

Pain in Your Foot or Ankle? It Could Be Arthritis

StatePoint

Arthritis in the feet and ankles can produce swelling and pain, deformity, loss of joint function and loss of mobility. Whereas previous generations had to accept this as a normal part of aging, an explosion of new therapies and surgical treatments is offering patients today both hope and relief. For best results however, foot and ankle surgeons urge early intervention.

“When it comes to arthritis, it’s important not to tough out symptoms or bear the pain,” says Danielle Butto, DPM, FACFAS, a foot and ankle surgeon and Fellow member of the American College of Foot and Ankle Surgeons (ACFAS). “Earlier treatment is not just about alleviating symptoms sooner. In many cases, we can even slow the progression of the symptoms, and use less invasive proce-

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Early detection of lung cancer is important

StatePoint

Lung cancer is the leading cause of cancer death in the United States. While early detection can vastly improve a patient's chances to lead a full and healthy life, the majority of those who are high risk are not getting screened.

The American Lung Association, which is committed to defeating lung cancer and supporting those with the disease, is sharing vital information to help more people learn their risk and connect them to screenings and other life-saving resources:

PREVENTABLE DEATHS

According to the 2022 "State of Lung Cancer" report, a mere 5.8% of Americans eligible for a low-dose computed tomography (CT) scan were screened. A low-dose CT scan is a special kind of X-ray that takes multiple pictures as the patient lies on a table that slides in

and out of the machine. A computer then combines these images into a detailed picture of the lungs. Studies estimate that if even just half of the approximately 8 million Americans identified as high risk for lung cancer were screened with a low-dose CT scan, over 12,000 lung cancer deaths could be prevented. In fact, since low-dose CT scans started to be used for screening, it has reduced cancer deaths by 20% and it has reduced deaths from other causes by almost 7%.

RISK ELIGIBILITY

Many people who are at risk for lung cancer and are eligible for screening are not identified and are not referred for screening. Under the most recent lung cancer screening guidelines, those ages 50-80 who have a 20 pack-year smoking history or who have quit smoking in the past 15 years should get screened for lung cancer.

The American Lung Association of-

fers a helpful tool for determining your eligibility for screening, found at www.SavedByTheScan.org.

ELIMINATING RACIAL DISPARITIES

It is especially important for Black men and women to speak to their health care provider about their risk and get screened if necessary, as they are more likely to develop lung cancer and less likely to survive five years with the disease than people of any other racial or ethnic group.

Research suggests that Black Americans have a higher baseline risk for developing lung cancer – Black American smokers get lung cancer at least 20% more often than other people who smoke. Furthermore, systemic racism and injustices and issues continue to persist in the healthcare system, and Black people and other communities

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How urologists detect bladder cancer with blue light cystoscopy

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Like many bladder cancer survivors, Karen S. often reflects on her personal experience with the disease, and the support she received throughout her healthcare journey.

Karen was diagnosed with bladder cancer in 2010 at age 54, after experiencing symptoms for two years. As an oncology nurse for more than 40 years, she was well aware of the many forms of cancer. Nevertheless, she assumed her frequent urinary tract infections and discomfort were gynecological in nature and never expected her doctors to discover a tumor or to be diagnosed with bladder cancer.

After receiving a variety of medical treatments, Karen still had persistent disease. She transferred to a National Cancer Institute-designated cancer center where her bladder cancer specialist informed her about a technology called Blue Light Cystoscopy (BLC) that would allow her doctor to see tumors that white light alone may miss.

“BLC was a quick and easy procedure that gave my doctor the ability to identify tumors early on, allowing for earlier and less aggressive treatment,” says Karen.

Each year, about 81,000 people in the United States are diagnosed with bladder cancer, according to the National Cancer Institute. Symptoms in both men and women can mimic common urinary tract infections, like they did for Karen. For men, however, the more common symptom is blood in the urine. Whatever the symptoms, it is important to see a doctor.

