

For every
stage
of **life**

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GIVE YOUR HANDS A HAND

Twenty-seven. That's how many bones are in each of our hands, plus muscles, tendons and nerves that control movement. Because we use them all almost constantly, even small changes in how well they function have a noticeable impact on our daily lives.

If you begin to experience pain, numbness or tingling, limitations in movement or weakness in your hands, or postural issues, do not hesitate. That is the time to see your primary care practitioner, chiropractor, osteopath or an orthopedic specialist for a referral to the hand/upper extremity therapists at the WWMG Orthopedic, Sport, Spine and Hand Center in Everett.

The three occupational therapists on staff, Kari Ketner, Sharon Patterson and Victor Gajewski, are trained in specialized assessment and treatment of conditions such as carpal tunnel syndrome (nerve impingement at the wrist), lateral epicondylitis (elbow tendonitis), trigger finger (inflammation of finger tendons), arthritis and fractures.

Regardless of the injury or illness, the focus of rehabilitation treatment is to restore as much functional use as possible to the hands and/or upper extremities.

"Our ultimate goal is to help clients get back to doing their daily activities and occupations," says Ketner.

"After an initial evaluation, the therapist creates an individualized treatment plan, including a home program," adds Gajewski.

"We issue aids for clients to use at home—putty, exercise bands or tubing-- as well as giving them tailored exercises," explains Patterson. "We also make custom orthoses—which resemble casts but are lightweight and removable--to support, immobilize or protect joints."

Occupational therapy can also play an important role in the prevention of overuse injuries. "We can identify risk factors in a workplace or home environment, provide guidance on appropriate modifications and develop programs tailored to each individual," Ketner notes.

General tips for avoiding desk-job overuse injuries include taking breaks to stretch arms and wrists, stretching chest and back muscles, engaging core muscles when sitting and practicing deep abdominal breathing to reduce tension in the shoulders and upper arms.

The Orthopedic, Sports, Spine and Hand Center is at 3726 Broadway, Suite 201. All therapists are accepting new patients. **(425) 317-9119**



BOTOX FOR CHRONIC MIGRAINE

For the past several months, Lake Serene Clinic, a WWMG care center in Lynnwood, has been offering Botox treatments for chronic migraine. A chronic headache is defined as more than 15 headaches a month—with eight of those episodes being full-blown migraines—for at least three months.

Joshua Webb, ARNP, explains that the treatment, administered every three months, consists of a series of 31 injections at very specific points across the forehead, and back of the neck and head. This is usually done for at least two rounds before determining its effectiveness.

“Botox seems to work by reducing the pain messages sent to the brain. Without these, the migraine chain reaction can’t begin. It’s also thought that there could be partially a numbing effect to the head as well,” he says, emphasizing that “it is a very well-defined treatment protocol with precisely mapped injection points.”

Webb adds that migraines are caused by changes in the neurons of the brain, which can become hyper-excitable and more vulnerable to triggers such as stress, lack of sleep or head and neck problems. In fact, *“there can be hundreds and hundreds of triggers.”*

The treatment typically requires insurance pre-approval, and to qualify, patients usually must have failed at least two preventative oral medications.

For more information, call **(425) 742-9119**.



AN ALLERGY CLINIC SUCCESS STORY

When Laura Goodrich was told last fall that the WWMG ENT practice was launching an allergy clinic, her response was: “Sign me up now!”

“I literally was their first patient,” Goodrich recalls. “My allergies had gotten to the point that I could barely breathe. I was on two medications and steroids, and nothing was working anymore.”

After an initial doctor visit and evaluation, Becky Epperson, ARNP, performed allergy testing.

“I think she checked for 120 things and I was allergic to every single one: every tree, every plant, my dog, my cat. Even glycerin, of all things. That one surprised her, but not me. My whole life I’ve had to be careful of what makeup I use, shampoos, conditioners, lotions.”

In people with allergies, the immune system treats allergens as dangerous invaders, mounting an all-out chemical attack. Many allergy symptoms are side effects of those chemicals.

The goal of allergy immunotherapy treatment, which Goodrich began in September, is to keep the immune system from responding inappropriately to allergens through gradual exposure.

“They started me on weekly injections, and within a few weeks, I was off everything except one medication and was already noticing a big difference. At this point, I’ve been feeling really great. It’s made a world of difference.”

When we spoke, Goodrich had just begun the second phase of her treatment with higher-dose injections every 10 days. “My shots started out looking like water and now they look like syrup.”

“If I do well at 10 days for a while, we’ll move them out to two weeks, then three weeks, and eventually, monthly. I could take drops orally at home instead of going to the clinic for injections, but for now I’m better off doing what I’m doing because it’s working. As long as I keep feeling better, I’m a happy camper!”

To schedule an appointment or for more information, please call **(425) 791-3093**. The Allergy Clinic has offices in both Everett and Marysville.

ONE STEP AT A TIME TO A HEALTHY LIFESTYLE

Bonny McMahon remembers the exact date she joined the WWMG Lifestyle Medicine program: January 6, 2013. She also remembers when she reached the milestone of losing 100 pounds: this past February 14.

Since then, she has been checking off items from a celebratory to-do list of 100 entries, including telling 100 people that she loved them. On Valentine's Day she did that on Facebook and asked for 100 "Likes."

"I can't even believe how much better I feel and how much better my life is. Everything's just physically easier, and mentally I'm stronger. I now put myself as a priority... instead of last."

