Vol. 1, No. 2 Fall 2011

San Antonio's Guide To Health And Wellness

PeakLife SA MAGAZINE

Award-winning P.E. Teacher Makes Fitness Fun

Kids Are Rockin' Their Way To Fitness!

The Importance Of Health Literacy

San Antonio Schools Add 100 Salad Bars

PeakLife SA MAGAZINE

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Terri O'Bryant makes physical fitness fun. She is pictured here working with several students at Converse Elementary School

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Want to lower your blood pressure, increase immune system function and feel happier, try upping your touch time. Whether it's a yummy massage, holding hands with your partner or cuddling up with Fido, touch helps slow the heart rate and reduce that nasty stress hormone cortisol (not to mention it just feels good).

Letter from the Editor

In May, I completed my first triathlon. This was a momentous victory after six knee surgeries spanning ten years. The last of the surgeries was in 2008, and involved transplanting new cartilage and realigning the tibia. My daughter, Katie, was not yet three at the time, and I had no idea how I was going to care for her while immobilized for months. With my leg in a full splint and crutches, I was not able to bring her a cup of milk or help her reach toys. I was scared and frustrated. Yet I knew that this was a critical time for me as a mother. My daughter was watching and absorbing the way I handled this challenge. Do I meltdown and wallow in my pain or do maintain my sense of humor and rise up? I wanted to teach my daughter that sometimes life hands you a challenge, and it's your decision how you deal with it. It wasn't easy. I tried to be patient with my recovery and to empower my daughter by giving her projects to help. Today at five years old, she still remembers helping mommy put on her clothes. Together, we made it through the muck, and competing in the triathlon was a celebration of coming out on the other side. When I crossed the finish line hand-in-hand with my husband, Phil, Katie was waiting on the other side with my parents. I was so grateful that my daughter could witness my happy, red, sweaty face as I crossed the finish line and know that anything is possible.

Our children are little sponges. They absorb and mimic our behavior. We teach them not only with our words, but with our actions. This issue of *PeakLife SA* focuses on San Antonio's kids. Award-winning physical education teacher, Terri O'Bryant offers some helpful hints to help make fitness fun for you and your family. Our success story features, Jennifer Meachum, a registered dietician who grew up in San Antonio as an overweight child. Her triumphant story exemplifies the difficulties of breaking out of the mold and rising above. You will learn about local programs that are available for kids, as well as some tips and inspiration for boosting your own health and fitness.

I hope that these pages give you a few ideas to activate and inspire both you and your children.

Let's get SA healthy!

Dianne

Oooops!

There is a proverb which states, "If you don't make mistakes, you don't make anything." At *PeakLife SA Magazine*, we will continually aim for the stars, but are prepared to mess up every now and then.

Our apologies to Dr. Jason Garrett who we incorrectly identified as an M.D. instead of D.C. in the contributor section of our summer issue.

Meet The Staff

Dianne Glover, MPH, Publisher and Editor-in-Chief

Dianne has had an eclectic career. She has been a stage and television actress, a certified aerobics instructor, a certified Wellness Coach and featured columnist for CAPG Health magazine. She received her MPH from University of California Los Angeles (UCLA).

Kymberly Richardson, Director of Sales

Kymberly has been a successful advertising sales executive for over 10 years. The mission of *PeakLife SA* inspired her to get involved in the health and wellness industry on a personal and professional level. Her intention is to inspire the people in beautiful SA to embrace a healthy lifestyle.

Robin Jerstad, Cover Photographer

Robin Jerstad has spent over 20 years as a photographer for prominent newspapers, Reuters News Pictures and the United Press International. He currently specializes in corporate, editorial and portraiture photography. www.JerstadPhoto.com

Valerie Okunami, Production Director

Valerie has spent over 20 years in advertising and marketing as an agent and consultant to a wide variety of businesses in northern California. Her specialty is publishing and she works with companies in the health and medical industries. She is also a certified yoga instructor and owns a successful workplace yoga business.

Converse Elementary P.E. Teacher Inspires The City

By Terri O'Bryant, physical education teacher at Converse Elementary, member of Mayor's Fitness Council, Judson ISD's 2011 Teacher of the Year and the 2010 State of Texas Elementary P.E. Teacher of the Year

Over the past three decades, childhood obesity rates in the United States have tripled; today nearly one in three children are overweight or obese. For the first time in American history, today's children may have a shorter life span than their parents. In San Antonio, 30% of school aged children are overweight or obese. As a physical education teacher, these statistics are staggering to me. Now is the time to stand up, get moving and fight the most pressing health crises in the nation.

How in the world did we get here? I believe we have been on a slippery slope. Thirty years ago, most children led lives that kept them at a healthy weight. They ran around at recess, walked or rode their bike to and from school every day. Eating fast food was rare and snacking between meals was considered a treat.

Today, walking and riding bikes to school have been replaced by car and bus rides. Physical education and after-school sports programs are being cut across the nation. Afternoons are now spent with video games, movies, internet or TV (average of 7.5 hours a day). Parents are busier than ever, and families eat fewer home cooked meals. An explosion of portion sizes has developed. We are eating 31% more calories than we did in the 70's. This includes 56% more fats and oils and 14% more sugars.

The good news is that small steps can cause big changes. In San Antonio, I currently teach a quality P.E./Health program. This program has a purpose, long-term goals, and is developmentally and instructionally suitable for the diverse group of students being served. My goal is to create activities that are fun for the children and motivate them not only in school, but outside the doors of Converse as well.

A few of our recent activities included a Pedometer Walking Team in which students were challenged to walk across America by using pedometers and recording their distance on a map. Each student that walked 10,000 steps received a shoe charm to keep them motivated. We also have a Speed Stacking Team. Speed stacking helps students develop bilateral proficiency, equal performance on both sides of the body. By increasing bilateral proficiency, a student develops a greater percentage of the right side of the brain, which houses awareness, focus, creativity and rhythm. Stacking helps train the brain for sports and other activities where the use of both hands is important, such as playing a musical instrument or using the computer.

It's a sticky job, but Terri does it well.

I have also started a Jump Roping Team. The team participated in the Jump Rope for Hearts benefit to raise money for the American Heart Association. The fundraiser was held during P.E. classes. The kids had a blast... giving to others and getting fit in the process. Last year, Converse Elementary raised nearly $4,000. We added a twist to the event. For $1.00, any student could purchase a foot of duct tape to tape me to the wall of the gym. I stood on a stool for 2 hours as each student that brought money taped me. At the end of 2 hours, I was completely stuck to the wall. And miraculously, the shape that appeared after the students randomly placed the tape was a giant heart. It takes heart to be a hero and these kids are mine.

