

EXECUTIVE HEALTH NOTES

Winter 2006

ENTRUST YOUR HEALTH TO THE NAME YOU KNOW

Beyond Thorough, Blood Pressure Test Leads to Melanoma Diagnosis



Dr. Hensrud examines patients thoroughly.

When Ron Bubar had his blood pressure tested, he wondered what he might learn about the health of his heart. Little did he know that his worries weren't internal, but rather external in the form of a curious lesion on the back of his upper arm.

For a few years, Bubar had been seeing Donald Hensrud, M.D. at the Mayo Clinic in Rochester Executive Health Program. After having a coronary bypass several years prior, Bubar was most concerned about symptoms he was experiencing relative

to his heart. His heart checked out fine – but his skin did not.

“Dr. Hensrud actually put the blood pressure cuff on me himself,” says Bubar. “When he did, he noticed an area on the back of my arm which was out of my view. When he asked me how long it had been there, I didn't know what he was talking about. After they did a biopsy, I found that this patch of skin I'd never even seen was actually a malignant melanoma.”

The melanoma was removed just in time. Bubar and his physicians believe the margins were deep enough that it wouldn't have taken long before it migrated elsewhere in his body.

“I've had two events in my life that were somewhat threatening – this melanoma and my coronary artery disease,” recounts Bubar. “Both were found by physicians and both took me by surprise. I'm convinced that

if I had been anywhere but Mayo Clinic, this melanoma would have gone on for too long undetected.”

“The exam is so thorough, they truly don't leave any stone unturned.”

— Ron Bubar

Although Bubar spent time in the sun when he was younger, playing sports and working outside, he has never been a sun worshiper. This experience made him make changes beyond diet and exercise. He now consistently applies sunscreen and tries to stay out of the sun as much as possible.

Says Bubar, “The exam is so thorough, they truly don't leave any stone unturned. The fact that Dr. Hensrud was so involved, even down to putting on my blood pressure cuff, that was just amazing to me. And, I really think it saved my life. I have to say, Dr. Hensrud truly is a ‘hero’ to me.”



DEAR EXECUTIVE HEALTH PROGRAM PARTICIPANT:

Melanoma - watch for it!

Several years ago, I began to add some dye to my beard to keep the color consistent with my hair. One week, I noticed an area under the right sideburn that had been hidden previously. At first, I thought the dye had stained the skin. But it was not that – it was a melanoma. The diagnosis was confirmed by a biopsy with a dermatologist a few days later.

By the time it was removed, the brown area was about the size of a quarter, with irregular edges. Through the use of Moh's surgery performed at Mayo Clinic Arizona, a piece of skin about 4 cm² was removed and the edges sutured, resulting in a type of face lift on only the right half my face! It felt tight for a few weeks, but the area gradually healed and the resulting scar is almost unnoticeable today.

Both melanoma and non-melanoma skin cancers are increasing in incidence, related primarily to sun exposure. There have also been medical reports that ultraviolet rays from non-filtered fluorescent light fixtures may contribute to the incidence, along with arsenic, coal tar, creosote and radium.

Leslie Christenson, M.D., author of a study recently reported in JAMA has observed that "Younger people are getting these cancers, and changes in sun exposure behaviors to prevent this are increasingly important."

So be aware. Thoroughly look at your skin regularly and see the dermatologist if you find anything new or different. Use a sunscreen containing moisturizer on your face every morning. And if you are planning to golf, do yard work or spend an extended period in the sun, don't forget to apply sunscreen to all unprotected areas.

Robert Orford, M.D.

Director, Executive Health Program

Skin Cancer: Prevention is Key Year-Round

Skin cancer is the most common cancer in the United States and is increasing rapidly. Although more benign forms of skin cancer such as basal cell and squamous cell carcinomas are on the rise, the greatest increase has been in melanoma, the most serious and deadliest type of skin cancer. In fact, the percentage of people with melanoma has more than doubled in the last 30 years.

