

SLEUTHING

the source of the pain

“Finding the source of pain so it can be treated effectively is a little like detective work,” observes Keith S. Susko, MD, of Southwest Florida Rehab & Pain Management Associates. “It takes a thorough understanding of a patient’s medical history, an awareness of how the pain progressed and how it now restricts function and activities, and a knowledge of the treatment modalities that have been tried and failed.”

“Armed with this information, I can work toward developing a treatment plan that helps patients find true pain relief as quickly as possible. The goal,” Dr. Susko emphasizes, “is to help each patient do the things pain has kept him or her from doing, restoring functionality so the patient can participate in sports, hobbies, or work-related activities without being limited by pain.”

Dr. Susko explains that pain can result from several causes, including damaged or malfunctioning nerves, muscle spasms, or arthritis. Patients may have several processes contributing to their pain, making it even more difficult to arrive at the right diagnosis. They may have referred pain, which is pain felt in one area of the body but caused by problems located in another. A good example of this is pain in the hip or knee that is caused primarily by a problem in the back.

Lynn’s story

Lynn Dimoff had a lifelong history of back pain and muscle spasms. She was referred to Dr. Susko after a fall injured her tailbone in early 2005 and was immediately impressed with this thorough evaluation of her condition.

“Dr. Susko doesn’t just find pain and treat it,” states Lynn. “He deals with his patients’ whole body, digs into what is wrong until he finds the root causes of pain, and then addresses the problem.”

“Lynn’s pain required a multifaceted approach,” relates Dr. Susko. “She had a problem with back pain due to scoliosis and also dealt with very painful chronic muscle spasms. I also found that back and neck pain were exacerbated by a problem with Lynn’s feet.”

Dr. Susko treated Lynn’s back pain and muscle spasms by teaching her simple stretches and exercises to strengthen her muscles and to reduce their tendency to spasm. He recommended heat and cold therapy to further reduce pain. Pain-relieving injections helped reduce the symptoms of Lynn’s arthritis, and a change in footwear and the use of heel inserts in Lynn’s shoes helped correct her gait and further reduce her neck and back pain.

“Thanks to Dr. Susko,” says Lynn, “I finally have real pain management.”

More than pain relief

In addition to treating patients with chronic and acute pain, Dr. Susko also is trained to help patients who suffer from weakness, spasticity, or hemiparesis following injury or illness.

“People often don’t realize there is help for these problems, so they do their best simply to live with them,” says Dr. Susko. “I want to get the



FEELIN’ FINE. Lynn is able to enjoy simple pleasures, like lifting her baby, thanks to ongoing pain management support from Dr. Susko.

word out that help is certainly available.”

Ella Price suffered a stroke in July 2005, leaving her with a paralyzed left arm. The muscle in Ella’s left shoulder pulled away from the bone and became stiff, her left wrist began to draw in toward her elbow, and the constriction of the fingers drew her left hand into a fist. Muscle spasticity and pain were constant companions.

Fortunately, Dr. Susko employs a number of approaches to help restore patient comfort and function for patients like Ella. Pain-relieving or muscle-relaxing injections, trigger-point therapy, hot and cold compresses, physical therapy and stretches, and electrical stimulation all can be helpful.

“When the patient is receptive,” Dr. Susko adds, “I also support them by joining them in prayer, and I take time to explain all the approaches I recommend so they understand what to expect, that the process may take time, and that I will leave no stone unturned in my effort to help them.”

In treating Ella, Dr. Susko began with trigger-point injections and stretches that relieved much of her pain. Muscle relaxants and BOTOX injections helped release the constriction of Ella’s wrist and hand.

“Dr. Susko helped me a lot,” Ella states. “I’m still on muscle relaxants, but I don’t need the pain medication as much anymore. My hand isn’t balled up into a fist, and I am even able to raise my left arm up over my head; it’s no longer paralyzed. If anyone has a stroke or illness that leaves them paralyzed or weak, I think they should see Dr. Susko,” advises Ella.

“They’ll be 110 percent satisfied. I can’t sing his praises enough.” **FHCN**—Billie S. Noakes

Relief at last!

The staff at Southwest Florida Rehab & Pain Management Associates welcomes your questions and comments regarding this article. For additional information or to schedule a consultation, please call (239) 432-0774. Southwest Florida Rehab & Pain Management Associates is located at 12700 Creekside Ln., Suite 301, in Fort Myers.



James P. Weiner, MD, is board certified by the American Board of Anesthesiology. He received his medical degree and completed his residency in physical medicine and rehabilitation at Eastern Virginia Medical School, Norfolk, and completed an anesthesia residency and received fellowship training in pain management at the Naval Hospital, Portsmouth, VA. He also received fellowship training in anesthesia at Bowman-Gray Medical Center, Wake Forest University, Winston-Salem, NC. He is a member of the American Association of Electrodiagnostic Medicine, American Association of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation, American Society of Anesthesiology, Florida Medical Society, Florida Society of Anesthesiology, International Association for the Study of Pain, and International Spinal Injection Society. He has published extensively in his areas of expertise.



Peter S. Schreiber, DO, is board certified in physical medicine and rehabilitation. He completed his undergraduate studies in microbiology at the University of Florida, Gainesville, and received his medical degree from Nova Southeastern University College of Osteopathic Medicine, Davie, FL. He served his internship and a combined residency in internal medicine and physical medicine and rehabilitation at Case Western Reserve University/Metro-Health Medical Center, Cleveland, OH. Dr. Schreiber is a member of the American Medical Association, American Osteopathic Association, and American Academy of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation.



Keith S. Susko, MD, is board certified by the American Board of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation with subspecialty certification in pain medicine. Dr. Susko completed his undergraduate studies, with an emphasis in biomedical engineering, at the University of Arizona College of Engineering. He earned his medical degree and completed his medical internship and his residency in physical medicine, serving as chief resident, at Eastern Virginia Medical School, Norfolk. While in Virginia, Dr. Susko founded the medical school’s Habitat for Humanity student volunteer group, organizing workdays for volunteer labor and assisting in the construction of homes for the needy. He has developed numerous presentations and lectures concerning myofascial trigger point evaluations, osteoporosis, electromyography, cerebral palsy, and low back pain. Dr. Susko is a member of the American Academy of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation, Association of Academic Physiatrists, American Academy of Pain Management, American Medical Association, and American Academy of Electrodiagnostic Medicine.



Robert D. Mehrberg, MD, is a board-certified physiatrist, certified in physical medicine and rehabilitation, as well as in electrodiagnostic medicine. He completed his undergraduate studies and earned his medical degree at Tulane University, New Orleans, LA. He served his internship and his residency in physical medicine and rehabilitation at Eastern Virginia Medical School, Norfolk, where he was appointed chief resident. Dr. Mehrberg has lectured on, written, or coauthored numerous articles, abstracts, presentations, and publications concerned with the treatment and well-being of rehabilitation patients. Dr. Mehrberg is a member of the American Association of Electrodiagnostic Medicine, American Academy of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation, and Association of Academic Physiatrists.

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