Every year, our school participates in the Go! Kids Challenge, which is a three-month fitness challenge, offered by San Antonio Sports Foundation. Each student in the class that completes the challenge gets to toss a pie in my face. This is a VERY tasteful event! Making physical activity enjoyable for children will help them to make a lifetime commitment to staying healthy and fit.

Participation by the whole family is important to make a change in children's lives. I try to engage the parents by inviting them to attend Family Fitness Nights and their childs' P.E. class. These programs have been created due to a need in our community. I can educate the students about health and fitness, but if it is not done at home then the child is not receiving the full message. Studies show that children who are active with their parents are likely to be active adults. This will pay huge dividends in their future.

Often parents ask me what they can do to encourage healthy behaviors at

home. I recommend focusing on fun activities that involve the whole family, such as:

- Take the family on a nature scavenger hunt in a local park.
- Get everybody in the family a pedometer and keep a family chart at home.
- Check out the Witte Museum's HEB Science Treehouse - a powerful experience to inspire a balanced life—all while getting the body up and moving.
- Once a week get together and have one family member design his or her own 30 minute gym class.
- Sign up for a 5K or 10K race with your child. Sometimes having a goal in mind can motivate even the most reluctant exercisers.
- Eat dinner as a family. Children can help prepare healthy dishes. If they assist in the preparation, they are more likely to eat the healthy items.
- Make sure that you model good behavior and are active yourself. Children will follow your example.
- Keep a box in the trunk of the car that holds balls, a Frisbee, kite, and jump rope (you'll always be ready for fun!).

Whether it is at home or at school, we need to be teaching the "whole" child. Often school activities focus on measurable, rational qualities. We measure math accuracy, not emotional well-being. So, when the school district's budget gets tight, the "special" areas (art, music, and P.E.) are usually the first to be cut. However, the long term the obesity epidemic that the United States is facing is going to cost our nation more money. In 2000, the total cost of obesity (including medical costs and the value of wages lost) was approximately $117 billion. (U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Services). In 2009, that cost ballooned to $147 billion (U.S. Centers of Disease Control and Prevention). This is approximately 9.1% of total U.S. medical expenditures.

I believe that physical education promotes a sound mind in a sound body. Studies of the brain have shown that quality daily physical education is vitally important for students' learning (Hicks 1995). Research supports the idea that students learn one of three ways: kinesthetically, auditorily, and visually. Removing kinesthetic learning is like putting a blindfold on a visual learner or ear plugs in an auditory learner. The solution is to provide a varied curriculum for all students which establishes the foundation for personal fitness habits and the necessity of physical activity.

My life has been filled with so many adventures and challenges, and I believe that I have grown from all of them. I want to help children learn to be fit and healthy in a fun and educational way, so they will be able to make informed decisions for healthy active lifestyles now and in the future. If you are not healthy and fit, life is more challenging. I truly believe that "You are not fully educated until you are physically educated."

Terri O'Bryant has been married to her husband, Bill, for 28 years and has three sons. She has worked at Converse Elementary for almost eight years. Contact: txgal459@gmail.com.

Fighting Heart Disease One Step At A Time

By Sandy Levy, Communications Director of the American Heart Association, San Antonio Chapter

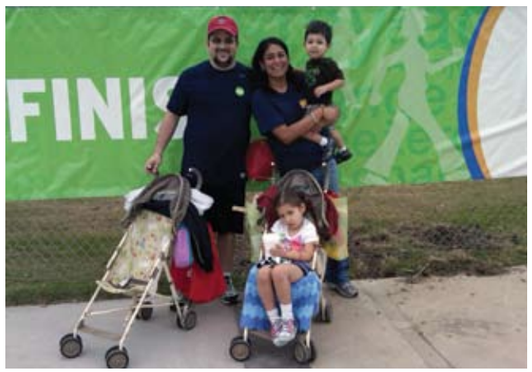
Chase Thalman knows what it is to be given a second chance. This year in June, he celebrated the 40th birthday he thought he might never see. Rather than celebrate with a party, Chase has committed himself to teaching others about the disease that nearly took his life. He hopes that all of us will be more aware of the dangers and make changes that can literally save lives.

In August of 2009, at the age of 38, Chase Thalman had a massive heart attack. He had never smoked; he didn't have diabetes or hypertension; he was not overweight. Chase exercised regularly and considered himself to be in good physical condition. Then on that fateful morning in August, without warning, Chase had a massive heart attack. He was rushed to the hospital and into surgery where doctors discovered he had a 98% blockage as a result of a blood clot that had formed in his artery. "I will always be considered to have heart disease", says Chase. "But the good news is that I am alive and I can tell my story and actively get involved in being part of the cure, in hopes that others can be saved too."

Chase Thalman (pictured here with his family) walks to raise awareness about heart disease.

Chase's story is not that unusual. So many of us, when we think of heart disease, picture old men with pot bellies. But heart disease looks like every one of us. It looks like little Greta Benshetler, who was born on Valentine's Day in 2009 with a congenital heart defect. It looks like women and teenagers, and it looks like Paul Lally who had a quadruple bypass at the age of 41.

What so many of these people have in common is that this battle motivated them to get involved and make a difference. Chase has become an Ambassador for the 2011 Heart Walk. He has set a personal goal to eat healthier, to walk four to five times a week and to encourage others to do the same.Chase decided he would get the San Antonio community to pledge to walk 5,000 miles between March, 2011 and October 22, 2011 – the date of the San Antonio Heart Walk to be held at Brackenridge Park. He is also determined to raise $100,000 to aid in the fight against this number one killer of Americans. Chase created a website: www.texaswalkforlife.com where individuals can pledge to walk any number of miles as part of his "Walk with Chase" team or provide financial support. At this time, individuals have pledged to walk more than 20,000 miles!



Paul Lally, a quadruple bypass survivor, wants to raise awareness of heart disease.

Paul Lally is another survivor who is determined to educate the community about the risks of heart disease and how walking can reduce those risks and change or even save their lives. "I recognize that no one is invincible," says Paul. "I could have died and left my wife without a husband and my children without a father." "I am living now to show the public the tremendous difference that walking can make." To learn more about Paul's story visit www.walkwithpaul.org.

