

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

60 seconds
Of news you can use

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@floridatoday.com.

The Doctor is In

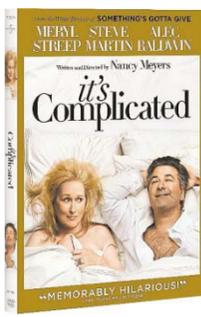
A free lecture on how to keep Alzheimer's disease from worsening begins at 11 a.m. Wednesday at Health First's Leeza's Place, 3661 S. Babcock St., Melbourne. To register, call 951-7118.



MELISSA ETHERIDGE
FEARLESS LOVE

New on CD

- "Fearless Love," Melissa Etheridge
- "The Age of Miracles," Mary Chapin Carpenter
- "Nobody's Daughter," Hole
- "Fever by Bullet," My Valentine
- "Thank You Mr Churchill," Peter Dinklage
- "Unmistakable Love," Jo Dee Messina
- "Drowning Pool," Drowning Pool
- "Daddy Yankee Mundial," Daddy Yankee
- "Never Alone," Jim Brickman



New on DVD

- "It's Complicated"
- "The Imaginarium of Dr. Parnassus"
- "Transylmania"
- "Five Minutes of Heaven"
- "The Descent Part 2"
- "The Fugitive Kind"
- "The End of Poverty"
- "Pride and Prejudice"

Tame your Tummy

Learn common causes and natural solutions for digestive problems when CARE Chiropractic and Wellness Center, 1938 Dairy Road, West Melbourne, hosts a free lecture at 7 p.m. Thursday. Call 728-1387.

FLORIDATODAY.com

Your complete online guide to news across the Space Coast and from around the world.



CAN'T SEE 3-D

Photo illustration by Rob Landers and Malcolm Denemark, FLORIDA TODAY

Looming large. To see three-dimensional images in such movies as "Avatar," "Alice in Wonderland," "How to Train Your Dragon" and "Clash of the Titans," an individual's sight must be able to "separate the drive to converge from the drive to focus," said cornea specialist Dr. Raphael Trespalacios of Melbourne.

Not all eyes are equipped with depth perception

BY SUSAN JENKS
FLORIDA TODAY

If the 10-foot blue creatures inside the lush alien world of "Avatar" fail to jump out at you, it could mean an unrecognized vision problem.

Not necessarily a severe one, physicians say, but a hidden visual problem, such as impaired depth perception or an inability to see three-dimensionally. Depth perception is not measured by the classic big E eye chart.

"It all starts with the concept of 20/20 vision," when a letter on these charts can be seen clearly from 20 feet away, said Dr. Paul Rousseau, a doctor of optometry in Viera. "If the result is 20/20, patients think they have perfect vision and no problems."

But there can be binocular vision impairments, as well, an umbrella term describing visual errors when an individual's two eyes fail to work together properly to create a single clear image. These impairments can range from mild to severe.

"We have two eyes for a reason. The two eyes working together give us stereovision or 3-D vision," Rousseau said. "When that doesn't happen, either you won't see the 3-D effects at all or it will create so much visual discomfort, you might leave the theater."

Many reasons exist for binocular vision problems, from neurological dysfunction, if the brain fails to process and fuse images sent to it from each eye, to weakened eye muscles, which cause the eyes to turn inward or outward, disrupting visual alignment. If these problems are acquired in adulthood, medical conditions such as stroke or age-related macular degeneration, although considered rare, may be to blame.

"If you can't see a 3-D movie, your glasses are bad or you may have a medical problem, so go get an eye exam," said Dr. Thomas Teather, an ophthalmologist with Florida Eye Associates specializing in pediatric ophthalmology and strabismus. Strabismus refers to a visual disorder where the eyes fail to align properly, considered one of the more common reasons for binocular vision loss, most often seen in children.

