

FEATURES EDITOR SUZY FLEMING LEONARD, sleonard@floridatoday.com or 242-3614

60 seconds

Tell us your health ideas

Do you have ideas or feedback on the health and medical coverage in FLORIDA TODAY? Contact medical reporter Susan Jenks at 242-3657 or sjenks@florida.com



New on CD

- 'Big To-Do,' Drive-By Truckers
'Here I Am,' Marvin Sapp
'Under Great White Northern Lights,' The White Stripes
'Live On Lansdowne, Boston MA,' Dropkick Murphys
'La Raza,' Armored Saint
'Imaginary Television,' Graham Parker
'Highway Rider,' Brad Mehldau
'Best of Twelve Nights in Hollywood,' Ella Fitzgerald
'Survival Story,' FloBots



New on DVD

- 'The Princess and the Frog' Armored
'Ninja Assassin'
'The Fourth Kind'
'Did You Hear About the Morgans?'
'Astro Boy'
'Broken Embraces'
'Dillinger is Dead'
'Wonderful World'
'Paris'
'Hawaii Five-O - The Eighth Season'
'Mystery Science Theater 3000 - Volume XVII'

Chorale in concert

Brevard Chorale presents a performance at 7 tonight at Brevard Community College, 1519 Clearlake Road, Cocoa, featuring music from 'Les Miserables,' 'The Sound of Music' and more. The cost is \$10. Call 433-7385.

FLORIDATODAY.com

Pill won't shorten life, study finds

BY RANDY DOTING GANNETT

Good news for women who have used birth control pills: A long-term study finds those who took oral contraceptives at some point in their lives have a lower risk of death than women who never took the pill.

"Many women, especially those who used the first generation of oral contraceptives many years ago, are likely to be reassured by our results. However, our findings might not reflect the experience of women using oral contraceptives today, if currently available preparations have a different risk than earlier prod-

ucts," Dr. Philip Hannaford of the University of Aberdeen, leader of a new study, said in a statement.

However, those who took oral contraceptives are at higher risk of violent or accidental death. The authors of the study, which appears online March 12 in the journal BMJ, aren't sure why this that might be so.

Hannaford and colleagues tracked 46,000 women for almost 40 years.

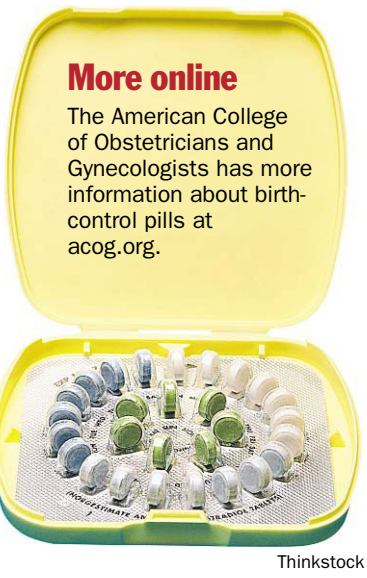
In the long term, women who took birth-control pills had a significantly lower risk of death from causes such as heart disease and

cancers — even cancers of the uterus and ovary — compared with other women.

Women younger than 40 who took birth control pills had a slightly higher risk of death, the researchers report.

The authors conclude, "oral contraception is not significantly associated with an increased long-term risk of death — indeed a net benefit was apparent."

But, they write, "the balance of risks and benefits may vary globally, depending upon patterns of oral contraception usage and background risk of disease." ■



More online

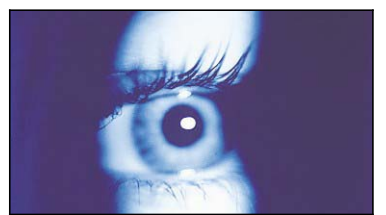
The American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists has more information about birth-control pills at acog.org.

Thinkstock



Michael R. Brown, FLORIDA TODAY

Miracle of life. Susan McCrea, with her 3-month-old daughter, Sarah, said donating her placenta was an easy decision. "It's not like there's anything you're going to do with your placenta," McCrea said.



Thinkstock images

Eye opening. A single placenta can help up to 100 recipients.