Each month the American Heart Association and Chase have held "Walk with Chase" events at venues all over the city to get the community walking. Chase will culminate his mission for this year at the Heart Walk at Brackenridge Park on the morning of October 22nd. He will have the ultimate celebration of the 40th birthday he thought he might never see. His wife and four children will join in the celebration with him, ever thankful that he is still here with them.

Join Chase and Paul, and thousands of others from the San Antonio community to "Walk Your Heart" and be a part of making our city healthier. Runners, children, and dogs on leashes are welcome at the Walk. Let this be a catalyst to get your entire family walking their way to heart health.

Visit www.sanantonioheartwalk.org to learn more about the event and register to help the cause. See ad on page 6.

New Program Gets San Antonio Girls On The Run

By Minka Misangyi, Ph.D., Executive Director of Girls on the Run of Bexar County and co-owner of CORE: Think beyond the Body, an empowerment program for women

It's 6:30 a.m. at the Earth Day 5K, Woodlawn Lake Park, and the tent and tables are up. It's still too dark to see much, and we're cutting up fruit and arranging the snack table wondering who will come. The hair fixings arrive—pink and green hair spray that may turn out to be more stain than spray, pink and green ribbons, body glitter, and Girls on the Run stickers.

Race day is finally here, the 5K event that concludes Girls on the Run of Bexar County's spring session. We've been pushing them hard toward this day, and the past two weeks of preparation have been like a tempest brewing.

This is their race. The day they've been working toward for 12 weeks. The girls are paired up with their running buddies, adults who accompany them for the entire race to encourage them along the way. No girl gets left behind. We've impressed upon the girls that the goal in running, just like the goal in life, is to keep moving forward. They can run, walk, skip, hop, do a jig, but they cannot stop. And they cannot go backward. In running, just like in life, it is often easier to keep moving when you know someone's beside you. They've had their team beside them all season. Today they will also have their own buddies to ensure they are not alone.

Girls on the Run® was founded by Molly Barker, MSW and four-time Hawaii Ironman triathlete, in 1996. Combining her counseling and teaching expertise with research on adolescent issues, she developed and delivered the first curriculum with 13 girls in Charlotte, North Carolina. The innovative, experiential program combines training for a 5K event with life-changing, confidence building lessons that enhance the physical and mental health of 8- to 12-year-old girls.

Molly first began running at the age of 15 when she found herself stuck in the "girl box," the place where many girls go around middle school when they begin to morph into what they think they should be instead of being who they really are. The messages of the girl box vary but the overarching theme comes from a culture rooted in the belief that girls and women must conform to a set of standards that are often unattainable.

The Bexar County council began offering Girls on the Run at Hawthorne Academy in spring of 2011 with 36 girls. Currently, we are expanding to four more schools and hope to serve up to 150 girls. Any girl in the required age range can join the program; she does not have to attend the school at which the program is offered. With San Antonio ranked as one of the highest in the nation in diabetes and obesity, Girls on the Run could not have arrived in Bexar County at a better time. Although Girls on the Run is an empowerment program that gives girls the skills and confidence to make healthy life choices, running is the tool we use to show them how. At the beginning of the season, many girls are not sure they will be able to run the 5K at the season's end. But as race time draws near, it becomes clear to everyone that the girls are more than able--they are unstoppable.

It's nearly 8:00 a.m. at the start line and the girls' faces glow—and then the race begins! A sea of green and pink amid a flotilla of hair ribbons cascades down the road. The sidewalks are lined with spectators yelling their support to the girls as they complete their two laps around the lake.

The race goes by quickly. Within 27 minutes the first girl and her buddy cross the finish line, followed quickly by others, one after another, all of the girls and their buddies have finished. They run like we've never seen before. Their faces are pink and smeared with sparkly body glitter. Their shirts are twisted and heavy with sweat. And their smiles could light a runway.

For more information on the program or to find out how you can volunteer, visit our website at www.gotrsanantonio.org/, find us on Facebook at www.facebook/gotrbc, or email us at gotr@gotrsanantonio.org.

Minka Misangyi, Ph.D., has two passions: writing and helping people get and stay healthy. She has taught composition and literature at the university level, and now freelances. She writes articles as well as fiction and has just completed a collection of short stories. For more information, contact her at minka.misangyi@yahoo.com.

SA Success Story

By Jennifer Meachum RD, LD, CNSD, the Director of Community Outreach and Employee Wellness for North Central Baptist Hospital

Jennifer Meachum, RD, LD, CNSD before and after.

Growing up in San Antonio, I was always overweight. My mother was a single mom working long hours and going to school to provide the best for us. This translated into many meals away from home and usually not the healthiest. My dad's side of the family is Hispanic which means I was always surrounded by homemade, calorie-laden, Mexican food. My favorites were my abuela's (grandma's) homemade flour tortillas hot off the comal smothered in butter, as well as, homemade tamales, and carne guisada. My abuela was the owner of Olivia's Mexican restaurant in San Antonio, so not only was food a part of my family's livelihood, it was also our way of communicating affection and the center of every family gathering.

Away from home, I began to experience the social ramifications of being overweight. The most painful remarks were those made by my family. In the Hispanic culture, it is widely accepted to joke about being overweight. Overweight children are usually given the nickname gorda or gordo (fat girl or fat boy). At fourteen years old, I was greeted at a family gathering by my uncle who repeatedly slapped my stomach while blurting out, "You sure are packing on the pounds!" Needless to say, I was mortified.

To distract people from my weight, I worked hard at making others laugh. In high school, I was the class clown. If I made others laugh first, I was not the brunt of their jokes. I was accepted as the entertainer. I sat on the sidelines as my friends began dating, going to school dances, and competing in athletics. I didn't even participate in physical education class, as the coach took pity on me and assigned me as the attendance keeper. I continued to create the impression that I was happy, but inside I was lonely and hurting. I sought comfort in food to numb the pain.

Coupled with my unhealthy eating habits was my complete lack of physical activity. On my dad's side of the family regular exercise was not part of their life or culture. My mom enjoyed being active and was always very supportive of any sport I wanted to try. I attempted swimming and tennis lessons, but never felt successful, primarily due to insecurities about my weight.

I continued to pack on the pounds in college and tipped the scale at 230 pounds and a size 20 pants. I was not the class clown anymore, just the fat girl. I was majoring in biology, but I had no idea what I wanted to do with my life. My lack of self-confidence made it impossible to visualize a clear future.

