

# Connecticut Orthopedic Update

November 2002 • An Independent Orthopedic & Sports Medicine Newsletter for Physicians and Others

## Irritable Bowel Linked To Fractures

Patients with inflammatory bowel disease (IBD) have a significantly higher risk of fractures, according to a new study in the UK and the Netherlands. Researchers found patients with Crohn's disease had a higher fracture risk than patients with ulcerative colitis. The risk of hip fracture was increased by 86% in Crohn's patients and by 40% in ulcerative colitis patients. Researchers recommended that IBD patients should receive counseling on ways to reduce bone loss.

## Ski Tips For A Safe Winter

While popular with all ages, skiing is responsible for more than 41,600 skiing-related injuries to youths under age 15. To enjoy a safe ski season, the U. S. Consumer Product Safety Commission, U. S. Skiing Association and National Sporting Goods Association recommends that skiers should ski with partners and stay within sight of each other. Skiers should also wear an approved helmet to protect from head injuries as well as wear boots and bindings that have been set, adjusted, maintained and tested by a ski shop that follows American Society of Testing and Materials (ASTM) standard job practices. Skiers should check the binding of each ski before skiing. Since most injuries occur when skiers are tired at the end of the day, skiers should rest when fatigued.

## Pain In the Neck Merits Check-Up

Neck injuries, resulting from a ligament sprain or muscle strain often associated with motor vehicle crashes or hard falls in a contact sport or elsewhere, can often resolve themselves with proper diagnosis and treatment. Your doctor will measure range of motion and check for any point tenderness. X-rays will also help your doctor spot other sources of neck pain, including spinal fractures, dislocations, arthritis and other serious conditions. You should see your doctor if you have pain, especially in the back of the neck, that worsens with movement; pain that often peaks a day or so after the injury, instead of immediately; muscle spasms and pain in the upper regions of the shoulders; headache in the rear of the head;

sore throat; increased irritability, fatigue, difficulty sleeping and difficulty concentrating; numbness in the arm or hand or tingling or weakness in the arms.

## Cysts Not Always Cause For Alarm

Finding a lump on any part of the body nearly always causes patient concern, but when it comes to a lump-like growth on the hand or wrist, harmless ganglion cysts are usually the culprit. Ganglion cysts generally grow on the top of the wrist, on the underside of the wrist, at the end joint of a finger or at the base of a finger. Ganglion cysts seem to affect women more than men and are especially common in gymnasts, who tend to stress the wrist. Your doctor will help you assess the cyst and recommend any necessary treatment.

## Nutritional Supplements Effective?

A recent study in the Journal of Clinical Gastroenterology concluded that of the five of the most popular performance-enhancing supplements, including androstenedione, creatine, chromium, ephedra, and protein and amino acid supplements, only creatine may be marginally beneficial. Researchers found, however, that the potential benefit would probably only be useful to the professional athlete and not the average person. Since all of the supplements have potentially harmful side effects, none are recommended by researchers for use.

## Exercise Aggravates Achilles Tendon

Achilles tendonitis, an inflammation of the Achilles tendon which connects the calf muscles to the heel bone, is a common injury for weekend warriors and competitive athletes. That mild pain and stiffness after exercise or running that gradually worsens, is a sure sign you need to see your doctor for a proper diagnosis. Treatment usually involves rest; nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory medication; a bandage specifically designed to restrict motion of the tendon; and stretching, massage, ultrasound and appropriate exercises. Your doctor may also recommend orthoses, devices to help support the muscle and relieve stress on the tendon such as a heel pad or shoe insert.

*Connecticut Orthopedic Update is published by Connecticut Family Orthopedics, 33 Hospital Ave., Danbury, CT. Comments or suggestions for future editions may be sent to Gabe Carubia, Practice Administrator, who may be reached at 203-792-5558; via email at [ct.fmly.orthopedics@snet.net](mailto:ct.fmly.orthopedics@snet.net); or via fax at 203-731-3213.*