If you want to donate

- Only mothers-to-be who have planned Caesarian sections can donate, to prevent bacterial infections.
Prescreening involves normal blood tests and questions involving sexual history and drug use.
Once donated, the placenta's innermost layer is processed for use in eye surgeries.
A single placenta can help up to 100 recipients regain eyesight.
The most common treatment is for pterygium, a wing-shaped growth on the cornea that can distort vision. It also is used to treat chemical burns, corneal perforations and even some cancers in the eye.
Cord blood can be banked at the same time, although it requires more advance notice.
For more information call the Southeast Tissue Alliance at 866-432-1164.

Tissue helps restore sight

Placenta lining promotes faster healing after eye injuries, primarily the cornea

BY SUSAN JENKS FLORIDA TODAY

Patricia Koslowski does not know the identity of the donor whose tissue helped restore her vision to near-normal after a severe chemical burn in her left eye.

"Whoever it was, I feel so blessed," she said. "I had golf-ball-sized water blisters hanging on my face, and I couldn't see anything at all for three weeks."

The 65-year-old Melbourne resident burned her eye last October when she dropped a bottle of Clorox while doing laundry. Its contents splashed "up all over my face and up into my left nostril and eye."

Damage to her face healed fairly quickly, she said. And because of a donated placenta, her eye doctor was able to restore much of her lost sight using tiny grafts made from the tissue, which were implanted in the eye.

One donated placenta can potentially save the sight of up to 100 patients.

The stem-cell rich placenta, which lines the uterine wall and protects a developing fetus during pregnancy, usually gets thrown out after birth. But, increasingly, eye doctors are using the innermost lining of this tissue, known as the amniotic membrane, to See PLACENTA, 4D

The process of placenta donation

- The Southeast Tissue Alliance contracts with hospitals across Florida to recover placenta from women choosing to donate.
SETA contracts locally with Holmes Regional Medical Center in Melbourne and Cape Canaveral Hospital in Cocoa Beach.
Tissue is collected or recovered in the operating room by SETA.
Laboratory tests screen for possible infectious agents, such as

- HIV, or hepatitis viruses.
The tissue is shipped on dry ice to BioTissue Inc. in Miami, where it is processed for use in eye surgery.
The final product goes to ophthalmologists in Florida and other states to treat a number of eye diseases, primarily pterygium, growths on the eyes' surface, associated with sun damage.

— FLORIDA TODAY, Southeast Tissue Alliance



Room to grow. The placenta is a membrane that develops during pregnancy, lining the uterine wall and partially enveloping the fetus.

Orchestra takes audience 'Around the Bloch'

BY PAM HARBAUGH FLORIDA TODAY

If you're looking for an affordable and wide-ranging symphonic music experience, then consider Thursday's concert by the Brevard Community College Chamber Orchestra.

A simple \$5 admission fee will

get you into "Around the Bloch," a concert with a variety of symphonic music genres. Conducted by James Bishop, the program includes:

- Mozart's "Divertimento" K. 136
Mahler's "Adagietto Sinfonietta" from his Fifth Symphony

- Corigliano's "Voyage"
The prelude and fugue from Bloch's "Concerto Grosso for Piano and Orchestra"

The concerto features pianist Sally Cook, who is a BCC piano professor.

"It's a concert of very sophisticated music (and) academically

challenging for the students as well as the listener," Bishop said. "It's quite beautiful and moving."

The performance begins at 7:30 p.m. Thursday in the Bernard W. Simpkins Fine Arts Auditorium, BCC, 1519 Clearlake Road, Cocoa. Tickets are \$5. Call 433-7375. ■

Contact Harbaugh at 242-3717 or pharbaugh@floridatoday.com.

Research barks up tree of long life

Old dogs may have cancer answers

BY DAN MCFEELY GANNETT

University researcher David Waters hopes a bunch of old dogs will be able to teach scientists new tricks about aging and cancer.

Waters has embarked on a 23-day trek across the country to meet face-to-snout with 15 of the oldest-living Rottweilers in the United States. Waters, head of the Gerald P. Murphy Cancer Foundation at the Purdue Research Park, West Lafayette, Ind., has been leading a research team that studies aging and cancer in pet dogs. During the past three years, the team has compiled a database of scientific data on 140 Rottweilers through breeders and fan clubs. Only 15 still are alive, prompting Waters to put together his "Old Grey Muzzle tour."

"These dogs have lived 30 percent longer than average," Waters said. "They have dodged cancer and we believe studying them can shed light on what it takes to live well."