In 1995 on New Year's Eve, my whole life changed. I accompanied my friends to a local club where we spent the night laughing and dancing. At midnight, everyone exchanged the traditional New Year's Eve hugs and kisses, except me. I sat in a corner and found myself overwhelmed with emotion and fighting back the tears. I was surrounded by hundreds of people, but I had never felt so alone. I thought to myself "Is this it?" Am I going to be alone and fat the rest of my life? Am I ever going to marry or have kids? I was terrified, but in that moment, a switch was flipped on. I knew it was time to do something about my weight. It was time to begin to live life, to be healthy and to love myself.

When I started my journey, I knew that I had a long road ahead. I kept my decision a secret. I didn't want to disappoint anyone if I did not succeed. My mom was my cheerleader. She celebrated my successes along the way, picked me up when I was down, and supported my new lifestyle.

I began by following a high fiber, low-fat diet and ate three small meals a day. I started reading about nutrition. I kept a food diary which was a key factor in my success. It made me accountable and forced me to face the truth about what I was eating. I traded my love for unhealthy foods into a passion for cooking nutritious dishes, including makeovers of my Mexican favorites. (See page 12 for one of Jennifer's recipe makeovers.) In the beginning, I was embarrassed about my size, so going to the gym was out of the question. I began walking. First, I walked around the neighborhood gradually building up my speed and endurance. Eventually, I drummed up enough courage to attend a step aerobics class and fell in love with it. I found exercise to be very empowering and felt a sense of accomplishment after every workout.

At the end of the first month, I stepped on the scale and to my surprise I was 10 pounds lighter! Each month, I continued to lose ten pounds, and as the pounds melted off, my confidence increased.

Although I was successful, I did face some challenges along the way.

Weight plateaus were frustrations that I overcame by varying my cardiovascular workouts, adding weight training and eating more lean protein. The other major barrier very close to my heart was dealing with the culture of food within my father's family. To them, food is a labor of love, and they were offended when I did not eat the food they prepared. At first, I was teased for my new eating habits. But my family eventually understood. It was my food choices that had changed, not my love for them.

By making major lifestyle changes, I was able to reach my goal weight in less than a year. I was 100 pounds lighter and had a new lease on life. To this day I never take my weight loss for granted. I see it as a gift – a gift that has led me to where and who I am today. I am a confident and successful woman who has found her purpose in life, has empathy for others and is dedicated to fighting pediatric obesity.

Jennifer is a Registered Dietitian and has maintained her weight loss for 15 years. For exercise she enjoys evening walks with her husband and two young boys. Contact Jennifer at jmmeachu@baptisthealthsystem.com.

Want to be our next featured San Antonio success story? Have you transformed your body, mind or finances? We want to hear from you! Please contact Dianne@peaklifewellness.com.

Spicy Shrimp Tacos with Salsa Crema

Created by Jennifer Meachum RD, LD, CNSD

Shrimp:

1 teaspoon chili powder
½ teaspoon cayenne pepper (ground red pepper)
¼ teaspoon kosher salt
2 garlic cloves, minced
1 pound medium shrimp, peeled and deveined
1 teaspoon olive oil

Salsa Crema:

3 Tbsp light mayo
3 Tbsp light sour cream
1/4 cup green onion, thinly sliced
1/4 cup cilantro, finely chopped
1 clove garlic, minced
1/4 tsp. salt
1/2 serrano pepper, deseeded and finely chopped (optional)

8-corn tortillas
Optional Toppings:
shredded red cabbage
lime wedges
avocado slices

Directions:

1. To prepare shrimp, combine first five ingredients in a zipper locked plastic bag. Refrigerate 30 minutes. Heat oil in a large non-stick skillet in a medium-high heat. Add shrimp; sauté 4 minutes or until done.
2. To prepare salsa combine the 7 ingredients in a small bowl until smooth, refrigerate until ready to serve.
3. Warm tortillas in a skillet or in the microwave wrapped in a moist paper towel. Place equal amounts of shrimp on each tortilla. Top each with about 2 Tbsp salsa crema, shredded cabbage, avocado slices, and squeeze of fresh lime juice. Fold over tortilla and enjoy!

Nutrition Facts for 1 taco with 2 Tbsp salsa crema:

175 calories 7.5 gm fat, 13 gm carbs, 13.5 gm protein

- **September 9-10, 2011**
  Traffic Skills 101 for Bicyclists.
  This 9 hour course combines classroom and on bike instruction to teach you how to ride safely, legally and confidently in traffic. More details and registration at http://smartcycling.weebly.com/

- **September 10, 2011**
  Active Family Fun Day in the Park.
  9 a.m. – 12 noon. Copernicus Park, 5003 Lord Rd. The entire family is invited to participate in a variety of free, fun and active events including a punt, pass and kick competition, to name a few. Call 210-207-3000 for more information.

- **September 17, 2011**
  Toobalooza Adventure Race
  Toobing, Running, Mud pits & Obstacles. For more information go online at www.toobalooza.com. See ad on pg. 17.

- **September 24, 2011**
  San Antonio Walk for Polycystic Kidney Disease
  7:30 a.m. registration, 9:15am walk. Brackenridge Park-Joske Pavilion. No charge for walkers. For more information, go to www. http://www.pkdcure.org. Join PeakLife SA Magazine's team and receive a free hat.

- **September 24, 2011**
  Gardens by Moonlight
  7-11 p.m. The Botanical Garden, 555 Funston Place, is filled with several popular, live music performances, delicious treats, and great atmosphere. 210-207-3250.

- **October 1, 2011**
  Great Strides Walk to benefit Cystic Fibrosis Foundation
  8:00 a.m. registration, 9:00 am start. McAllister Park Pavilion For more information call 210-829-7267 or go to http//lonestar.cff.org/GREATSTRIDES.

- **October 1, 2011**
  24/7 Super Hero Obstacle Challenge
  8:00 a.m. Dress as your favorite super hero as you face 24 obstacles over 7 miles of unpredictable and unstable terrain. Is there a super hero in you? www.247superhero.com.

- **October 2, 2011**
  Life Time Kids Triathalon
  8:oo a.m. Challenging Triathalon for ages 7-14. Young athletes will swim, bike and run with the clock ticking to compete for the fastest combined time. Visit www.ltkidstri.com/page/show/310870-san-antonio-tx

- **October 2, 2100**
  Siclovia - San Antonio's Family Adventure
  10 a.m. Síclovía is a non-competitive event that temporarily turns busy city streets into large recreational areas for people to enjoy. For more information visit www.siclovia.org.

