



CEDARS-SINAI MEDICAL TIP SHEET: Jan. 2003

NEW CLINICAL TRIALS WILL EXPLORE TREATMENT TO IMPROVE SEXUAL DESIRE

For millions of women, a lack of sexual desire is often an unfortunate consequence of menopause, and can impact a woman's relationship with her partner. Now, new clinical trials at Cedars-Sinai Medical Center may provide hope for many women in the Los Angeles area, as participants are being sought for a study of a new investigational therapy designed to increase sexual interest in women who have experienced a decline in libido after menopause. The clinical trials will investigate whether very low levels of testosterone administered via a thin, nearly transparent patch will increase sexual desire. The patch is worn discreetly on the abdomen and replaced every three to four days. Please call 310-423-3850 or 1-866-409-6626 to learn more about participating in this research.

ANTI-CHOLESTEROL STATINS DO NOT REDUCE REPRODUCTIVE HORMONES IN WOMEN OF CHILD-BEARING AGE

A new study suggests that neither the use of statins nor low blood cholesterol levels significantly affected reproductive hormone levels in pre-, peri-, or postmenopausal women. These findings are the subject of an article appearing in the current issue of the *American Journal of Medicine*. Reproductive hormones are derivatives of cholesterol, which led researchers to wonder if statins, drugs that reduce blood cholesterol, might also decrease reproductive hormones. Fewer than 20 percent of clinical trial participants have been women, and previous studies did not include premenopausal women.

EXCESSIVE HAIR GROWTH IN WOMEN IS NOT JUST A COSMETIC PROBLEM, BUT AN INDICATION OF HORMONE DEFICIENCIES

Many women believe that this excess hair growth is just a natural nuisance and treat the problem cosmetically with hair removal treatments, electrolysis and the like, which only treat the symptoms of a larger problem that is likely hormonal. Women afflicted by Polycystic Ovary Syndrome (PCOS) commonly report this bothersome excess hair growth. Known as hirsutism, women experience excess growth of course, often long and dark hair, in a male-like pattern over the face, chest, abdomen, back, arms and legs. Dr. Ricardo Azziz, Chairman of the Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology at Cedars-Sinai offers expertise and hormone treatment alternatives for hirsutism.

DOCTORS AT CEDARS-SINAI ARE INVESTIGATING LASER EYE TREATMENT OF "LAZY EYE" IN PEDIATRIC PATIENTS

Traditionally, Amblyopia (or Lazy Eye) has been treated with prescription glasses, contacts or invasive surgical procedures - which poses a challenge for pediatric patients with other health complications or who have a difficult time wearing unbalanced glasses or contact lenses. Doctors at Cedars-Sinai are investigating laser eye surgery for pediatric patients with lazy eye between the ages of 7 and 18 years that may eliminate the need for corrective eye wear. Dr. Kenneth Wright, pediatric ophthalmologist has performed this procedure on 12 year old Kiley Bidwell, who had an exceptional outcome. Dr. Wright is now recruiting 10 patients to be part of a clinical study to investigate this procedure as a treatment alternative for lazy eye.

NEURAL STEM CELLS CARRY CANCER-FIGHTING PROTEIN TO TRACK AND DESTROY BRAIN TUMOR CELLS

Researchers at Cedars-Sinai Medical Center's Maxine Dunitz Neurosurgical Institute in Los Angeles have combined a special protein (TRAIL) that targets cancer cells with neural stem cells (NSC) to track and attack malignant brain tumor cells. With its tumor-tracking capabilities and natural cancer-killing properties, the experimental NSC-TRAIL combination may offer new hope for treating gliomas, a particularly deadly type of brain tumor.

STEM CELLS FROM WHOLE ADULT BONE MARROW DIFFERENTIATED INTO CENTRAL NERVOUS SYSTEM CELLS

Researchers at Cedars-Sinai Medical Center's Maxine Dunitz Neurosurgical Institute have generated for the first time neural progenitor cells from whole adult bone marrow. Researchers hope that if these neural stem cells can be transplanted to treat stroke, brain tumors and neurodegenerative disorders, they might provide physicians with a renewable source of stem cells, available from a patient's bone marrow instead of the brain, and without the ethical and tissue-rejection issues associated with the use of fetal stem cells. This research is the subject of the cover article of the December issue of the journal *Experimental Neurology*.