All of the Rottweilers are at least 13 years old. Typically, they don't live much past 10. Of the 15 he plans to visit, females outnumber the males 11 to four.

Monday, Waters was in Virginia to visit with "Buzz." Today, he travels to Tennessee to see "Schatze," and the tour ends in Seattle on April 3 with "Sugar," the oldest dog on the tour at 15 years and two months.

"If you want to understand aging, you have to look to those who have been extremely successful," Waters said. "These dogs are the equivalent to 100-year-old people and we want to find out what is the root of their success."

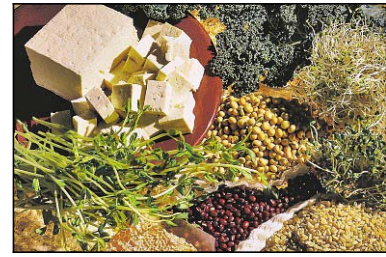
First stop on the "Old Grey Muzzle tour" was Friday in Holliston, Mass., where Waters met with "Bort," a mild-mannered Rottweiler owned by Gretchen Caldwell.

The Caldwell family raised Bort from a 12-week-old pup. The dog will turn 14 in two weeks.

"He's still pretty active, loves to go on his walks and greet the kids when they come home," said Caldwell, who volunteered Bort for the study. "He still thinks he can catch a squirrel, too."

During each stop, which can last up to four hours, Waters performs a physical examination on the dog. He listens closely to the hearts and lungs. He performs a neurological exam, collects DNA samples, checks bone density and measures See CANCER, 4D

INSIDE



Vegetarian tricks to staying slim

Think a vegetarian diet is the ticket to weight loss? Think again. Once they give up meat, many women find the number on the scale goes up, not down, 5D

Fitness calendar.....5D
People's Herbal Pharmacy6D
Health Newsmakers7D

Tests ensure placenta's purity

PLACENTA, from 1D

promote faster healing after eye injuries, primarily in the cornea, the clear dome-shaped window of the eye. Also, more pregnant women are being asked to consider donation. "Once I learned about the opportunity to do it, I wanted to," said Susan McCrea, a Palm Bay mother who gave birth to her third child, Sarah, in December. "It's not like there's anything you're going to do with your placenta."

McCrea described the donor criteria as straightforward and simple. "It only involved getting my permission and making sure I was healthy," through blood work and drug screening, she said. "It was very easy to do and it cost me nothing."

To recover placenta, the Southeast Tissue Alliance contracts with about eight hospitals across Florida, including two operated by Health First in Brevard County: Cape Canaveral Hospital in Cocoa Beach and Holmes Regional Medical Center in Melbourne.

The independent non-profit organization works only with Health First in Brevard because the demand for placenta is limited, according to Jean Hess, a nurse who is SETA's director of professional relations. "We only accept so many placentas per month," she said.

In 2009, the recovery agency, one of at least four such agencies in Florida, recovered 18 placentas in Brevard, up from none the three prior years, and eight in 2005.

But as new applications have developed and tissue distribution widens, Hess said, more doctors are waiting to use it. In the future, even the amniotic fluid that bathes the fetus and is believed to be a rich source of stem cells could be tapped for some use, she said.

"Certainly, it's not as controversial a source" for stem cells as the embryo, Hess said. "It's a better way of obtaining them."

Stem cells are the body's most basic cells, capable of transforming themselves into any type of human tissue.

Recovering amniotic fluid would have to be done before delivery, as this fluid is lost once labor begins. In the case of the placenta, the tissue also must be taken during a planned C-section to prevent bacterial contamination, as it was in McCrea's case, Hess said.

Issue of purity

Even so, other steps are taken to ensure the purity of placental tissue, according to Judi Cavazos, a nurse who chairs the Holmes and Palm Bay Hospital "tiger team," which encourages organ and tissue donations. The process is extremely thorough, she said, as the

placenta is not a life-saving tissue, so there's more time for testing. Screening is done not only before birth, but afterward to make sure a virus, such as HIV, doesn't show up later on.

Jenifer Merritt, director of customer affairs for BioTissue Inc. in Miami, said the tissue is tested based on guidelines set by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration. They include tests for the two HIV strains that cause AIDS, hepatitis B and hepatitis C viruses, two leukemia viral strains, West Nile virus and syphilis.