- **October 13, 2011**
  North Central Baptist Hospital's 2nd Annual Girls Night Out
  6:00-9:00 p.m. A free event for women to raise $20,000 for the Susan Komen Foundation. Will include a fashion show, silent auction, free health screenings, valuable health info from local health and wellness vendors, food, wine, and friendship. www.baptisthealthsystem.com.

- **October 17-22, 2011**
  Fat Talk Free™ Week
  Studio A hosts "Living Your Healthy Ideal" events in September and October. Stop by the Studio at 5900 Broadway and pick up a Fat Talk Free pledge card. Take the pledge and eliminate Fat Talk from conversations. Contact Studio A at 210-828-5900 or e-mail info@studioa-pilates to find out more.

- **October 18, 2011**
  Water Awareness Presentation
  6:30 p.m. Is the water you drink healthy? Where does it rate on the pH scale? Is your favorite drinking water an antioxidant, or is it oxidizing/aging? Come learn about these properties and how various drinking waters and other beverages measure up. Next Generation Water. www.nextGenerationWater.com. 210-408-9270. See ad on pg. 10.

- **October 22, 2011**
  American Heart Association/SA Heart Walk
  7:30 a.m. start. When you participate in the Heart Walk, you are taking steps to build healthier lives free from cardiovascular disease and stroke. For more information call 210-617-2600 or email: sanantonioheartwalk@heart.org. See ad on pg. 6. We welcome you to join the PeakLife SA Magazine team.

- **October 23, 2011**
  BOOtanica and Fall Garden Fair
  10 a.m. – 2 p.m. Botanical Garden, 555 Funston Place. Halloween games, creepy crafts, spooky storytelling and more! 210-207-3250.

- **October 30th**
  Rock The Cure
  Junior Diabetes Research Foundation International. Walk to Cure Diabetes. For more information visit www.walk.jdrf.org.

- **November 6, 2011**
  Big 12 Conference Soccer Championship
  Blossom Soccer Stadium, 210-820-2100, SanAntonioSports.org.

- **November 11 & 12, 2011**
  Rock 'N Roll San Antonio Marathon Expo & Packet
  Pickup, Alamodome, www.runrocknroll.competitor.com/san-antonio.

- **November 12, 2011**
  Organic Skin Care Event
  11:00 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Join Mary from Nature's Brands and learn about organic, eco-friendly skin care products that enhance your skin, naturally. Free. Next Generation Water in Vineyard Shopping Center. RSVP to info@nextgenerationwater.com or 210-408-9270. See ad on pg. 10.

- **November 12, 2011**
  ING Kids Rock
  8:30 a.m. Powered by San Antonio Sports, San Antonio Zoo, ingkidsrock.competitor.com/event-info/san-antonio/

- **November 13, 2011**
  Rock-n-Roll Marathon
  Benefiting Susan G. Komen for the Cure. 7:00 a.m. – 12:25 p.m. Experience this unique marathon which combines running and music and turns the average road race into a weekend-long event! Visit www.runrocknroll.competitor.com/san-antonio. See ad on back cover.

- **November 20, 2011**
  Natural Bridge Caverns 2011 Duathlons
  4 races in 1 day. Race starts 600 ft in the belly of The Natural Bridge Caverns. For more information visit www.redemption.rp.com. See ad on pg. 17

- **December 2&3, 2011**
  NCAA Division III Men's & Women's Soccer
  Championships Blossom Soccer Stadium, 210-820-2100, SanAntonioSports.org.

- **December 10, 2011**
  Pressing On
  5K run/walk/roll in McAllister Park to benefit Pressing on, an organization which provides specialized exercise-based training programs for those living with paralysis and other physical disabilities. For more information visit www.runforme5k.com.

- **December 15&17, 2011**
  NCAA Division I Women's Volleyball Championship
  Alamodome, 210-820-2100, SanAntonioSports.org.

Have an event that you want listed here? E-mail Dianne@peaklifewellness.com.

Ready To Rock 'N' Roll? Running Tips From Rudy

By Rudy Acevedo, co-owner of R+R Fitness

Whether you are training for the Rock 'n' Roll Marathon or you enjoy a morning jog in the park, there are several keys to making running a low impact, pain-free sport. Running form, cadence, and breathing are a few of these keys.

Form

One of the keys to good running form is to "stand tall." That is, the head should be held high with your gaze out ahead of you. Envision the crown of your head being pulled up by an imaginary string. The shoulders should be relaxed and down. Often when we tire, we tend to bring our shoulders "high and tight." If you feel yourself doing this, shake your shoulders and arms to loosen them back up. The arms should be bent approximately 90 degrees at the elbow, with your arms swinging mostly forward and back, instead of side to side. Your fingers should be relaxed. Envision that you're lightly holding onto a sheet of paper with your thumb and forefinger.

Keep your torso erect. Fatigued athletes have a tendency to slouch. This can negatively affect the ability to breathe properly. Doing core exercises during your cross-training will help to keep an erect torso, even when you're fatigued. If you find yourself slouching, take a deep inhalation to straighten out your torso.

Running is nothing more than balancing on one foot, and then another, in rapid succession. Stand on one foot to demonstrate this. Check your form in the mirror; odds are that you're standing tall, and not hunched over. Now, still balancing on one foot, try hunching forward, see how difficult it is to maintain your balance.

Often people tend to "over-stride" or "heel strike." Target your footstrike to be the mid- to fore part of your foot. If you are a heel striker, you've got several things working against you: First, you are driving with the brakes on, because the energy you just expended to move forward is wasted. Second, the impact from the heel strike has to go somewhere—even a running shoe with the best cushioning will only absorb some of the impact from your heel strike—the rest of this energy will transmit up the body to the ankle, the knee, the hip, and the lower back.

One of the best ways to eliminate a heel strike is to shorten your stride. You may have seen many types of footwear that mimic barefoot running. Care should be taken when trying to change your running form, including trying different types of footwear. Make sure that you give your body time to adapt to these changes by incorporating them gradually; otherwise you are more prone to injury.

Cadence

Running cadence is the number of times one of your feet strikes the ground in one minute. To measure your cadence, count the number of times either your right or left foot strikes the ground in one minute. Ideally, this number should be between 85-95. If you find yourself below 85, try shortening your stride in order to increase your cadence.