PEDIATRIC NEUROSURGERY TO RELEASE HIS TETHERED SPINAL CORD HELPS YOUNGSTER LOOK FORWARD TO A NORMAL, ACTIVE LIFE

Tethered cord is a congenital malformation of the spinal cord affecting infants and children. Left untreated, it can result in pain, incontinence and even paraplegia. Although some cases are fairly easy to diagnose, many remain undetected until symptoms progress to a serious stage. Ezra Kahn, age 4-1/2 years, had undergone more than 10 operations before he was brought to Cedars-Sinai where he was diagnosed and treated by a team of multi-disciplinary pediatric surgical specialists. Now approaching 5 years of age, the active youngster takes swimming lessons, plays basketball and is living life to the fullest.

SON'S BRAIN TUMOR MOTIVATES MOM TO REACH OUT TO OTHER LATINO PARENTS WITH SERIOUSLY ILL CHILDREN; RAISES MORE THAN \$140,000 TO AID UNDERPRIVILEGED FAMILIES

Tasha Noriega's otherwise healthy son Jonathan was diagnosed with a tumor in his brain. It was the size of a lemon. At that time Tasha had no idea what her son's condition implied or how the ordeal would eventually lead her to help other Latinos with seriously ill children. After Jonathan underwent a risky, but successful surgery to remove the tumor, performed by Dr. Keith Black of the Maxine Dunitz Neurosurgical Institute at Cedars-Sinai, his prognosis is great. Thankful that they had been so fortunate, Tasha determined to help other Latino parents who were facing challenges finding help for their seriously ill children. After hearing about a struggling grassroots organization called Padres Contra El Cancer (Parents Against Cancer) she left her job at the Dodgers to spend more time with Jonathan and to dedicate herself to fundraising efforts for cancer research. Padres helps children with cancer and their families by educating them about the illness, finding the best medical advice, helping them find their way through the mob of insurance companies, and breaking down language and cultural barriers that complicate communication. Tasha used her experience from working with the Dodgers to organize several fund-raising dinners for the Padres, which seemed at first like a great challenge for a small organization that had almost no budget. However, Tasha was pleased to find that her work had not been in vain. The first benefit raised a remarkable \$60,000. Then the second one topped it by raking in an astonishing \$80,000.

CEDARS-SINAI RECOGNIZES MLK'S BIRTHDAY WITH SYMPOSIUM FEATURING THE HONORABLE LOUIS W. SULLIVAN, M.D.

Brian D. Solberg, MD, has been recruited by Cedars-Sinai Medical Center to serve as director of orthopedic Cedars-Sinai Medical Center will celebrate Martin Luther King, Jr.'s birthday with a symposium, entitled the Challenges of Health Disparities in America, that will feature Louis W. Sullivan, M.D. Dr. Sullivan is the former Secretary of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services under President George H. Bush and the founding dean and first president of Morehouse School of Medicine. Dr. Sullivan will discuss the accessibility and provision of healthcare in the United States. More than 150 physicians and staff will attend the symposium in honor of Martin Luther King, Jr.'s birthday on Monday, January 20, 2003 from noon to 1:00 p.m. at the Harvey Morse Auditorium at Cedars-Sinai Medical Center.

NEW CHAIRMAN OF OBSTETRICS AND GYNECOLOGY BRINGS EXPERTISE IN POLYCYSTIC OVARY SYNDROME, FERTILITY AND MENOPAUSE

Ricardo Azziz, M.D., M.P.H., M.B.A., recently appointed Chairman of the Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology and Chief of the Division of Reproductive Endocrinology and Infertility at Cedars-Sinai Medical Center, specializes in research an innovation related to Polycystic Ovary Syndrome, Hirsitism and other women's health issues. Bilingual in English and Spanish, his expertise and Cedars-Sinai's previously established women's health programs provides an excellent opportunity to educate and build awareness about women's health in the community.

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