



**TRIGEMINAL NEURALGIA ASSOCIATION  
TEXAS SUPPORT GROUPS NEWSLETTER  
August 2005**

**HOUSTON SUPPORT GROUP – LEADER NEEDED**

We desperately need a volunteer from the Houston Support Group to help keep this group growing. Responsibilities would include reserving meeting space, lining up speakers, and conducting 4 support group meetings each year. We already have a treasurer that takes patient/supporter phone calls and someone else who sends out e-mail correspondence to people in our area. If you are interested, please contact Jane Boles, TNA's Executive Director, at 800-923-3608 or [jboles@tna-support.org](mailto:jboles@tna-support.org).

**TEXAS WEBMASTER NEEDED**

We need a volunteer to manage our TNA support group website. The key tasks would be to keep the meeting schedule up-to-date and to upload our monthly newsletter. Currently, the website uses Net Objects Fusion 8 software, ftp host, and the newsletters are put into Adobe reader format. If you can manage this, please e-mail Shelly Wilson at [swilson@tna-support.org](mailto:swilson@tna-support.org).

**THANK YOU FOR YOUR E-MAIL ADDRESSES!**

Thanks to everyone who's provided us with their e-mail address. This really helps us save on our mailing and copying costs. If you have an e-mail address where we can send this newsletter and any updates, please e-mail Shelly Wilson at [swilson@tna-support.org](mailto:swilson@tna-support.org).

**MEDICARE IS CHANGING: WHAT DO YOU NEED TO KNOW?**

For the first time in its history, Medicare is going to offer a plan that will pay for outpatient medicines. This is important news for the more than 40 million seniors and disabled persons whom Medicare now serves. Throughout the rest of this year, those

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enrolled in Medicare will have the opportunity to learn more about this new program and make decisions about participation. Here is an overview.

- Medicare Part D is a new benefit that covers prescription medicine.
- Every person enrolled in Medicare may participate in the new program, but no one must do so.
- Medicare Part D has special protections for low income seniors and disabled persons.
- Medicare will provide everyone with complete information BEFORE they need to sign up.
- Medicare is also going to pay for new health care screening services.

For more information, call Medicare at 1-800-633-4227 or go to their website at [www.medicare.gov](http://www.medicare.gov).

Source: Network News, Edition 5, 2005

### **CAR TRAVEL TRIP**

Jerry suggests when you are going on a long car trip with the air conditioning on, try placing Lidocaine patches on your face where you experience your facial pain. Lidocaine patches require a prescription and can be purchased from most pharmacies.

### **OLD STRIKING BACK BOOKS**

For those of you who have ordered the new Striking Back book that was released in November 2004, what have you done with your old Striking Back book? Well, one thought might be donate this book to your local library so others can benefit from the information.

### **CHOOSING DR. RIGHT**

Younger physicians often deliver better care—and have healthier patients—than more experienced docs do, finds a recent Harvard Medical School analysis of 62 physician-quality studies.

- Docs who graduated from medical school 20 years ago were 38 to 48% less likely to follow current standards, even in areas such as cancer screenings, heart disease treatment and diabetes care.
- Patients' death rates from heart attacks increased as the doctors' length of time in practice increased.
- Older doctors were more likely to undertreat depression, breast cancer, and high blood pressure.

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But the results don't mean that younger is always better, says lead researcher Niteesh Choudhry, MD. "Some older doctors were outstanding, and many may be better at interacting with patients and diagnosing complex medical problems."

The bottom line: Make sure your doc delivers up-to-date care by asking her how she stays abreast of the latest standards. Physicians at teaching hospitals may be your best bet.

Source: News & Trends, Prevention magazine, July 2005

### **MAKE THE MOST OF YOUR DOCTOR VISIT**

The average time spent talking with your doctor ranges from 10 to 20 minutes. Creating a prioritized list of conditions or questions before your visit is the best way to stay focused and allow ample time to discuss your concerns.

"Patients have my undivided attention during a visit," says Robert Machos, M.D., internal medicine physician at Harris Methodist Fort Worth Hospital. "Lists help us stay on track and avoid by-the-way statements such as, 'I'm having chest pain,' or 'My headaches are more frequent' when the doctor is walking out the door. Often the reason the patient made the appointment in the first place is revealed in one of these last-minute statements."

By preparing for your appointment beforehand, you and your doctor are better able to communicate about your concerns, which can result in a more effective visit and improved health.

Remember this important information at your next visit to the doctor:

- ✓ All your medications including vitamins and herbal supplements (you should also take them with you)
- ✓ Your primary concerns you would like to have addressed during the visit
- ✓ Any new symptoms since your last visit
- ✓ Any other information you've gathered about your condition

Source: TexasHealth, Spring 2005

### **UPDATES FROM OUR MEMBERS**

Sharon's neurologist added the prescription medication Cymbalta twice a day at 30 mg to work in conjunction with her TN medication, Carbamazepine. She reports the quality of her life is so much better now.

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Juna just had a successful radiofrequency lesioning also known as the PCGG and as a radiofrequency rhizotomy by Dr. Phil Williams, Jr. at Dallas Presbyterian Hospital. She left the hospital pain-free and is beginning to reduce her TN medication now. She will have some numbness as a result of this procedure but hopes to get off of all her TN medication and return to a normal life.

Rick just had his two year anniversary last month from having had a successful MVD by Dr. Weiner at Dallas Presbyterian Hospital. He's been pain-free this entire time. Life is great. He just finished school and will be a firefighter soon. Congratulations Rick!