Breathing

The key to breathing during exercise is to use the full capacity of our lungs. A common mistake is to not exhale completely, leaving the lungs partially filled with "used" or oxygen depleted air—thus reducing the volume available for "fresh" air. If you focus on exhaling completely, your body will naturally inhale properly. Again, maintaining an erect torso will also help.

Your breathing pattern will vary, depending on your level of exertion. Typically, you will look at a breathing ratio. For example, if you have a breathing ratio of 3:2, this means for the first three steps, you are inhaling and for the final two steps, you are exhaling. As your fitness level changes, you may see a change in your breathing ratio.

Following these simple tips for form, cadence and breathing can have a huge impact on your running time and help prevent injury. Give it a try!

Rudy Acevedo has been coaching athletes since 2005, and has completed 40+ marathons. His company, R+R Fitness, specializes in training athletes of all paces and abilities for endurance events. Rudy is a Certified Running Coach, a Physical Fitness Specialist, and a certified Yoga Instructor. To learn more about R+R, visit their website at www.training210.com or contact Rudy via e-mail at rudy@Training210.com.

Always stretch before your workout? According to research uncovered by Texas Physical Therapy Specialists (www.Tex-PTS.com), you should warm up your body with light aerobic activity and then incorporate dynamic stretching (stretching while moving) that is specific to the sport that you will be doing. Runners should start with a light jog, then incorporate some squats and lunges. This will increase power, flexibility and range of motion.

San Antonio Schools Add 100 Salad Bars

By: Caroline Roffidal-Blanco, MS, RD, LD,
Registered Dietitian, Communities Putting Prevention to Work

Effort Supports First Lady Michelle Obama's Let's Move! Initiative

The "obesity epidemic" seems to be the hot topic of conversation these days, and rightfully so with obesity rates steadily rising in the U.S. The statistics are quite shocking to say the least as the obesity trends have continued to rise in both adults and children, with the prevalence of heart disease risk and diabetes increasing as well. In the most recent report "F as in Fat: How Obesity Threatens America's Future 2011," Texas is ranked as the twelfth fattest state. Bexar County statistics are just as significant with 65% of adults and 30% of students being classified as overweight or obese.

So what is being done to combat the rising obesity trend? On a national level, First Lady Michelle Obama's Let's Move! initiative is focused on preventing childhood obesity within a generation. At a local level, the Mayor's Fitness Council and the City of San Antonio Metropolitan Health District (Metro Health) are working together to fight obesity. In March of 2010, Metro Health received $15.6 million in federal stimulus funds through the Communities Putting Prevention to Work (CPPW) grant, also known as the Find Your Balance campaign to focus on reducing the prevalence of obesity.

One of the major initiatives of the Find Your Balance campaign is the Healthy School Meals Initiative, which is focused on healthy school meal choices and providing increased access to fruits and vegetables in schools through salad bars. Research has shown that school children significantly increase their consumption of fruits and vegetables when they have a school salad bar. At a recent Culinary Institute of America's Healthy Flavors, Healthy Kids conference held in San Antonio, local middle and high school students participated in a Find Your Balance panel discussion. Students unanimously indicated they would prefer a salad bar as a healthy meal option at school.

Mayor Castro enjoys a fresh salad at a local school.

The Find Your Balance campaign is proud to have partnered with the Let's Move Salad Bars to Schools initiative which has a goal of donating 6,000 salad bars to schools nationwide. Let's Move Salad Bars to Schools supports First Lady Michelle Obama's Let's Move! initiative. CPPW grant funds provide eligible Bexar County schools with a free salad bar valued at $2,500. In January 2011, Metro Health held a Healthy School Meals Workshop, which provided resources and innovative techniques for nutritious school meals. National experts from Let's Move Salad Bars to Schools, the Alliance for Healthier Generation, and the Texas Department of Agriculture shared best practices and school success stories to better assist schools in San Antonio promote healthier choices for the students.

Through the successful efforts of the Healthy School Meals Initiative, more than 100 schools in San Antonio will be implementing salad bars this fall. With this monumental achievement, San Antonio is now one of the top 3 cities, alongside New York City and Chicago, utilizing the most salad bars. The San Antonio salad bar initiative will reach over 100,000 students in Bexar County!

San Antonio has also been selected as a Let's Move! city, so it's no surprise that San Antonio schools are taking progressive steps in promoting healthy school meals through the use of salad bars. Through the various health initiatives of the Find Your Balance campaign, San Antonio continues to take innovative strides in combating the "obesity epidemic." San Antonio's next report should read: "F as in Fighting Obesity: How San Antonio Fights Obesity to help America's Future."

For more information about the Find Your Balance initiatives, log on to www.SABalance.org

The Importance Of Health Literacy To San Antonio Families

By Elizabeth De la Fuentes
Executive Director, The Health Collaborative

Do you know the ideal weight for your child? Do you know your child's body mass index (BMI) ? Can you read the nutrition label on the peanut butter jar?

This is information that may be meaningless to parents with low health literacy. Yet it is information that is critical in raising healthy children.

Health literacy is the degree to which individuals have the capacity to obtain, process and understand basic health information and services needed to make appropriate health decisions. Healthy People 2020, a national strategic planning initiative of the U.S. government, says that 9 out of 10 Americans struggle with health literacy.

The San Antonio Health Literacy Initiative, a program of The Health Collaborative, is working to increase awareness of the importance of health literacy among families in San Antonio.

Health literacy is especially important for parents or caregivers since they are responsible for managing children's health. Most adults must make health-related decisions for their family every day. The literacy skills required for navigating the U.S. health care system are immense. They go beyond word recognition and understanding of health care terminology to an understanding of how to apply health information and access wellness programs.

Health literacy also greatly impacts childhood obesity. Many parents don't know that their child is overweight or the importance of the body mass index, a measurement of body fat based on height and weight. Even when a weight issue is identified, many parents don't know how to help or how to communicate with their children about it.

Here are some web sites to visit for more information on health literacy and families:

Family Health and Literacy: A Guide to Easy-to-Read Health Education Materials and Web Sites for Families By Julie McKinney and Sabrina Kurtz-Rossi Developed by World Education in collaboration with the National Institute for Literacy with a grant from MetLife Foundation http://healthliteracy.worlded.org/docs/family/fhl.pdf

We Can! http://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/public/heart/obesity/wecan/index.htm We Can! (Ways to Enhance Children's Activity & Nutrition) is a national movement designed to give parents, caregivers, and communities a way to help children 8 to 13 years old stay at a healthy weight. This program provides tools, fun activities, and more to encourage healthy eating, increased physical activity, and reduced time sitting in front of the screen (TV or computer) in their entire family.