Once donated tissue is collected and tested, SETA ships it on dry ice to BioTissue, where the amniotic membrane undergoes a proprietary process for use in eye surgeries. The company's final membrane product is frozen to preserve biologic activity, Merritt said, while another company, I.O.P. Inc., a California ophthalmic device company, dehydrates the membrane for use in the eye.

"Which is better?" asked Dr. Rafael Trespalacios, a cornea specialist with Brevard Eye Center in Melbourne. "I'm unaware of any studies that compare head-to-head outcomes of the two types."

For Koslowski, he said, he used the frozen membrane, which made her surgery "as easy as implanting a contact lens."

And the results have been good. Whereas before she could barely see the "big E" on the eye chart, Trespalacios said, vision in her left eye now is 20/40 — "good enough to drive."

However, in general, he said, he prefers the dehydrated products for convenience and cost, especially to treat pterygium, the wing-shaped tissue growths on the cornea, associated with sun damage from ultraviolet light. With time, these growths can impair vision and change the cornea's shape.

For now, pterygium remains the most common medical target for donated placental tissue, Trespalacios and others said. Instead of taking healthy tissue from the mucus membrane covering the eye and draping it over the raw area left behind by a pterygium's removal, the amniotic membrane is placed over the raw spot, where it provides "a mesh-work or scaffolding" to modulate healing with minimal inflammation or scarring.

"It's a clear, cellophane-like membrane," Trespalacios said, describing how the tissue looks. "It is not integrated into the eye, but works more like a bandage placed over a wound."

Other uses

Although membrane grafts are used in other eye conditions, even some cancers of the eye, placental tissue sometimes finds its way into cosmetic products, such as shampoo or soaps and vitamin products.



Michael R. Brown, FLORIDA TODAY

Bundle of joy. Susan McCrea of Palm Bay, who gave birth to her daughter, Sarah, three months ago, said once she learned about the opportunity to donate her placenta, she wanted to do it. "It only involved getting my permission and making sure I was healthy," McCrea said.

"If you look at your shampoo bottle, it might have 'amniotic tissue' listed as one of the ingredients. But, I still think whether it's used this way or for helping restore someone's sight, it's better than throwing it in the trash."

Judi Cavazos, nurse and chairwoman of Holmes Regional Medical Center and Palm Bay Hospital "tiger team," which encourages organ and tissue donations

The FDA does not prohibit its use commercially, confirmed Sibohan DeLancey, a spokeswoman for the federal agency. However, the agency requires placental products — from humans or animals — to be processed to remove any hormone activity and be free of viruses or other infectious agents, she said.

"If you look at your shampoo bottle, it might have 'amniotic tissue' listed as one of the ingredients," said Cavazos, an idea some individuals might find objectionable. "But, I still think whether it's used this way or for helping restore someone's sight, it's better than throwing it in the trash."

She would get no argument from Koslowski.

It's taken months to regain her vision, she said, and only

recently has she been able to wean herself off the eye-drops that helped minimize blurring during her recovery.

"You don't realize how hard it is to keep your equilibrium when you lose vision in one eye," she said.

Ever since the day of her accident, Koslowski admitted, she's been on a mission. Having worked as an assistant to a physician for many years in St. Louis, she is familiar with goggles or other eyewear to protect the eyes. She's even more vigilant now.

"I tell all my family members to go get some goggles for \$3 or \$4," she said. "They don't want to go through what I've been through the last few months."

Contact Jenks at 242-3657 or sjenks@floridatoday.com.

Old dogs may have cancer answers

CANCER, from 1D

body weight and height. Additionally, Waters conducts interviews with owners, exploring the home environment and the things owners have done to keep their dogs healthy.

Dog owners work hard

Caldwell believes she has played a key role in keeping Bort — who weighs in at 82 pounds and is nearly 26 inches tall — healthy and cancer-free. He's been fed healthy, low-grain food, gets plenty of exercise and was neutered at the age of 6, said Caldwell, who also owns three other Rottweilers.

"We've worked hard to keep his weight down because obesity can be a big problem in dogs his age," she said. "But I also know that some of his longevity is in his pedigree. Several dogs from his grandfather lived to an old age."

Like similar aging studies on long-living, cloistered nuns, Waters believes there are things to be learned from the Rottweilers on his tour. While genetics typically gets 30 percent of the blame for cancer and age-related health issues, 70 percent is lifestyle, he said.