"Anything that prevents an image from getting to one eye," such as strabismus, Teather said. See VISION, 4D

Binocular vision impairments

- Visual defects in which the eyes fail to work together, resulting in a partial or total loss of depth perception and stereoscopic 3-dimensional vision.
 - Strabismus, in which both eyes fail to focus at the same point at the same time, is one of the most common binocular vision problems, often diagnosed in childhood. Also called crossed-eyes, walleye or squint.
 - Amblyopia, in which the brain favors one eye, while vision in the other eye does not develop normally. Strabismus is a common cause of amblyopia; genetics also plays a role.
 - Treatments may include prescription glasses to help focus and straighten eyes; patching to strengthen weaker eye; vision training, likened to physical therapy for the eye; medications; or surgery to reposition eye muscles.
- American Academy of Pediatric Ophthalmology; American Academy of Optometry; FLORIDA TODAY

Free clinic in Palm Bay opens in 2011

BY SUSAN JENKS
FLORIDA TODAY

By Presidents' Day next year, the national organization Volunteers in Medicine hopes to open its 78th free clinic for the working poor and uninsured, this one in Brevard County.

"We don't accept (health) insurance," said Paul Ringenberger, who will serve as acting executive director of the new clinic, operating under the name Indian River Volunteers in Medicine. "We'll see you the first time, but then we direct you elsewhere."

The nonprofit clinic, still in the planning stages, will provide primary health care services and dental care at no cost to needy residents in Brevard and Indian River counties. Three quarters of the medical staff likely will be retired physicians and dentists, with the rest practicing physicians who donate their time.

"Ours is a different approach" to providing health care, Ringenberger said. "Especially with our retired doctors, this is a labor of love."

In Florida, the Palm Bay clinic, which will operate at an undecided location near Palm Bay and Babcock roads, will be the sixth clinic of its type in the state. The national organization, headquartered in Burlington, Vt., opened the first clinic in Hilton Head, S.C., in 1994.

Back then, a retired physician discovered that 1 in 3 residents on the island lacked access to care, Ringenberger said. So he brought together a group of other retired physicians, nurses and dentists to work on a voluntary, part-time basis, to address that gap.

Each state provides a limited license to retired health care professionals who choose to participate. The clinics rely on donations, grants and fundraising events to operate, rather than federal funding.

Volunteers in Medicine estimates there are more than 250,000 retired physicians, 350,000 nurses and 40,000 dentists in the United States today looking for meaningful ways to spend their retirement.

In Brevard County, Ringenberger credited three local physicians with wanting to establish a free clinic in the community: Dr. Gene List, a retired dentist; Dr. Barry Kronman, a retired ear, nose and throat specialist; and Dr. Richard Leong, a Satellite Beach dentist in the area for about 30 years.

He said the organization looked at unemployment rates, now at more than 12 percent, as well as the number of uninsured, before selecting the county as the site for a free clinic. About 24.7 percent, or 77,594 residents younger than 65 lack health insurance coverage in Brevard, according to a recent survey commissioned by the Health Council of East Central Florida.

As to the clinic's hours and days of operation, they have not been decided. ■

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

INSIDE



Support groups help runners recharge

Whether you are a competitive, social or goal-oriented runner, or you prefer walking, support is available to help rekindle your motivation to hit the pavement, 5D

- Health calendar..... 5D
- People's Herbal Pharmacy 7D
- Health Newsmakers 7D

Teen bullying can be red flag of depression

BY BETH J. HARPAZ
ASSOCIATED PRESS

NEW YORK — The word "bully" may conjure images of a 9-year-old punk shaking down a 7-year-old for lunch money. But teenagers experience bullying too, and research shows it can be a red flag for depression and suicidal behavior.

That's true whether teens are doing the bullying, or are victims of it.

"If you are vulnerable and being bullied, it can be the straw that breaks the camel's back," said Madelyn Gold, a professor of psychiatry and public health at Columbia University and the New York State Psychiatric Institute who has studied bullying.



Huddled in loss. Friends mourned for 17-year-old Alexis Pilkington, who killed herself in March in West Islip, N.Y. Nasty comments about her were posted online even after her death.

AP

That doesn't mean bullying causes suicide. But it is an associated factor. Six teenagers were charged recently in South Haley, Mass., in connection with the case

of Phoebe Prince, who killed herself after she complained of being tormented by kids in her high school.