What to Do For Heavy Kids by Michael Villaire and Gloria Mayer Institute for Healthcare Advancement http://www.iha4health.org/default.aspx?menuitemid=343

This book is a must-read for families with heavy kids. It is written in easy-to-read language for parents and caregivers.

The Health Collaborative (THC) works to improve community health through collaborative means. THC partners include Baptist Health System, Bexar County Department of Community Resources, CHRISTUS Santa Rosa Health System, Community First Health Plans, Methodist Healthcare Ministries of South Texas, Methodist Healthcare System, San Antonio Metropolitan Health District (Metro Health), University Health System, WellMed Medical Management, Inc., the YMCA of Greater San Antonio, and Steve Blanchard, Ph.D.

Some of the programming provided by THC to raise awareness of health literacy includes:

The Community Garden. Located on THC grounds, this project uses gardening as a platform to address health issues. Working with area families, THC staff emphasize how to prevent and reduce obesity by improving access to fresh fruits and vegetables and promote the health benefits of good nutrition.

Seventh Annual Health Literacy Conference. With the theme of "Emerging and Changing Roles in Health Communication," this conference will be held October 14 at the Doubletree Hotel Downtown. It is open to health care professionals and anyone interested in health literacy.

Project Measure Up. The goal of Project Measure Up (PMU) is to decrease the prevalence of youth that are overweight and obese in Bexar County. Working with local school districts, PMU provides leadership in planning and partnership related to surveillance research of the impact of school-based programs targeting youth obesity prevention.

For more information on the San Antonio Health Literacy Initiative or The Health Collaborative, visit www.healthcollaborative.com.

Change For Good

Stephanie Porter
General Manager, Spectrum Athletic Clubs

Every January, gyms across the country hum with the sounds of pounding feet on treadmills, the spinning pedals of stationary bikes and the clanging of weight machines. By April, the crescendo has died and gone are the packed parking lots and over-crowded Zumba classes. In spite of their good intentions, many people fail to stick with an exercise program or nutrition plan. Successfully sticking with change is more than just goal setting. You need personal motivation, proper support, and a serious plan for overcoming setbacks with positive self-talk. What are you going to say to yourself when you run into obstacles?

Find the emotional reward

It's easy to set a goal. But being emotionally motivated by the acheivement of that goal is crucial. Good times and bad you have to keep the "why" in mind. A weight loss goal is an easy example. The eager enthusiast declares, "I want to lose 20 pounds!" Or, "I want to drop two pant sizes!" But you need a reason to stay out of the box of Oreos. What's the real reason you want to lose weight? It's something only you know and it requires some self-reflection. The "why" could be you had more energy when you were 20 pounds lighter. Ask yourself if the desire to be two sizes smaller is more powerful than a margarita? Is it faster than a remote control? Is it able to leap over the couch to go for a walk instead of watching Oprah? For the change to stick, you need to be able to remind yourself why and keep that emotional reward right there when temptation rears its ugly head. Is getting into that pair of jeans going to feel better than having ice cream after dinner? Write your reason down on an index card. Make it the screen saver on your computer. It will be your internal guide to staying on track.

Say it Loud and Say it Proud

Next, you'll need to rally some support, develop a plan and add a dash of accountability. Telling your close friends and family about your goals creates a powerful support system. Tell these people how they can help and be specific. Lay out your goals and the steps you will take to achieve them so they will understand your actions. They won't coerce you into sharing that candy bar or going to happy hour instead of the gym. Find someone to do a weigh-in every week. Have your spouse request your attendance report from your gym. Make a bet with a co-worker to help you stay the course. Be sure you select people that understand the importance of their role in your success. They provide a layer of external accountability.

Bag the excuses

Too busy? Too tired? Too broke? The fact is, everybody makes time for what's important to them. So – how important is this? Put it in your calendar and make it sacred. Ask yourself if you'd rather be tired from lugging around 20 extra pounds or from the step class you'll take to shed them. As for economics, a walk around the block is free and so is parking in the farthest spot from the door to the office. There's a gym membership to fit any budget. No excuses.

Plan for Failure

Yep. You will face obstacles. They may or may not be under your control. This is where so many people throw in the towel thinking they have to "start over." But you have a plan—this is where positive self-talk pays off. Find that emotional "why" again and think through the feelings. Look at that original index card, check that screen saver. Forgive yourself and get back on track.

You can't just set goals….you have to develop a plan for change you can live with forever. Ask yourself why you want this change and how hard you're willing to work to achieve it. Then make the decision to change – for good.

Stephanie Porter has a B.S. in Sports Medicine and 15 years experience in the fitness industry as a personal trainer, group exercise instructor and general manager. She is an avid runner and fitness enthusiast. Contact: sporter@spectrumclubs.com

Kids Are Rockin' Their Way To Fitness!

By Mary Ullmann Japhet, Associate Executive Director, San Antonio Sports

When the Rock 'n' Roll San Antonio Marathon & Half Marathon came to San Antonio in 2008, it marked a cultural shift in the city. Suddenly, everyone knew someone training for the "Rock 'n' Roll" or was planning to run himself. First-time marathoners were everywhere and running stores were enjoying a surge in business. More than 12,000 of the 25,000 who participated that first year were from Bexar County and the trend has continued. I've lived in San Antonio for 25 years and have noticed a sea-change. There are more people running today than ever. No doubt that can be attributed to the excitement surrounding the Rock 'n' Roll Marathon. On marathon weekend, downtown is buzzing and if you're not running, you know someone who is or someone who is volunteering.

Not to be left out, kids can be part of the excitement of the Rock 'n' Roll San Antonio Marathon & Half Marathon too! The ING Kids Rock, powered by San Antonio Sports, is a non-timed, non-competitive fun run for children in grades K-7. It will be held in Brackenridge Park on Saturday, November 12, the day before the big marathon. Kids can finish their own marathon on race day by completing a cumulative marathon training program in the weeks leading up to the ING Kids Rock. Or they can simply run, jog or walk the one-mile course that morning. Entry for the fun run is $30 and can be found online at http://ingkidsrock.competitor.com/register/san-antonio/.