According to Karen, people with bladder cancer, or those who suspect they may have bladder cancer, should ask their doctor questions and seek a second opinion. Once



(c) fizkes / iStock via Getty Images Plus

diagnosed, they should explore support groups and do research on bladder cancer, including learning about the latest treatments and technologies available.

“It’s especially important for me to inform others about the benefits of BLC, since many people may not be aware of this option. BLC may help others diagnosed with bladder cancer the way it helped me,” says Karen.

A cystoscopy is a medical procedure where a urology healthcare professional uses a thin, tube-like telescope called a cystoscope to look

directly into the bladder for a close examination of the lining. This procedure is used to help find the cause of symptoms and to treat and monitor the condition. Historically, the only type of cystoscopy available used white light. BLC, however, uses both white and blue light to offer significantly improved detection of suspicious areas compared to white light alone and has been proven to increase the detection of non-muscle invasive bladder cancer.

Today, Karen is cancer free and continues to support those affected by bladder cancer, including pa-

tients, caregivers and their loved ones, by hosting support groups and working with the Bladder Cancer Advocacy Network. These resources can be found by visiting <https://bcn.org/>.

People experiencing symptoms of bladder cancer and those who have been recently diagnosed should ask their urologist about BLC, because it’s not available everywhere. To search for a location where BLC is offered near you, visit <https://rebrand.ly/BLC-Locator>.

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Do you know where your BBQ beef came from?

StatePoint

As barbecue season heats up, you may be wondering how to square your love for T-bone steaks and spareribs with your concern for the environment. The good news? Science is delivering new, game-changing solutions to tackle the environmental footprint of the beef and livestock industries.

THE PROBLEM

Approximately 9 million dairy cows, 90 million beef cattle, 60 million swine and billions of poultry in the United States produce more than 100 times more organic waste than humans; but where human waste makes its way to a septic tank or sewage treatment plant, livestock waste is usually spread untreated on the ground as fertilizer.

While this practice has short-term agricultural benefits, it's ultimately a major contributor to a number of environmental and health issues. Phosphorous, nitrogen (mostly as ammonia), pathogens and bacteria from manure run off the soil and pollute waterways.

This nutrient runoff fuels increasingly toxic algae blooms in fresh, estuary and coastal salt waters, creating areas where most aquatic species can't survive.

What's more, the highly mobile and volatile nitrogen from ammonia in animal waste can become airborne, a difficult and expensive to control problem that poses significant health risks to humans.

Finally, the 1.5 billion tons of manure generated in the United States annually also plays a major role in climate change. Manure emits carbon dioxide, methane and nitrous oxide, all of which are potent greenhouse gases.

NEW SOLUTIONS

An advanced livestock waste collection, treatment and recycling system from Bion Environmental Technologies Inc. is transforming manure from a liability to an asset.



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It starts with an innovative barn design that houses the livestock, collects waste, and feeds the treatment system on a continual basis.

This patented technology not only provides comprehensive waste treatment that neutralizes pathogens, bacteria and ammonia and minimizes greenhouse gas emissions, but also produces superior organic, and climate- and water-smart, fertilizers with a low carbon footprint, as well as generates clean water and renewable natural gas.

Typical beef production uses an extraordinary amount of water, particularly from crops for feed. With Bion, 30% of the waste stream is processed into recycled, clean water.

And, thanks to precise application of organic and climate-smart fertilizers produced by the system, the resulting soil is healthier with a better balance of nutrients. In short, more abundant crops are produced, less water is used and greenhouse gas emissions are reduced.

Along with environmental stew-

ardship and resource efficiency at the forefront of the technology's design, experts have been retained to ensure that animal accommodations, hygiene, care and feeding are all optimized for animal health and welfare. To learn more, visit bionenviro.com.

"Today's consumers want sustainable, transparent and 'better for you' food," says Bill O'Neill, Bion's CEO. "Through innovation, we are bringing real beef to tables that is both sustainable and ethical."