"Decisions these owners made for their pets can profoundly help longevity, whether that be diet, vaccinations, ovary removals, the use of lawn chemicals," Waters said. "We want to find out what is at the root of the longevity."

Animals and aging

Using animals to study aging is nothing new, says Felipe Perez, an expert on aging and associate professor of clinical medicine for the Indiana University School of Medicine's geriatrics pro-



Photo courtesy of Josh T. Reynolds

House call. Purdue University researcher David Waters holds up an X-ray of Bort, a 13-year-old Rottweiler belonging to Gretchen Caldwell.

gram. The practice dates back at least 70 years, but has long used mice and laboratories, not dogs and homes.

Although he has not worked with dogs, Perez said "looking for an answer when you don't have one is always good."

Waters, 52, focuses on the Rottweilers, he said, because of the similar patterns of aging and cancer behavior for those that are afflicted. Waters says there is a growing need to find out what impacts healthy aging.

"I know we are going to find that each dog has its own story. The key is what are the different pathways to successful aging? That is what people want to learn. This is where the fresh ideas on cancer research are going to come from."

At her home in Holliston, where Caldwell has also agreed to donate Bort's body to research when he finally passes on, she hopes there will be some fruit to her pet's labors.

"I would just love for them to be able to figure out some of these connections with cancer and aging," she said. "Anything Bort can do to help unravel this puzzle."

Spend Less & Look, Feel, and Eat Better 321-986-8686

FIRST EXAM FREE
NON-EMERGENCY
Must Present Coupon. Not valid with any other offers. ADA code # 00140 exp. 4/21/10

CROWNS \$499
3 or More Reg. \$559. Not valid with any other offers. Must Present Coupon. Exp. 4/21/10 ADA code #2752

Family Smile Survival Kit

Great Smiles Denture Kit

\$50 OFF
Reg \$750 Upper & Lower Premium Dentures
Excludes Immediate Dentures
Must Present Coupon. Not valid with any other offers. ADA code #05120 and #05110. Exp. 4/21/10

\$50 OFF
METAL BASED FUSED Acrylic Partial Dentures
Upper or Lower Reg \$ 675
Must Present Coupon. Not valid with any other offers. ADA code #5213 and #5214. Exp. 4/21/10

Robert A. Matthews D.M.D. www.perfectfitdental.com | 3345 N Courtenay Parkway, Suite 105, Merritt Island, FL | OPEN MON-THU 8:30-5:00; FRI 8:30-2:00

GRAND OPENING EVENT
Come Experience Hearing at its Best
Thursday, March 25th and
Friday, March 26th 9am to 5pm
WOULDN'T YOU WANT TO TRUST YOUR HEARING TO A DOCTOR?

- Board Certified Dr. of Audiology
- University of Florida B.A.; M.A.; AuD
- Veteran's Administration Medical Center Trained
- Shands Teaching Hospital Trained


Odilie Bagwell, AuD.
CCC-A

Grand Opening Special!

- \$1000 off purchase of two hearing aids. (select models)
- Food and beverages served
- Door Prize Drawings
- Chance to win amplified TV Headphones
- Free Hearing/Balance Screenings
- Free amplified phone (Must qualify)


ELITE AUDIOLOGY


widex passion
THE VIRTUALLY INVISIBLE HEARING AID

321.504.HEAR (4327)
or
Call for Appointment

4200 SR 524 Suite 103, Cocoa

36-4686

The Town Square
Wuesthoff's Assisted Living Facility in Viera



"Real angels take care of my mom here"
~ Donna Lee Carden, daughter of Town Square resident Laurie DeLany


1700 Wuesthoff Drive, Viera

Assisted Living Facility #8134

Donna Lee Carden chose The Town Square for her mother because her own daughter, who works in healthcare, highly recommended it. "It's like visiting my mother in her own home, but better because the staff are real angels who take care of my mom."

Laurie DeLany, a resident for four years, says, "I'm very independent and I love this place because they spoil me. My best friend lives here and a doctor makes monthly house calls — what more could I ask for?"

To learn more about The Town Square and to receive a free tour and lunch, call 321-255-6030.


Wuesthoff HEALTH SYSTEM
Better Care for a Better Community.

MARCH SPECIAL!
\$500 move-in fee WAIVED & \$1000 off first month if you move in by March 31, 2010!

36-5343