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### Lower-Risk Cure for Varicose Veins

*From Brigham and Women's Hospital*

Until recent years, treatment for painful and often unsightly varicose veins was itself painful and required extended time for recovery. A new, safer procedure changes that.

Varicose veins develop when the larger veins beneath them stop working. When this occurs, blood pools in the smaller veins, causing them to bulge. Traditional surgery for varicose veins was invasive, painful, caused scarring and required weeks for recovery. But a new technique called endovenous laser treatment (EVLT) is revolutionizing treatment. The EVLT technique involves local anesthesia, insertion of a thin laser through the greater saphenous vein, and ultrasound imaging to locate the area of the vein that is not working. The doctor then guides the laser to the problem area and closes off the vein that is not working. This allows smaller, healthier blood vessels to take over the task of circulating blood in that area.

*Dear Reader,*

*In this edition of the Health Update, WorldCare is very excited to announce that UCLA has joined the WorldCare Consortium. Through this and future updates, we look forward to bringing you some of the latest health findings from the Consortium Hospitals.*

*Sincerely*

*Rebika Shaw, Regional Director, Corporate Communications*

### HEALTH NEWS

#### Aging Athletes Need to Care for Shoulders

*From Duke University Medical Center*

Many middle-aged athletes swat tennis balls, swim, or dribble basketballs for two reasons—the joy of physical activity and competition, as well as maintaining their cardiovascular fitness.

While exercise is a key factor in forestalling heart disease, aging athletes who are still young at heart should not neglect their musculoskeletal systems, especially if they want to maintain an active life style into their 60s and 70s, according to Claude T. Moorman III, M.D., director of sports medicine at Duke University Medical Center. Failure to appreciate the musculoskeletal system can lead to injuries that could curtail favorite pastimes, he says.

"We know that exercise and physical activity is an important way to maintain our overall health. Many people... don't seem to be paying as much attention to other parts of their bodies," Moorman says. "Over the past decade we have seen a dramatic increase in the number of patients over the age of 40 needing surgery to repair damage to their joints."

Continued on the next page 

#### Nicotine Vaccine To Be Tested

*From Massachusetts General Hospital*

A novel approach to helping smokers kick the habit—a vaccine—will be tested at Massachusetts General Hospital (MGH). The nicotine vaccine, NicVax, is designed to keep nicotine from reaching the brain where it produces its rewarding effects. Earlier studies of the vaccine, which has not yet received FDA approval, have indicated that it is safe and may be effective.

"We currently have several proven ways to help smokers quit—including nicotine patches and gum and the antidepressant bupropion—but if someone using these medications slips and smokes a cigarette, he or she experiences rewarding sensations from smoking," says Nancy Rigotti, M.D., who will lead the study at the hospital. "Since this vaccine keeps nicotine out of the brain, smoking no longer has any pleasurable effects, and the smoker should find it easier to quit."



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## Genes Act Differently in Men and Women

From the University of California, Los Angeles

Scientists may have revealed the origin of the battle of the sexes—our genes. UCLA researchers report in a new study that thousands of genes behave differently in the same organs of males and females. The study sheds light on why the same disease often strikes males and females differently, and why the genders may respond differently to the same drug.

The research holds important implications for understanding disorders such as diabetes, heart disease and obesity, and could point the way to the development of therapies designed specifically for men and specifically for women. The UCLA team examined brain, liver, fat and muscle tissue from mice. (Humans and mice share 99 percent of their genes.) The scientists scrutinized the function of more than 23,000 genes in male and female tissue.

## Aging Athletes Need To Care for Shoulders (continued)

One area of particular interest to Moorman is the shoulder, a unique joint where four different muscles and their tendons form a "cuff" keeping the ball at the end of the arm bone inside the socket of the shoulder blade.

Moorman says that 10 years ago, most of the surgeries he performed on over-40 weekend warriors involved the knee. "Now, I'd say that about 60 percent of the cases I do involve the shoulder, with about 80 percent of those repairing injuries to the rotator cuff," Moorman says. "Over time, the tendon tends to break down, first as tiny tears.

## NEWS ON WORLDCARE

**UCLA joins Consortium.** UCLA Healthcare recently joined the WorldCare Consortium as a Second Opinion provider. Ranked as the best hospital in the Western United States for the past 16 years by U.S. News and World Report, this hospital now brings its expertise to our clients through the WorldCare Global Telemedicine Network.

**Network expands to 32 countries.** In February 2006, WorldCare launched operations in Spain through a partnership with Real Time Telemedicine Ltd. Additional contracts in Puerto Rico have now expanded the WorldCare global network to 32 countries worldwide.

### "I will always be grateful"

### Patient Perspective

*"As I said goodbye to my pregnant wife to be prepped for the operation, I did not know if I would live or not. What I did know was that my neurosurgeon was armed with the world's best information to get me through. I cannot express to you the peace of mind that gave me as I was being prepared to be operated on... I will always be grateful for WorldCare." —A.B., age 35*

### About WorldCare

The global health care community has trusted WorldCare since 1994, when it became the first company to offer physician-referred, patient-specific, second opinion e-consultations (telemedicine) for serious illnesses. WorldCare benefits patients around the world by providing access to top physicians, cutting edge medical practices and best medical advice through highly specialized electronic medical opinions from the best medical centers in the United States.

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These tears can eventually coalesce into a much larger tear that needs treatment."

The key to prevention, Moorman says, is to recognize the early signs when the tears are small, such as pain that begins at the front of the shoulder and moves down the side of the arm, usually after such activities as reaching or lifting. Over time, the pain may increase, even when the joint is not being used.

Duke researchers are currently evaluating different exercise and weight training regimes to determine those that can strengthen the rotator cuff without aggravating the joint. The researchers hope to develop a

strategy that will help middle-aged people preserve the integrity of their rotator cuffs as they exercise to strengthen their hearts.

When a tear in the rotator cuff occurs, either as a result of long-term wear-and-tear or an acute injury, surgery is often the only solution. "Fortunately, we can perform most rotator cuff repairs safely and effectively with an arthroscopic approach, which means less pain and quicker recovery for patients," Moorman says. Most patients receiving this minimally invasive approach are back to normal routine in three to four months, twice as fast as the traditional surgical approach.



Contact your local WorldCare office if you are interested in obtaining a second opinion from our world-class Consortium of hospitals. Visit [www.worldcare.com](http://www.worldcare.com) for more information.