New Medicare Scams

By Andrew Bird
Financial Concepts

Recent news stories have reported that scams targeting seniors have arisen around the new Medicare cards, which the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) began distributing April 1, 2018.



What consumers should know:

CMS will never ask consumers or members for personal or private information to get the new Medicare number. If members receive a phone call about their new Medicare card, they should NOT provide any information.

Consumers do not need to supply CMS with information to get a new Medicare card. They will NOT receive calls or mailings from CMS asking for information. Consumers should NOT supply anyone with personal information regarding the

new Medicare card.

The new Medicare card does not cost anything. Consumers should NOT provide personal information including bank account numbers or Medicare numbers in regard to the new Medicare card.

Consumers do not need to purchase a temporary Medicare card. Consumers' current Medicare cards are valid and should not be destroyed until they receive the new Medicare card in the mail from CMS. Medicare card replacements are being mailed between April 2018 and April 2019.

The bottom line is CMS will NOT call or send any request asking for personal information in order to mail the new Medicare replacement card.

United Health Care. (2018, April 4). Help Consumers Avoid a Scam- New Medicare Cards.

Andrew Bird, an agent at Financial Concepts in Mesquite, specializes in Medicare and Insurance services. Andrew Bird can be reached at 702-346-7025 or by email at Abird@fcimesquite.com

Cancer

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of color are less likely to be diagnosed early, less likely to receive surgical treatment, and more likely to not receive any treatment at all.

FIGHTING BARRIERS

Despite the fact that lung cancer screening is extremely effective at improving life expectancy and has the potential to dramatically improve lung cancer survival rates, many patients are not getting screened, even when they have a referral from their doctor to do so. The reasons for low screening adherence range from practical concerns, such as financial and transportation barriers, to more elusive issues like distrust of the medical system and lack of awareness regarding the seriousness

of the disease.

Emerging resources are helping eliminate these barriers and are making it easier for people to assess their screening eligibility, locate screening centers, schedule appointments, and receive financial assistance if they don't have insurance or transportation. Free tobacco cessation resources and other lung health resources also exist to help people to reduce their risk. To learn more, visit www.lung.org/lung-health-diseases.org or speak directly to a nurse or respiratory therapist by calling the Lung HelpLine at 1-800-LUNG-USA.

When lung cancer is detected and treated in its earliest stages, more positive outcomes can be expected. That's why it's so important that everyone learns their risk and connects to resources to help them get screened.

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Telephone or Internet Assistance Program

In order to make telephone or Internet service more affordable to low-income households, Reliance Connects participates in the federal government's Lifeline assistance program.

WHAT IS LIFELINE?

LIFELINE is a federal program that reduces the monthly cost of telephone service by \$5.25/month, OR Internet service by \$9.25/month, for qualifying low-income households.

WHO IS ELIGIBLE FOR LIFELINE ASSISTANCE?

If you participate in at least one of the following programs, you may be eligible for Lifeline Assistance:

- SNAP
- Medicaid
- SSI
- Veterans Pension and Survivors Benefit
- Tribal Programs (and live on federally recognized Tribal lands)
- FPHA or Section 8
- Your total household income is at or below 135% of the Federal Poverty Guidelines

HOW TO APPLY

Lifeline requires additional documentation to qualify for benefits. If you meet one of the eligibility requirements above, go to LifelineSupport.org or call 800-234-9473. All information and requirements can be found on the Lifeline website. Please notify the Reliance Connects office after you apply and are eligible at 702-346-5211.

FOR MORE INFORMATION visit LifelineSupport.org or call 800-234-9473.



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New resources for those living with COPD

StatePoint)

Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), a long-term lung disease that includes bronchitis and emphysema, is a leading cause of disability and death in the United States. More than 12.5 million people have been diagnosed, but millions more may have the disease without even knowing it.

