

By Mark McClure, MD
Medical Editor

Let's define our terms. Our goal at Landmark Urology and Complementary Medicine is to help our patients achieve optimal health. That does not mean "perfect" health; it simply means helping patients move to the highest level of good health that they can achieve and maintain.

Encouraging people to make healthy lifestyle choices is a centerpiece of my work as a holistic physician. Helping them deal with and overcome difficult, sometimes chronic conditions—such as urinary incontinence or prostate cancer—is at the heart of my work as a urologist and surgeon. Blending these two approaches to health and healing is the mission of our practice.

Life is all about choices, which we are required to make as long as we live. All of us get to decide the quality of our choices, moment to moment, day by day. People who choose to eat less than wholesome food, who smoke and fail to exercise, are drawing down their reserves. Their checkups may seem to be fine: lab tests are normal, EKGs are not suspicious. But by the time abnormal results show up on these tests, many people have lost 80 percent of their functional capacity! The return to good health becomes a steep hill to climb.

Disease isn't something that is just out there, waiting to ensnare us. It's an imbalance in our bodies. And even though it's given a name by medicine, disease is highly individualized, very much a personal journey for each of us.

Thus I often share with my patients the simple fact that preventing illness starts with making healthy choices—and if you slip and fail today, get up, dust yourself off, and renew your commitment to good health. Eat well, exercise, drink good, clean water, and breathe clean air whenever possible. The choices are not complicated.

RELIEVING INCONTINENCE

As a urologist, I have a special interest in the prevention of incontinence. I've worked with many hundreds of patients over the years that are uncomfortable with and embarrassed by the fact that, to greater or lesser extent, they are losing control of their bladder.

So it is a joy for me to help them on the path of prevention. There are simple, effective steps that can be helpful, and if these choices are less than satisfactory, there are simple, outpatient surgical procedures that are now remarkably effective. Female stress incontinence usually develops slowly with age, and may often be a result of childbirth. Incontinence generally occurs when pelvic muscles are not strong enough to keep the opening from the bladder neck closed when you're under physical stress. A simple cough, for example, might create the kind of stress that could induce leakage.

Many of my incontinence patients are achieving excellent results with the "sling" procedure, one of a number of treatment options we can offer patients.

This is a simple, 15-minute procedure, done in the hospital on an outpatient basis, under sedation or general anesthesia. A surgically implanted sling corrects stress incontinence by supporting and repositioning the bladder neck and urethra in their correct position—which can help the urethral sphincter function properly. (see illustration)



The sling cradles the urethra to prevent urinary leakage.

The end result is that after a sling procedure, most women can once again regain control of their bladder—which is often an important goal for these patients in attaining optimal health. For most female patients with stress incontinence, this procedure offers an excellent outcome. The success rate for cure is 85 percent. The chance of improving the condition is another 10 percent.



Dr. Mark McClure and Cheri Elliott, ANP, co-founders of Landmark Urology and Complementary Medicine.

Optimal Does NOT Mean Perfect

TOUCHING THE SOUL

As a physician and surgeon, I minister to the physical needs of my patients every day, and yet I understand better all the time that the purpose of a doctor is to teach, to be there for a patient as a counselor and as a friend. I care about their physical concerns, and I care about their soul. In this high-tech world, patients want to be heard in a compassionate way. Old-time doctors knew their patients, their families, and all their problems and life events. They listened well, often I think out of their intuition. They remain my heroes.

Cancer patients I've observed become experts at living. They come to understand that every day is rich with possibilities. They see nature differently; they see their relationships differently. They understand that their time is precious and valuable, and it's a gift they give to others if they share it with them. They learn to live each day to its fullest.

But we don't have to wait for serious illness to afflict us before we make changes in attitude and lifestyle habits. Every day is a new day. And the truth is, there never will be a better time than today to go down the path of optimal health—whatever that may be for you—embracing your physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual well-being.

I also encourage my patients to practice forgiveness and understanding, starting with themselves. Release grudges. Rectify relationship problems. Beautify your environment. Plant flowers. Appreciate nature. Slow down and smell the roses!

Tell yourself you love and appreciate yourself. Learn to mean it. If you can't,

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get help understanding why. Tell others you love them. Take time to really listen to others. Find a purpose in life. Volunteer. Do something good for others. Practice random acts of kindness and senseless acts of joy.

Control your thoughts and speech. Speech and the thoughts and attitudes you hold are energies. The dominant ones become the main energies you communicate to your body. Negative energies such as habitual dissatisfaction, depression, despair, ill-will, resentment, hatred, and aggression disrupt the body's harmony and depress the immune system. Positive energies such as truth, gratitude, patience, harmlessness, generosity, respect, honesty, and peace restore the body's energy, promote harmony, and strengthen the immune system. *h&h*

For more information about urologic and complementary medicine approaches and procedures, contact:

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