



THE PHYSICAL THERAPY SPECIALTY CENTER

a division of Primary Care Partners

NEWSLETTER

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MEET THE ROTATOR CUFF

There is a lot of confusion about exactly what the rotator cuff is. This confusion leads people to think that it is just one muscle (it is actually 4). Some people refer to it as the “rotary cup” or “rotator cup,” which gives people the feeling that it is similar to a car part or something mechanical. It is mechanically designed with a purpose, and that purpose is to “rotate” the shoulder joint properly to allow for appropriate function of the shoulder joint without pain. When this system doesn’t function properly it can lead to pain and that pain can limit your daily activities, particularly with reaching overhead and behind the back. We are going to delve into this complex system, in hopes that we can help you to understand your rotator cuff and its purpose better. Check out our blog to learn more.

AROUND THE CLINIC:

Summer is heading out and fall is on the horizon. Has anyone had a chance to try some of the wonderful local produce that is grown in our great community? September is fruits and veggies month and we are all truly blessed to be in the great valley that has, not just the ordinary produce, but the amazing Olatha sweet corn, Palisade peaches, Green River melons, just to name a few. Fruits and veggies are important for providing our bodies with appropriate vitamins and nutrients to assist the body as it heals from an injury. If you have not had the opportunity to try these, you are running out of time. Local farmer’s markets have ample amounts of produce, but you can also find them at many road side stands and various farms all over the valley. Celebrate fruits and veggies month and go get some local produce before it is gone.

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Therapy Minutes

This section is to keep you up to date and provide education regarding PT, OT, and Speech Therapy

Physical Therapy: Rotator Cuff surgery or not?

Now that you have gotten familiar with the rotator cuff, we can move on to rotator cuff tears. Rotator cuff tears are one of the most common injuries that occur in the upper body. This injury leads to pain in the shoulder along with limited functionality of the injured arm. Once shoulder pain and impairments begin, people seek treatment through many avenues, but are often overwhelmed and do not know which path is the best for them. This blog seeks to utilize current research findings to help guide the path. Current research is showing very little difference in decreasing pain and improving function in the short term (1 to 5 years) with surgery versus conservative (physical therapy) management. Research also shows that 4 out of 5 people at 10 years continue to show decreased pain and improved function without the use of surgery. Check out our blog (posting September 15th) and find out which path may be helpful for you.

Occupational Therapy: What makes the Human Thumb Unique?

What makes human hands unique? The human opposable thumb is longer, compared to finger length, than any other primate thumb. This long thumb and its ability to easily touch the other fingers allow humans to firmly grasp and manipulate objects of many different shapes.

Most primates have opposable thumbs, while some more surprising animals, such as the arboreal frog, koala and giant panda, also benefit from this useful digit. Nonetheless, out of all these species, humans can reach their thumb the farthest across their hands.

Without our thumb, we wouldn't be able to do half the things we can – open things, turn handles, hold items and pinch. It's one of the key things that separate us from animals, who can't really get a grip to the same level that we can.

The human thumb is used for most everything we do, that is also why it has a tendency to wear out. Therefore it is important to protect the thumb joints as well as all the fingers with a combination of rest, stretching and exercises.

An Occupational therapist can provide you with appropriate exercises and joint protection techniques so your thumbs will stay healthy and happy.

Speech Therapy: Adult Dysphagia

Dysphagia is a swallowing disorder that may involve the oral cavity, pharynx or esophagus. Signs and symptoms of dysphagia include coughing, choking, throat clearing, and/or wet vocal quality during or after eating or drinking. Other signs of swallowing difficulty may include drooling, complaint of food “sticking” in throat, avoiding certain food textures or drinks, and increased time needed to chew or swallow. Some consequences of dysphagia include unintended weight loss, malnutrition, dehydration, aspiration pneumonia, compromised health, choking and even death.

Each year approximately one in 25 adults will experience a swallowing problem. Approximately 30% of the elderly population receive medical treatment for dysphagia each year. Dysphagia can develop due to a stroke, traumatic brain injury, dementia, Parkinson's disease, multiple sclerosis, generalized muscle weakness, as well as a variety of other progressive neurological disorders.

Speech-language pathologists are trained to evaluate and treat dysphagia. Speech therapy interventions include training in therapeutic swallowing exercises, educating the client and caregivers in compensatory strategies, signs and symptoms of aspiration, possible diet modifications, and safe swallow guidelines to enhance swallow safety and ensure proper nutrition and hydration. If you or your loved one are experiencing swallowing difficulty, please contact your medical provider for an order to be seen by our speech therapist.