Given the tremendous impact COPD has on individuals, it's no surprise that it is a significant healthcare burden in the United States. In 2019 alone, there were close to 1,320,000 emergency department visits due to COPD and close to 536,000 hospitalizations. The total economic cost of COPD in this country is close to \$50 billion each year.

COPD can impact all aspects of one's life, making basic household and personal care tasks difficult. However, there are numerous actions a person with COPD can take to feel better and reduce the disease's impact.

Those who are newly diagnosed

with COPD often have many questions about what they can do to feel better. With this in mind, the American Lung Association has launched COPD Basics, a one-hour online course that is free and open to all. Designed to improve COPD care, the course is meant for people living with COPD, their families and healthcare professionals, such as nurses, physicians and respiratory therapists.

The COPD Basics course will teach participants about COPD risk factors and prevention; recognizing the symptoms and diagnosing COPD; maintaining a high quality of life while living with a chronic disease, and the latest treatments and medications. Healthcare professionals who complete the course may be eligible to receive continuing education credits or contact hours. If you or a family member has recently been diagnosed with COPD, take the COPD Basics course at Lung.org/COPD-Basics.

There is currently no cure for COPD, but new resources can help those living with the disease manage their condition.

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Arthritis

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dures to treat the condition than we would otherwise.”

Understanding the early warning signs of arthritis, the progression of different forms of the disease and the new treatments available are important for getting the proper treatment and managing your symptoms.

OSTEOARTHRITIS

Osteoarthritis is a degenerative condition characterized by the breakdown and eventual loss of cartilage in the joints.

One common area where osteoarthritis occurs is the big toe. The big toe makes it possible for you to walk and run upright, absorbing forces equal to nearly twice your body weight when walking. With all it endures, it's no surprise that overuse can erode cartilage, causing serious pain and even physical deformities. Nevertheless, many people confuse big toe arthritis, also known as hallux rigidus, with bunions.

Early signs of hallux rigidus include pain and stiffness during use, or during cold, damp weather, difficulty with activities like running and squatting, and swelling and inflammation around the joint. Additional symptoms may develop over time, including pain during rest, bone spurs, limping, and dull pain in the hip, knee or lower back due to changes in gait.

If you notice any of these symptoms, see a foot and ankle surgeon. Conservative treatments like shoe modifications, orthotic devices and physical therapy, may prevent or postpone the need for surgery. If you have mid- to end-stage arthritis in your foot or ankle, you may require next steps, such as ground-breaking cartilage regeneration treatment, implant

surgery or the surgical removal of damaged cartilage and spurs, all of which have quick recovery periods.

“People with this disorder tend to suffer much longer than they need to,” says Dr. Butto. “They're often pleasantly surprised when they find out their problem can be fixed.”

RHEUMATOID ARTHRITIS

Rheumatoid arthritis (RA) is a disease in which certain cells of the immune system malfunction and attack healthy joints. Foot problems caused by RA commonly occur in the ball of the foot near the toes, although RA can also affect other areas of the foot and ankle. The most common signs and symptoms are pain, swelling, joint stiffness and difficulty walking, as well as a range of deformities, including rheumatoid nodules, dislocated toe joints, hammertoes, bunions, heel pain, Achilles tendon pain and flatfoot ankle pain.

As part of a team that includes a primary doctor or rheumatologist, your foot and ankle surgeon will develop a treatment plan aimed at relieving associated pain, which may include orthotic devices, accommodative shoes, aspiration of fluid build-up and steroid injections. When RA produces foot pain and deformities not relieved through other treatments, surgery may be required.

“Listening to your body and seeing a foot and ankle surgeon are so important. With today's scientific advances, treatment can reduce pain and restore you to your previous mobility, strength and functionality,” says Dr. Butto.

For more information on foot and ankle arthritis or to find a foot and ankle surgeon near you, visit FootHealthFacts.org, the patient education website of the American College of Foot and Ankle Surgeons.

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