San Antonio Sports, our local nonprofit sports commission that helped bring the Rock 'n' Roll Marathon to San Antonio, offers a related eight-week training program so kids can get active and be a part of the growing marathon buzz. The ING Kids Rock marathon training program is available free to public and private elementary schools in San Antonio, and public schools in Boerne and New Braunfels.

Over the course of eight weeks, children will have run, jogged or walked a cumulative marathon (or ½ marathon for kids in grades K-2.) The official ING Kids Rock training program kickoff is the week of September 12 at participating schools. Children will receive a training log at school and anyone may find it online at http://ingkidsrock.competitor.com/event-info/san-antonio/ or at SanAntonioSports.org. On Nov. 11, the final day of the training program, children will complete their final mile at school and receive a commemorative wrist band marking their achievement. Some kids will also participate in the ING Kids Rock fun run the next day.

"The modified marathon training program allows kids to log the miles, work toward a goal and experience a sense of accomplishment when they cross the finish line," said Dr. Susan Blackwood, San Antonio Sports executive director. "It encourages healthy lifestyle changes one mile at a time and gets kids up and moving."

Your whole family can join in the ING Kids Rock excitement. Make plans to run with your child or volunteer at the event. Be an active role model in his or her fitness journey! For more information, call San Antonio Sports at 210-820-2100 or visit SanAntonioSports.org.

About San Antonio Sports

For more than 25 years, San Antonio Sports has put our city on the global stage. From NCAA Championships to the Rock 'n' Roll San Antonio Marathon, the premier events we've hosted have delivered more than $357 million for our local economy.

San Antonio Sports' mission is to transform our community through the power of sport. To learn more, visit SanAntonioSports.org.

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DEFENDING YOUR THYROID

Stop fighting the wrong battle

By [Dr. Charles Webb]

It's known that 80–90% of hypothyroid patients in the U.S. have an autoimmune disease called Hashimoto's thyroiditis. With Hashimoto's, *an errant immune system* attacks and "chews up" the thyroid gland to the point where it becomes inflamed, swollen, and impaired—often no longer able to produce the hormones it should to maintain health and quality of life. Sometimes during the typically long process of destruction that characterizes Hashimoto's, the gland even dumps *too much* hormone for short periods, creating hyper/hypo cycles that can drive patients and their doctors to the end of their ropes.

Despite Hashimoto's 80–90% dominance in the "thyroiditis" (swollen thyroid) category, doctors seldom diagnose it via lab tests because insurance companies are unwilling to pay for the tests. They know that conventional medical treatment for Hashimoto's—hormone replacement therapy—is the same as the treatment for other forms of hypothyroidism. The thinking goes like this: if the treatment is going to be the same no matter what, why pay for extra testing? Seems logical enough, but is it? Let's explore.

A large number of my patients are middle-aged women who come to my office after having been told by doctors that they are hypothyroid. They have been taking various hormone-replacement medications such as Synthroid™ to get their laboratory numbers—especially their pituitary TSH and thyroid T4 levels—back into "normal" ranges. Despite the treatment, including jumps in dosage, these women continue to exhibit many different symptoms, including symptoms of hypothyroidism that hormone replacement was supposed to alleviate.

When that approach failed to relieve symptoms for these women, another diagnosis often followed, usually from the following sickness menu: Depression (maybe along with "it's all in your head"); Cyclothymia; PMS; Chronic Fatigue Syndrome; Fibromyalgia; and Anxiety Disorder. For these women, the additional diagnoses have meant more drugs and more side effects from those drugs, yet little if any relief from the misery they suffer. What is going on?

The immune system has two sides. One side "attacks invaders" while the other side creates antibodies that "tag invaders" for later attack and removal. In Hashimoto's, one side has gone "hyper," tricking the body into attacking its own cells. Further, when a confused immune system creates errant antibodies that attack the thyroid, those inflammatory antibodies also convince other body cells to resist thyroid hormones present in the bloodstream. That's not good. Thyroid hormones are meant to trigger important metabolic functions within cells. When the cells resist, the hormones already present don't work well, e.g., energy levels tank. That's why a patient can have "proper" laboratory levels of thyroid hormones in her bloodstream and still have symptoms of low thyroid.

The key to managing the immune system of a Hashimoto's patient is first to find out whether the patient indeed has Hashimoto's! Then we find out which side of the immune system is out of kilter and bring it back into balance with the other. This doesn't mean suppression, however. That is dangerous. It means modulation. Once the proper laboratory panels are run—which includes a comprehensive

thyroid panel as well as looking for blood sugar disorders, other hormone imbalances, anemia patterns, and adrenal gland dysfunction, the needed approach usually becomes quite clear. But that approach is, and must be, tailored to each individual. One size does not fit all. Too many things are

often out of kilter at the same time with Hashimoto's. What's more, to hone in on the real issues, doctors need time to truly listen to patients, a service that is in short supply under today's insurance-driven "health care."

To conclude, the faulty premise in treating Hashimoto's, whether actively diagnosed or not, is to regard it as a *thyroid* disease requiring hormone replacement, alone. That is fighting the wrong battle. Hashimoto's thyroid is basically an *immune system problem* that just happens to be targeting the thyroid. Manage the immune system problem well and the thyroid gland will often recover stability. Moreover, further damage (and continued

symptoms) can usually be averted by finding out what likely triggered Hashimoto's in the first place, managing the diet, evaluating GI function for issues, altering general lifestyle behavior, and supplementing with immune-system-

modulating plant extracts commonly used in functional medicine.

Yes, hormone replacement may still be needed if too much damage has been done and the gland is no longer able to produce sufficient amounts. Although Hashimoto's is the result of some form of genetic susceptibility to environmental and other triggers and can't be reversed in the current science, it can be managed and held at bay very well to regain quality of life.

Good "consumer" links:

http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmedhealth/PMH0001409/

http://thyroid.about.com/od/findingdoctors/a/thyroid-patients-endocrinologists-thyroidologists.htm

Charles Webb, DC, CCST, is a functional medicine practitioner, wellness mentor, prolific speaker, and architect of the Reclaim 24 Lifestyle Enhancement Program for which he has written the books, *Reclaim 24* and *Metamorphosis*. His professional practice includes chiropractic, nutrition, anti-aging, hormone balancing, fitness, appearance/body rejuvenation, and permanent weight control. He is also president and clinical director of his Imagine Wellness Center, 115 Gallery Circle, Suite 209, San Antonio, TX 78258.

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