Norma wrote that her son, Cameron, who has had MS for 27 years and has been confined to a wheelchair for the last 10 years also has TN. Cameron's tried all of the medications and procedures except the MVD. About 5 years ago, Dr. Phil Williams, Jr. in Dallas performed a radiofrequency rhizotomy on him and his pain was immediately gone when he came out of the anesthetic and remained gone until the nerve grew back. Cameron had another rhizotomy on May 23, 2005 by Dr. Williams, and again Cameron is completely pain-free. What a blessing! Norma and Cameron can't say enough good things about Dr. Williams. (Cameron's MS doctor is Dr. Frohman at UT Southwestern Medical Center and they like and admire him too!)

Dorothy reports she's been pain-free since November 2003 when she had a successful MVD by Dr. Kopitnik who used to be at UT Southwestern in Dallas and is now with Central Wyoming Neurosurgery in Casper, WY. Dorothy thinks life is wonderful!

Leslee feels her health has improved as a result of taking Physicians Select vitamins that her general practice doctor recommended. They can be ordered on-line at [www.psvitamins.com](http://www.psvitamins.com)

Vickie had a successful MVD by Dr. Tom Kopitnik in December 2003 and is still pain-free and medication-free today.

Deanne feels fortunate that she's only had one bad TN attack a number of years ago and then nothing until about a month or so ago. She's now taking Trileptal. Hopefully she'll be back in remission soon!

Ken's been able to get off of the TN medications he was taking by going to Dr. Dixon for chiropractic treatments in Tyler. He's been off of his medication for 6 months now.

Joe's TN has slowly returned (but not bad) for the first time in five years since he had a radiofrequency rhizotomy by Dr. Phil Williams, Jr. in Dallas. We hope it goes back into remission soon!

Beth had a successful MVD in April 2000 which helped her tremendously. She's so grateful for relief of pain. Hurray!

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Please pray for:

- Dolores as she attempts to control her pain through a pain management doctor.
- Nancy's husband, Gene, who has an aggressive form of bladder cancer. Needless to say, Nancy's TN has acted up but by increasing her TN medication, she's been able to control her TN pain so she can support her husband during this stressful time.
- Robin who had been pain-free and medication-free for 21 years from a successful MVD. After a wreck, her TN returned on the same side. She had a radiofrequency rhizotomy but that didn't work. She is going back to her first neurosurgeon that did her MVD to see if she is candidate for another MVD later this month.
- Curt who had a successful MVD by Dr. Jannetta in 1985 and now has TN starting on the other side.

If you would like to share an update with our group, please let Shelly Wilson know. Send an e-mail to [swilson@tna-support.org](mailto:swilson@tna-support.org) or a written note to 604 Aberdeen Way, Southlake, TX 76092.

## MEETING NOTES

### **Waco Meeting – May 2, 2005:**

Charles Holt, D.D.S., P.C discussed craniofacial pain and dentistry. He defined craniofacial pain as a specialty is the discipline of Dentistry that includes the assessment, diagnosis and treatment of patients with complex acute and chronic craniofacial pain, oromotor and jaw behavior disorders, and chronic head, neck and facial pain, as well as the pursuit of knowledge of underlying pathophysiology and mechanisms of these disorders.

Dr. Holt explained the trigeminal nerve is the largest and most complex of the cranial nerves. It is the chief sensory nerve for the face, the anterior half of the scalp, the orbit and eyeball, the nose and nasal cavity and sinuses, the lips, teeth, mouth and the anterior two-thirds of the tongue. The motor nerves of the third division of the trigeminal nerve supply the muscles of mastication, the mylohyoid, anterior belly of the digastric, tensor palatine and tensor tympani muscles.

There are various facial pain disorders and temporomandibular problems that can cause significant facial pain and mimic some trigeminal disorders. Classic trigeminal neuralgia is usually easy to diagnose based on the type, location and severity of the pain.

In Dr. Holt's practice, he sees patients with conditions that may be confused with TN. These are atypical facial pain, deafferentation pain, sympathetically maintained pain, neuralgia-inducing cavitation osteonecrosis (NICO) and temporomandibular disorders.

To book an appointment with Dr. Holt, call 817-283-0025 or metro 817-267-8810.

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## FUTURE TEXAS MEETING DATES

Austin – T.B.A.  
Dallas at Zale Lipshy Hospital –10/26  
Fort Worth at Baylor All Saints – 9/27, 11/1  
Hill Country – T.B.A.  
Houston at Christus St. Joseph Hospital – T.B.A.  
San Antonio – 8/9, 9/13, 10/11, 11/8, 12/13  
Tyler at East Texas Medical Center – T.B.A.  
Waco at Hillcrest Baptist Medical Center – 9/13, 11/14

## TREASURER’S REPORT – NORTH CENTRAL EAST TEXAS

<b>Beginning Balance 6/30/05</b>	<b>\$2963.78</b>
<b>Donations Received</b>	<b>\$771.10</b>
Copies	77.80
DVD’s from TNA	31.50
Postage	<u>269.05</u>
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b><u>\$378.35</u></b>
<b>Ending Balance 7/31/05</b>	<b>\$3356.53</b>

## FINANCIAL CONTRIBUTIONS

Local TNA chapters *do not receive* funding from the national office. If you would like your tax-deductible contribution to go toward your local Texas chapter, please make your check payable to the order of Trigeminal Neuralgia Association and in the memo field put the name of your support group (i.e. North Central Texas chapter, Houston chapter) then mail it to Shelly Wilson, 604 Aberdeen Way, Southlake, TX 76092 for processing.

Please remember to also support the efforts of the Trigeminal Neuralgia Association’s national office. Typically, they are the first ones to make contact with new TN sufferers. They provide us with convention materials, run the national website, promote research, and a host of other activities.

Trigeminal Neuralgia Association  
2801 SW Archer Rd., Gainesville, FL 32608  
Phone: 800-923-3608, 352-376-9955  
Fax: 352-376-8688  
[www.endthepain.org](http://www.endthepain.org)

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