In another case, a teenager See BULLYING, 4D

Twice as many boys than girls are bullying victims, inciters

BULLYING, from 1D

named Alexis Pilkington killed herself in March in West Islip, N.Y., and nasty comments about her were posted online even after her death.

Ann Haas, director of suicide prevention projects at the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention, cautioned against thinking in terms of "cause and effect" when it comes to bullying and suicide.

"The key risk factor for suicide in youth is unrecognized, untreated mental disorders, particularly depression," Haas said.

But a study of 2,342 high school students published in 2007 in the *Journal of American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry* showed "a clear association" between bullying, depression, suicidal thoughts and suicide attempts.

Secret lives

Teens often are secretive about their social lives, but bullying is "something we need to ask our kids about," Gould said.

Remind them that insulting or humiliating someone on Facebook, by text or e-mail can be as devastating as physical confrontations or pranks.

"In the 21st century electronic age, you can be one step removed from what you're doing," said Alec Miller, an adolescent psychologist at the Children's Hospital at Montefiore/Albert Einstein College of Medicine in New York. "You're not actually saying something to someone's face. You're just writing an e-mail. That makes it a lot easier to bully and harass."

Explain that bullying — physical or verbal — "is serious, that it's not in fun, that some people take this very seriously and they can think of hurting themselves," Gould said.

Teen fears

Yet teens may fear becoming the bully's next target if they speak out. So be sure to encourage them to tell parents, teachers or guidance counselors, and if you're the one they come to, let school officials and other parents know what's going on.

What if your teen is being harassed?

If he or she doesn't seem deeply distressed by it, offer some simple coping strategies. Bullies thrive on getting a reaction from their victims, so ignoring them can be a powerful antidote, Gould advised.



GNS illustration

Make it stop. Encourage kids to take action if they witness bullying. A simple comment like "Cut it out" or "Leave him alone" could help change the dynamic when someone's being picked on.

"Defend yourself, not by getting into a fight, but by showing you have resilience," she said. "Find other friends, join other groups, find another social network that is not going to do that to you."

How do you know whether a teen's reaction to bullying is normal or not?

Teens are often moody, but "depression is a much more sustained kind of thing" that can last weeks, Haas said. If you're concerned, an easy first step is to call your pediatrician, for a checkup or a referral to a mental health provider.

Despite the popular conception every high school in America is run by "mean girls," Gould's research found rates of bullying behavior — for victims and perpetrators — were about twice as high among boys as among girls.

Other gender differences: Physical bullying is more prevalent among boys and "relational" bullying — teasing, verbal harassment and social manipulation — is more common among girls. But while girls involved in bullying were far more likely to report depression, suicidal thoughts or attempts than boys, boys are four times as likely as girls to die by suicide, Gould said.

Haas added teens struggling with sexual identity issues may be especially vulnerable to bullies.

Gould said a new study awaiting publication followed adults who reported being bullied in high school to see if it had any lasting impact.

The good news: Most adults who were bullied in high school "were not suicidal, not depressed and not at risk for suicide," she said.

"There is life after high school," Haas said, "but that can take many years for all of us to appreciate." ■

Reading eye chart doesn't catch all vision problems

VISION, from 4D

said, "can cause you to lose sharp vision."

That, in turn has an obvious impact on the 3-D moviegoers' experience.

The exact number of individuals facing inadequately developed binocular vision skills is unclear. While optometrists like Rousseau estimate as many as 1 in 5 Americans may be affected, ophthalmologists suggest the numbers may be far lower. Teather, for one, said the numbers have been exaggerated in the past.

Still, despite some turf problems between the two groups of health care professionals, he said, "any legitimate optometrist or ophthalmologist allowed to use diagnostic eye drops should be able to identify a binocular problem," so consumers should feel comfortable going to either one.

"There are some great MDs out there and great ODs that can diagnose and figure out a vision problem," he said.

Individual issue

Dr. Raphael Trespalacios, a cornea specialist with Brevard Eye Center in Melbourne, said some individuals with depth perception or stereovision problems might not recognize they have a vision problem, because they're used to seeing everything in two dimensions.

