

About Integrative Medicine

A GUIDE TO SELF-CARE AND SUPPORT | WINTER 2019



Jun Mao, MD, MSCE
Chief, Integrative Medicine Service

CHIEF'S NOTE

Welcome to the winter issue of the Integrative Medicine Service newsletter. This month, we celebrate the new year with tips from our fitness experts on sticking to the resolution to include more exercise in your week; share our latest efforts to help you get a good night's sleep; explore the relationship between sugar and cancer in our "Ask the Expert" series; invite you to sign up for a winter class; and discover melatonin in the About Herbs feature.

Happy New Year!
Jun



Join a Six-week Yoga Course Starting in January

Yoga for Healthy Joints

Improve mobility and stabilization of the hips and pelvis. Learn gentle Hatha yoga poses and stretching to support joint mobility while strengthening the surrounding muscles and tendons. Breathwork and meditation can help alleviate chronic pain.

Tuesdays, January 15 to February 19, 2020
6:00 PM to 7:00 PM
Evelyn H. Lauder Breast Center
Fee: \$120

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

New Year, New You! How to Include More Exercise in Your Routine

By Christina Seluzicki

Many of us want to make changes in the new year and engaging in more regular physical activity is a popular resolution. The American Cancer Society, the American Society of Clinical Oncology, and the American College of Sports Medicine all recommend that people with cancer avoid inactivity and return to normal daily activities as soon as possible. But managing cancer treatments or adjusting to survivorship, which may include side effects like fatigue and pain, as well as difficulty getting motivated and staying interested, can make this a challenge.

To help people with cancer meet their wellness goals, mind-body and fitness experts at MSK's Integrative Medicine Service provide a robust schedule of classes and individual sessions for all ages and abilities at two locations in Manhattan. Our exercise classes are designed to support the needs of special populations such as young adults with cancer, breast and gynecologic cancer survivors, prostate cancer survivors, and those with concerns about bone health. In addition, MSK offers yoga and tai chi classes

that combine movement and meditation to reduce stress and improve balance and flexibility. To better serve the needs of people outside of Manhattan, MSK is now partnering with community yoga centers to offer classes to people with cancer at or near MSK regional sites. Currently, the program is available in Westchester, Suffolk, and Nassau counties.

Below, our mind-body and fitness experts, tai chi instructor Robin Hardbattle, yoga instructors Clare Patterson and Tina Paul, and fitness instructor Lauren Chiarello, share tips for setting realistic goals to commit (or recommit) to making exercise a regular part of your life.

Learn about our class schedule at www.mskcc.org/cancer-care/diagnosis-treatment/symptom-management/integrative-medicine/therapies/classes.

Contact us at yoga@mskcc.org to learn more about our regional yoga program.

TIPS FOR (RE)COMMITTING TO BEING PHYSICALLY ACTIVE IN THE NEW YEAR



Give yourself time to relax into and enjoy the practice.

If you feel rushed, you won't enjoy it! — Robin



Try practicing with music.

Tai chi is rhythmic, let the music help you move! — Robin



Do a few simple movements and stretches first thing in the morning.

You might notice how much better you feel throughout the rest of your day. — Clare



Practice self-compassion and kindness.

If you miss a day or don't meet your goals, avoid self-critique. Treat yourself how you would a close friend. — Clare



Make a plan.

Each Sunday, write out your exercise plan for the week. Schedule your workouts like you would any other appointment and adjust your plan as needed. — Lauren

Don't forget the power of your breath.

A slow and steady breath through the nose calms the nervous system and can be practiced anywhere and anytime. — Tina



Find a workout buddy.

When we team up with a friend, we are more likely to show up and stay consistent. We are stronger together! — Lauren



Memorial Sloan Kettering
Cancer Center

Sleeping Well in the New Year: Linking Research to Patient Care

By Eugenie Spiguel

As we welcome 2020 after what may have been a busy — and tiring — holiday season, it is a great time to make sure that you are getting a good night's sleep. MSK's CHOICE study comparing cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT-I) and acupuncture found that both treatments were effective for reducing insomnia. However, patients and healthcare providers are often unaware of the benefits of these treatments for insomnia and may not have access to them at their cancer centers.

To address this knowledge gap, MSK and the Society for Integrative Oncology (SIO) held a fall workshop on "Sleeping Well After Cancer" as part of the SIO 16th International Conference in New York City. The goal of the workshop was to bring together patient advocates and healthcare providers in conversation about how to share the CHOICE study results and to identify and discuss how best to overcome patient, provider, societal, and institutional barriers to making these treatments available. The Patient-Centered Outcomes Research Institute funded both efforts. Researchers, clinicians, and patient advocates plan to publish their

recommendations for overcoming these barriers later this year.

"Sleeping well is essential for the overall health and well-being of people affected by cancer, but sleep issues such as insomnia are often not addressed at clinical visits" says Jun J. Mao, MD, MSCE, principal investigator on the CHOICE study and MSK's Chief of Integrative Medicine. "It is important to prioritize sleep and ensure that patients and healthcare providers are familiar with evidence for effective nonpharmacological insomnia treatments like CBT-I and acupuncture."