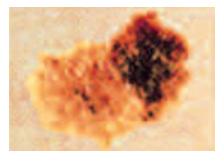
Although the statistics are grim, the good news is that many cases of skin cancer can be prevented by taking a few relatively simple precautions:

- **Avoid the sun between 10 a.m. and 3 p.m.** Try to schedule outdoor activities for other times of the day, even in winter or when the sky is cloudy.
- **Wear sunscreen summer and winter.** Be sure to use a broad-spectrum sunscreen year-round with a sun protection factor (SPF) of at least 15. Use sunscreen on exposed skin, including your lips, the tips of your ears and the backs of your hands and neck.
- **Be an educated sunscreen consumer.** Sunscreen labels can be confusing, and sometimes actually misleading. That's why the Food and Drug Administration has instituted new labeling guidelines. Among the changes are the elimination of the terms *sunblock* (no product actually "blocks" UV rays), *all-day* (no sunscreen lasts all day) and *waterproof* (all sunscreens wash off in water to some extent — the new term is *water-resistant*). Sunscreens claiming an SPF higher than 30 are now labeled 30+, rather than 45 or 60, because tests show little difference among products with SPF factors over 30.
- **Wear protective clothing.** Sunscreens don't provide complete protection from UV rays. That's why it's a good idea to also wear dark, tightly woven clothing that covers your arms and legs and a broad-brimmed hat, which provides more protection than a baseball cap or visor. And don't forget sunglasses. Look for those that block out both UVA and UVB rays.
- **Avoid tanning beds.** Tanning beds emit UVA rays, which penetrate deeper into your skin.
- **Be aware of sun-sensitizing medications.** Some common prescription and over-the-counter drugs — including antibiotics; certain cholesterol, high blood pressure and diabetes medications; birth control pills; nonsteroidal anti-inflammatories such as ibuprofen (Advil, Motrin, others); and the acne medicine isotretinoin (Accutane) — can make your skin more sensitive to sunlight.
- **Check your skin regularly and report changes to your doctor.** Examine your skin often for new skin growths or changes in existing moles, freckles, bumps and birthmarks.

The ABCDs of Melanoma

A changing mole is the most important warning sign that a melanoma could be developing. The American Academy of Dermatology suggests that you consult a dermatologist immediately if any of your moles or pigmented spots exhibit:

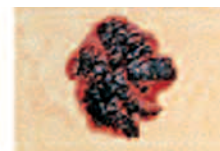
- **A**symmetry; one half unlike the other half
- **B**order irregularity; scalloped or poorly circumscribed border
- **C**olor: variations from one area to another; shades of tan and brown; black, white, red or even blue colors; and,
- **D**iameter: larger than 6mm (the size of a pencil eraser).



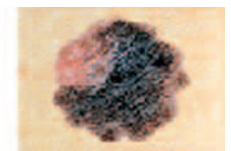
A (ASYMMETRY)



B (BORDER IRREGULARITY)



C (COLOR)



D (DIAMETER)

Ache-Free Travel Tips

If your business requires a fair amount of travel, your body may be paying the price. Although sitting for an extended time may leave you feeling cramped, there are a few things you can do to help diminish the aches and pains of travel.

- Before getting in your car or on an airplane, do a few full-body stretches.
- Wear comfortable, loose-fitting clothing.
- Get up to walk or stretch every hour. In a plane, step into the aisle. When driving, stop the car and get out and walk around.
- Pump your feet several times, as if pushing a car accelerator. This aids circulation in your feet and ankles.
- Do simple seat exercises such as shoulder shrugs, ankle circles, head rolls and wrist rotations.

For more travel tips, visit www.mayoclinic.com.

How to Find Reliable Information About Your Medications

Both the federal government Web site www.medlineplus.gov and the Mayo Clinic Web site www.mayoclinic.com have an extensive database on prescription and over-the-counter medicines and supplements. For Internet information about most medications, type the trade name of the drug (e.g., Lipitor) then press the “control” and “enter” keys (which will complete the name of the Web site automatically, yielding <http://www.lipitor.com/> in this case).

Message Service Change

Executive Health patients at Mayo Clinic Arizona may at times receive a call notifying them that an electronic message is waiting and asking them to call (480) 425-5365. This messaging system has been in place for several years, but there has been a recent change. Instead of using the SSN (Social Security Number) for identification when you call back, the MCN (Mayo Clinic Number) must now be used.

EXECUTIVE HEALTH EARNS 5-STARS!

