

Successful aging, head to toe

By **KAYE BAKER**

PRODUCER

SPECIAL TO THE GLENDALE STAR

Living your best life is attainable. Radio hosts John Wenzlau and Millie Oakeson spend each Tuesday morning talking with expert guests on Independent Talk 1100 KFNX on ways to improve your quality of life and age well. This past week, they spoke with Steve Laughary on mobile dentistry, and Dr. Don Curtis, a course director and a practicing physician at the Foot & Ankle Clinic at Midwestern University in Glendale.

One of the saddest things Laughary witnesses, as he promotes mobile dentistry amongst the senior population, is how often oral hygiene is ignored. Many times, an older adult, due to financial circumstances, ignores tooth pain, or dental care because they don't have insurance, Medicare doesn't cover it and they don't have extra money to pay for the costs. Another reason they ignore dental care is lack of transportation. The transportation scenario has changed with the availability of mobile dentistry.

Laughary said, "Any oral care can be done in the home or mobile unit, except for anesthesia."

It's virtually an office on wheels and they can even accommodate bed-bound clients.

Most mobile services take the common dental insurance plans and some do accept ALTCS. The licensing is regulated just as it is in the regular dental offices. Mobile services can be utilized in emergency situations, so a patient doesn't have to wait any longer than they would with their regular dental office.

Poor oral care can lead to serious and sometimes fatal results, such as aneurisms, heart attacks, even dementia, if the bacteria gets into your blood stream and isn't dealt with. For information on mobile dentistry, call Steve at 480-748-8241.

The subject changed from dental care to foot care with Dr. Curtis. One common contributing factor in foot



John Wenzlau and Millie Oakeson

problems is diabetes. Diabetes is a condition where an individual is unable to process sugars properly and this can cause significant damage to the blood vessels and the nerves that go to the feet, causing neuropathy, numbness and constant pain. Walking and exercise do help and it may be easier to swim, if it hurts too much to stand on your feet, but the important thing is to see your doctor, so you don't develop sores or infections.

Other common foot issues Dr. Curtis sees are bunions and Planter fasciitis. Oakeson was curious if wearing high heels can cause bunions.

Curtis said, "Genetics play a big part in the equation, if you will develop bunions or not, but wearing ill-fitted shoes can certainly add to the likelihood of getting them."

However, wearing high heels that fit properly doesn't mean you will get bunions. Plantar fasciitis is a condition, where the ligament on the bottom of the foot is tight and becomes sprained. Stretching, wearing supportive shoes and anti-inflammatory medicines can help. For information on the Foot & Ankle Clinic at Midwestern University, or to make an appointment, call 623-537-6000.

For more information on these topics, or to ask a question, visit www.successfulaging.info. Tune in 11 a.m. to 12 p.m. every Tuesday to Independent Talk KFNX 1100, as we continue to explore "Successful Aging."

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