calhoun, Georgia, and moved to Gadsden to have a better family life. For the last two years, I have been working in Gadsden and Fort Payne. I've recently decided to dedicate my full attention to Fort Payne and DeKalb County to help serve the community and patients who have welcomed me so openly.

My interest in medicine began as a child. I knew I wanted to be an orthopedic surgeon when I broke my arm at age 6. I've never veered from my original plan. As Mark Twain said, "The two most important days of your life are the day you were born and the day you find out why."

I truly believe I am doing what I was put on this Earth to do, and I am beyond grateful to have the privilege to do it.

Q. What has surprised you about being a doctor?

A: I would have to answer that in two parts. First, I have been surprised by the patient relationships I have built. It is truly humbling to have not only patients put their trust in you but who trust you enough to refer their family and friends to you as well. I still have patients who drive from Georgia to see me every month. There are few things I am more humbled by than that. Second, it is rare that I feel like I am going to a job. I have been blessed to enjoy being an orthopedic surgeon. It's rewarding, challenging and fun all at the same time.

Q. What do you like most about being a doctor?

A: I try to treat and speak with everyone, whether it be patients, hospital staff or families, as if they were my own parents. I try not to let a word or action come from me that my mom or dad would chastise me for saying or doing. I think that is really the key to success as an orthopedic surgeon or any other service profession.

I live by three very simple rules.

1. Show up and be nice.
2. Treat everyone as you would your mother.
3. The right thing to do always hurts the worst.

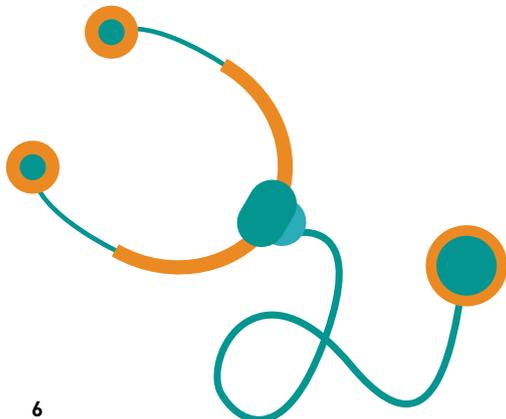
Q. If there were one thing you'd like to share with your patients, what would it be?

A: Specific to my profession, I enjoy helping people get back to their regular lives. I help patients get back to being themselves. I'm able to replace someone's knee or hip and have them walk without pain, or fix someone's rotator cuff and get them back to work or playing golf. There is such a wide variety of patients, needs and procedures that there is never a dull moment. Sometimes, all people need is just a hug and some reassurance. Those are the times you really feel rewarded.



Need an orthopedic surgeon? Dr. Hester can help. Call (256) 813-9524 to schedule an appointment.

Dr. Hester is a member of the medical staff at DeKalb Regional Medical Center.





Sneaky SODIUM

Too much sodium can cause high blood pressure and put your heart at risk. Learn how sodium finds its way into your food and how you can avoid it.

Ideal Intake



Adults should consume **fewer than 2,300mg** of sodium every day.



To **MAXIMIZE HEALTH BENEFITS**, adults should limit their daily sodium intake to **1,500mg a day or less.**



▶ People need fewer than **500mg of sodium** a day for their bodies to function properly.



Source: American Heart Association

So Much Sodium

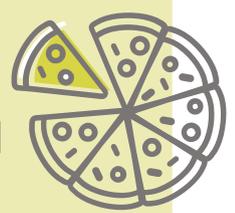
▶ Average Americans consume **more than 3,400mg** of sodium daily.



>75%

MORE THAN 75 PERCENT of consumed sodium comes from prepackaged, processed and restaurant food — not table salt.

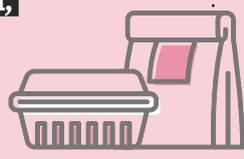
* Many products — like chain pizza — contain **more sodium in the U.S.** than in other countries.



Source: Centers for Disease Control & Prevention

See Ya, Sodium

Prepare fresh meals and **avoid prepackaged, processed and restaurant foods** to cut most sodium out of your diet.



* Check the **NUTRITION FACTS LABEL** for foods with 5 percent Daily Value of sodium or less and products marked "low sodium."

Gradually **reduce your sodium intake** and **use spices** to help your taste buds adjust.



Source: U.S. Food and Drug Administration

DeKalb Regional Medical Center
200 Medical Center Drive
P.O. Box 680778
Fort Payne, AL 35968

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This publication in no way seeks to serve as a substitute for professional medical care. Consult your doctor before undertaking any form of medical treatment or adopting any exercise program or dietary guidelines.

Next Steps »»»» FOR «««« JOINT PAIN

If you thought you'd need a joint replacement "someday," how do you know if someday is today?

Replacement joints now last longer — from 10 to 15 years to as long as 20 in some cases, according to the National Library of Medicine — offering younger patients years of pain-free living. You may be ready if:

- nonsurgical treatments, such as physical therapy and pain management, are not providing relief
- X-rays and other tests confirm damage to the joint
- your physician determines surgery is your best option



Is joint pain keeping you on the sidelines? Call (256) 813-9524 to schedule an appointment with Andrew Hester, M.D., board-certified Orthopedic Surgeon.

Dr. Hester is a member of the medical staff at DeKalb Regional Medical Center.

Patient results may vary. Consult your doctor about the benefits and risks of any surgical procedure or treatment.