Two and a half years ago, McMahon had multiple health problems and took nine daily medications. Various attempts at weight loss had failed to yield lasting results. Then a middle-aged family member had a heart attack. "He survived, but we are only four years apart and we had a similarly unhealthy lifestyle. I had other clues that I'd better get it together. My grandma died at 64 of a stroke. My mom, who died at 66, had every kind of lifestyle disease, which I also see at the assisted living facility where I work."



"I was on that road, but now I have a healthy lifestyle and the tools to maintain it."

McMahon credits Dr. Marissa Fernandez-Kiemele with giving her those tools in small, manageable steps.



"I think the first thing she asked us to do was to drink only water, coffee or tea for two weeks. I lost about seven pounds in those two weeks."

Subsequent steps included incorporating simple exercises into everyday activities and practicing mindful eating.

"She also demonstrates how to cook healthy foods using produce that's in season, which I knew nothing about. I was brought up on fast food and convenience food."

"And class sizes are small, so she knows us. That's really helpful."

For McMahon, the benefits of the program have spiraled. "Because I'm eating healthy, I crave healthy foods. I feel better, so I am more active. Before, I maybe could walk for 30 minutes; now I maybe sit down for 30 minutes."

Information on current Lifestyle Medicine classes is available at (425) 225-2755.



MAKING COMMUNICATION A PRIORITY

After Dr. Valerie Eckley completed medical school at UW and her residency training in Spokane, she returned to her hometown of Ritzville, in the Moses Lake area, to practice family medicine.

Twenty years later, she decided that Snohomish Family Medicine, a WWMG care center, merited a move across the Cascades. Why? In a nutshell, because of "the combination of the physicians, the staff and the patients."

Dr. Eckley likes the range of family practice and the opportunities it offers to educate patients and help them address lifestyle changes "so they're able to have a higher quality of life, or feel that it is fun, enjoyable and healthy."

Good communication between patient and doctor is essential to that goal.

"It's not just me telling someone what to do, but listening and making suggestions, and if the person is not interested in that plan, then coming up with another one. I factor in the social environment and what's going on in that person's life."

This is especially important, she explains, because many of her patients have chronic issues like diabetes or hypertension or are women, whose health issues change through different periods of their lives.

Dr. Eckley, who joined Snohomish Family Medicine last September, is accepting new patients. Appointments can be scheduled by calling (360) 568-1554. Offices are at 629 Avenue D in Snohomish.

DIABETES ED: ONE SIZE DOES NOT FIT ALL

If you arrived at a meeting and were told there was no agenda, you would probably assume you were wasting your time. And if you were meeting with Meghann Moore at the WWMG Diabetes & Nutrition Education Center, you'd be wrong.

"I don't have a checklist for a visit, because my priority is to find out what's bringing you in. What is it that you want to know and need to know? What is your life like right now?"

Moore, a registered dietitian and certified diabetes educator, explains that her motivation is to help patients fit diabetes into their lives, rather than instructing them how to change everything to fit around diabetes.

"That can involve support resources, coping strategies to deal with stress, guidelines for being active, or information on how medications work in tandem with lifestyle changes."

And, of course, discussions about food, "such an intimate thing that means so much to all of us. The way we eat, what we eat, who we eat with.... There's a huge emotional component to food that has to be respected and understood."

Although Type 2 diabetes is the most common in adults, Type 1 diabetes is increasingly being diagnosed beyond the traditional window of infancy or childhood, says Moore. "In some of those cases it's called LADA (Latent Autoimmune Diabetes in Adults.) For these people there is the extra challenge of managing insulin and, if they so choose, equipment such as insulin pumps."

Helping her clients navigate insurance is also part of Moore's job. "The first year following diagnosis, insurance covers 10 hours of diabetes-specific education and three hours total of medical nutrition therapy with a dietitian."

At the end of our conversation, we come full circle to the goal of connecting with each

individual and understanding his or her situation, including financial constraints.

"In a way, eating well and being able to feed your family well these days is a privilege mainly for people who have the money to do it. If you're paying a dollar a pound for broccoli but you can get a burger for a dollar at the local fast-food drive-thru, of course you're going to get what gives you the most calories for what you can afford. So again, when I know somebody's situation, I can say: 'Let's look at the fast food menu together; can we choose the best option for you?'"

"It can be overwhelming at any age to be told that you have any type of diabetes, and you don't get to go on vacation from diabetes, so you've got to work with what's reasonable."

Moore, who holds a Master of Public Health from the University of Washington, joined WWMG in June after seven years at the Polyclinic. There she was instrumental in starting its diabetes education program.

She meets with clients two days a week in Bothell and one day a week in Marysville. Call **425-791-3087** for more information.



Our Specialties

Audiology & Hearing Aids, Cardiology, Clinical Laboratory, Clinical Research, Critical Care, Diabetes & Nutrition Education Center, Ear, Nose & Throat/Allergy/Audiology, Endocrinology & Metabolism, Endoscopy, Facial Plastic & Aesthetic Services/Lumina, Family Practice, Gastroenterology, Gateway Surgery Center, Nephrology, Orthopedic Sports, Spine & Hand Center, Pathology, Podiatry, Psychology, Pulmonary/Sleep Medicine, Rheumatology, Urology, Walk-In, North Puget Sound Center for Sleep Disorders

We're experts in our field.

Western Washington Medical Group has over 90 providers in 17 specialties with 22 locations in Snohomish, Skagit and Island counties. We strive to provide the highest quality, comprehensive medical care for our patients, which is why we require all of our physicians to be board certified/eligible in their specialty.