As part of the 2005 Patient Perception Awards, the Executive Health program was given the highest five-star ranking. The awards are especially noteworthy because they are based on patient interviews – the most important type of feedback we can get.

Who to Contact:

New appointments and general information

480-301-8088

Shelly Zausmer

Lee Hebenstreit

Fax Number

To return your patient questionnaires by Fax:

- Dr. Stepanek’s patients: 480-301-9644

E-mail

mcs.exechealth@mayo.edu

Web Address

www.mayoclinic.org/executive-health

Billing Questions

480-301-8165

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Physicians and Administrative Assistants

- Dr. Robert Orford

480-301-7379

Kim St. John, Assistant

- Dr. Michael Covalciuc

480-301-8285

Laura Taylor, Assistant

- Dr. Pasquale “Pat” Palumbo

480-301-7379

Kim St. John, Assistant

- Dr. Jan Stepanek

480-301-4481

Marci Green, Assistant

- FAX (except questionnaires):

480-301-7569

MAYO CLINIC IN THE NEWS



Jacksonville, Florida



Rochester, Minnesota



Scottsdale, Arizona

Florida: By looking at the ratio between two forms of amyloid beta (A β) protein, researchers at Mayo Clinic believe they have found a way to identify who might develop Alzheimer's disease, as well as its precursor – mild cognitive impairment. Most A β is in a form made up of 40 amino acids (A β 40), but a small percentage has 42 amino acids (A β 42). In all people with Alzheimer's, A β 42 deposits in the brain to form senile plaques, which are one of the pathological hallmarks of the disease. Results of this study were recently presented at the Alzheimer's Association International Conference on Prevention of Dementia in Washington, D.C.

Minnesota: A new Mayo Clinic study provides further evidence of aspirin's benefits for patients with heart disease and suggests they should continue taking it even in the days leading up to surgery. The study further confirms aspirin's benefits for patients with known cardiovascular disease. It also shows there is no increased risk of bleeding, which eliminates the main reason why physicians and surgeons would ask patients to discontinue aspirin

therapy. The study results suggest a reduction in strokes and related events, but the trend was not strong enough to be statistically significant. The findings were published in *Circulation: Journal of the American Heart Association*.

Arizona: Mayo Clinic is among the first medical centers in the nation to treat early cancers of the esophagus, including Barrett esophagus, with two new treatment options – photodynamic therapy (PDT) and radiofrequency ablation (RFA). The incidence of esophageal cancer has tripled in the last 20 years, with early stages of it occurring in younger patients. Esophageal cancer arising from Barrett esophagus is the second fastest rising cancer in the U.S. Approximately 5-10 percent of patients with Barrett esophagus develop cancer. Mayo Clinic in Arizona is the first to perform radiofrequency ablation and the only center in the world currently using the procedure to treat low-grade dysplasia. Although both RFA and PDT provide new hope for patients with Barrett esophagus and esophageal cancers, prevention of acid reflux remains the best defense against esophageal cancer.

Preventive Medicine Update

Curious about the latest in preventive medicine? Here's a brief summary of recent research that might be of interest to you.

- **Echinacea debunked.** A recent study at the University of Virginia found no benefit from echinacea, either alone or in combination, on rhinovirus infections (the "common cold"). The best way to prevent a cold? Wash your hands regularly.
- **Blindness associated with drugs used for erectile dysfunction.** A very small number of patients have reported sudden blindness in one or both eyes after using sildenafil citrate (Viagra), tadalafil (Cialis) or vardenafil HCl (Levitra). Risk factors include a prior episode

of sudden visual loss, age older than 50 years and a history of heart disease, diabetes, high blood pressure, high cholesterol or smoking.

- **Prostate cancer prevention.** Statin medications, used for cholesterol control, and green tea have both recently been reported to lower prostate cancer risk. The benefits of tomatoes and reduced consumption of red meat on prostate cancer risk are already widely known. Regular exercise has been found to slow the progression of prostate cancer.

- **How long will you live?** Check out the Living to 100 Life Expectancy Calculator www.agingresearch.org/calculator for a statistical estimate of your life expectancy. Between 1973 and 2003, estimated life expectancy at birth increased by 6.8 years, from 67.1 to 74.8 for men and from 74.9 to 80.1 for women.

**Reference details are available upon request.*



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