"They'll think, 'This movie looks the same to me,' since they have no other frame of reference," he said. "The only way they might figure



Some people are used to seeing everything in two dimensions, said Dr. Raphael Trespalacios.

out something is wrong is if they're sitting next to someone who says, 'Wow, that almost hit me!'"

Because optometrists often do primary care vision exams, Trespalacios said, they might be the first to identify these problems. But ophthalmologists also see and treat them, mostly non-surgically, he said.

Trespalacios explained what might happen visually inside the movie theater as the pupils of the eyes dilate and strive to focus in response to the darkness and the 3-D images hurled at them.

"If you're focusing on something near, the eyes want to converge," he said. "But if something is shot out at you from the screen, to experience it, you have to be able to separate the drive to converge from the drive to focus," which a pair of healthy eyes can easily do.

Except for profound vision problems, he said, most individuals probably experience some of the 3-D effects when they go to the movies, in part because of the way the movies are designed and filmed today and in part because of the wide range of vision imparities individuals experience.

One of his patients, for example, diagnosed with amblyopia or lazy eye, where the brain favors one eye over the

other, "sees the more dramatic effects in 3-D movies, but not the milder ones," he said.

And that might hold true for many other viewers, as well.

Image perception

To illustrate some of the visual skills missed on an eye chart, Rousseau asked Steve Bonnici, an occupational therapy assistant studying at Keiser University, to act as his visual guinea pig.

While reading the eye chart, Bonnici's eyes never moved, focusing straight ahead on each letter. But when looking at a page of book copy, his eyes tracked left to right on the words, much the way the carriage of a typewriter moves.

Other tests, covering up one eye at a time, showed dramatic differences in how each eye perceives an image.

"If the eyes are not lined up properly, the brain may try to fix it," Rousseau said. "There's a conflict of signals, which may result in blurring or floating" images. If that happens while watching a 3-D movie, he said, "it makes us very uncomfortable."

Rousseau recommended moviegoers not sit too close to the screen.

Ideally, he said, sit toward the middle or the back of the theater.

And if you have monovision contacts, where one corrects for being nearsighted and the other for distance problems, don't wear them, or you might miss the action, he said.

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

The difference between an optometrist and ophthalmologist

Ophthalmologists: Doctors of medicine or doctors of osteopathy who complete four years of college, four years of medical school, one or more years of general or surgical training, and three or more years in a hospital-based eye residency. Ophthalmologists cover all aspects of eye care from diagnosing and treating eye diseases to surgical eye care.

Optometrists: Beyond college, optometrists receive a doctor of optometry degree. Licensed to provide primary eye care services, optometrists diagnose and treat visual conditions, such as nearsightedness, farsightedness and astigmatism, but they also can diagnose eye diseases, such as cataracts and glaucoma. Patients requiring surgery are referred to an ophthalmologist.

Now Available... Our New HCG Program
Lose up to a Pound Per Day... up to 30 Pounds in 30 Days!

Results may vary

OVERWEIGHT?

Metabolic Melt Down™

LOSE up to 1 POUND PER DAY

up to 30 POUNDS IN 30 DAYS!

JAN LANE CARVER lost 30 lbs. in 30 Days on the HCG Program!

I lost 30 pounds in 30 days and 7 inches off my waistline!
 Over the last 5 years, I gained a few pounds each year. I just could not get it off.
 This was so easy, no cravings, no hunger and lots of energy!
 I feel better than I have for years!

Re-set your fat thermometer!

Our clients are finding it easy to lose their weight and **KEEP IT OFF!**

Over 1 million Pounds Lost Nationwide!

Call Today to Start Losing

Over 70 Locations Nationwide & Growing...

Over 20 years in business...

My cruise is in 30 days!
What am I going to do?

Healthy savings/flex cards now accepted

METABOLIC

RESEARCH CENTER

WEIGHT LOSS SPECIALISTS

FREE CONSULTATION Easy Dine Out! Doctor Developed Programs!

MELBOURNE

953-0203

ROCKLEGE

636-1656

NOW SERVING

TITUSVILLE

636-1656