If you are struggling with insomnia, MSK's Integrative Medicine Service offers both acupuncture and CBT-I. Acupuncture is available at two locations in Manhattan and at all of MSK's regional sites. To schedule an appointment, call 646-888-0800. CBT-I appointments are available in-person in Manhattan or via live video conferencing for people living in New York State and New Jersey. To schedule an appointment, call 646-888-0847.

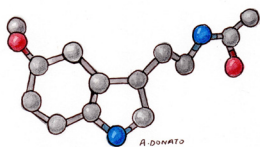
ABOUT HERBS

Melatonin

By Jyothirmai Gubili

Melatonin is a hormone produced by the pineal gland that is released after dark and inhibited by light. It regulates circadian rhythms, sleep, and mood. Melatonin supplements have gained worldwide popularity as sleep aids. They are sold as capsules, tablets, transdermal patches, and in sublingual form. Prolonged-release forms of melatonin are also available.

Clinical research findings suggest that melatonin may decrease the time it takes to fall asleep and improve sleep duration. It may also help reduce jetlag, improve anxiety and pain associated with surgery, decrease



the frequency of migraine attacks, and help improve cognitive function and sleep maintenance in patients with Alzheimer's disease.

Studies in settings for cancer care have shown benefits of melatonin in improving sleep quality in breast cancer survivors, quality of life for patients with metastatic solid tumors, and helping to lower the occurrence

of side effects associated with chemo- and radiotherapy.

Adverse events (unexpected medical events) associated with melatonin use include drowsiness, alterations in sleep patterns, altered mental status, and disorientation. Additional research is underway to determine the potential of melatonin to treat cancer and the safety of long-term use.

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Six-week Yoga Courses

Yoga for Beginners

Yoga is a safe and gentle form of movement that can be done during and after cancer treatment. Learn classical Hatha yoga postures to increase range of motion, improve posture, and build muscle strength. Incorporate breathing exercises to reduce stress and anxiety and promote relaxation. Open to all levels and abilities. No prior experience necessary.

Fridays
January 17 to February 21, 2020
12:30 PM to 1:30 PM
Bendheim Integrative Medicine Center
Fee: \$120

Yoga for Stronger Bones

Chemotherapy, radiotherapy, and hormonal therapy can cause bone loss that may increase the risk of fracture and falls. Practice safe and active yoga poses that can help build stronger bones and increase range of motion and flexibility. Simple breathing techniques and meditation support relaxation.

Wednesdays
January 15 to February 19, 2020
11:00 AM to 12:00 PM
Bendheim Integrative Medicine Center
Fee: \$120

Registration is required. Call the Integrative Medicine Service at 646-888-0800 to register or to learn more about these classes.

ASK THE EXPERT

Gary Deng, MD, PhD

Integrative medicine doctor Gary Deng is the Medical Director for Integrative Medicine at MSK, where he leads the Integrative Medicine Clinical Program. He focuses on incorporating evidence-informed Eastern medicine approaches to cancer care, with a particular interest in nutrition, physical activity, stress management, and sleep. In addition, Dr. Deng advises people with cancer on the proper use of herbs and dietary supplements. Recently, he sat down with us to discuss a common patient question that has been the focus of much discussion in cancer care: sugar.



Gary Deng, MD, PhD

I heard sugar feeds cancer. Is that true? Can I starve the cancer by avoiding all sugar?

It is not true. Almost every cell in the body — good and bad — needs sugar (glucose) for fuel. Cancer cells are aggressive and will take nutrients at the expense of normal cells; you cannot starve the bad cells by not eating sugar. This is why advanced cancer patients who eat very little food can lose a lot of weight while the cancer continues to grow. In addition, it is impossible to totally avoid sugar. Every food has some form of sugar. Even something that does not taste sweet, such as a cucumber, contains a small amount of sugar. This does not mean that we should not be mindful of the amount of sugar we consume. Too much sugar may result in a high level of glucose in the blood (hyperglycemia) that we should aim to minimize.

Another common misconception is that there is "good" and "bad" sugar. Sugar from fruit is not "good" because it is "natural." Most sugar is natural. The white sugar you get from the grocery store comes from sugar cane or sugar beet, both natural plants. Eating too much sweet fruit or white sugar can both cause high glucose levels.

The bottom line: Try to minimize the intake of too much sugar, but you do not need to (and it is also impossible to) avoid all sugar. How much is too much? There is no absolute cut-off value. In general, aim to eat foods with less than 10 grams of added sugar per meal.

Do you have a question for our integrative medicine experts? Email us with "Ask the Expert" in the subject line at aboutherbs@mskcc.org. We may feature your question in an upcoming issue!

Bendheim Integrative Medicine Center
1429 First Avenue at East 74th Street
Appointments: 646-888-0845
www.mskcc.org/integrativemedicine