


 Questions

Sports Injuries

Ask the EXPERTS

Your family's medical questions answered by Katy area experts

Sports Injuries

What is sports psychology? When should you seek psychological help in the recovery process?

The treatment model for athletic injury has changed. Recent studies show that injuries require a full scope of treatment - from medical to mental and emotional. While sports psychology is rarely discussed, there are proven results in helping athletes return more quickly, and successfully, to the field. It is shown that athletes who have followed the treatment protocol in conjunction with physical therapy have a higher success rate of returning to the field at the same, if not higher, performance level than prior to injury. Ideally, an athlete would work with a sports psychology consultant prior to surgery; treatment and recovery time are much quicker in this scenario.



- **Robert B. Andrews, MA, LMFT, CSC**
The Institute of Sports Psychology

Varicose Veins

What are varicose veins and what causes them?

They are enlarged veins that may be blue, red, or flesh-colored and occur most often in the legs. Varicose veins may be caused by weak, damaged, deformed, or missing valves in the veins. Your leg muscles push blood back to the heart against gravity. Normally, valves in your veins keep your blood flowing forward to return it to your heart. But if the valves aren't working properly, blood can leak back into the veins and pool there. When backed-up blood makes the veins bigger, they can become varicose. You should seek treatment if varicose veins cause pain or aching; a vein is red, swollen, very tender or warm to the touch; the skin on your calf and ankle becomes thick and changes color, or has sores; a varicose vein begins to bleed; or your symptoms interfere with your daily activities.



- **Ulises Baltazar, MD**
Houston Methodist Cardiovascular Surgery Associates

Secondhand Smoke

My in-laws smoke, and I'm hesitant to let my kids stay in their house overnight. Should I be concerned? Are the effects of secondhand smoke more dangerous for young children?

There have been studies which have documented associations between secondhand smoke and serious health problems including cancer, asthma and other pulmonary disease, frequent upper respiratory and ear infections, heart disease, and stroke. These studies are conducted among patients who are habitually exposed to secondhand smoke at work, home, the car, or in public places. Children are more vulnerable to secondhand smoke than adults, and extra precaution should be taken to ensure that children are not exposed to environments with secondhand smoke.

Practically speaking, almost all people have been exposed to a mild degree of secondhand smoke in their environment, and it may not be entirely possible to completely eliminate secondhand smoke from an environment. In the home and in the car are two critical environments where extra precaution should be taken to avoid child exposure. In this particular situation, a discussion with the in-laws about avoidance of smoking while the children are in the house or in the car is prudent. They should be willing to avoid any smoking indoors or in the car while the children are present in order to create a safe environment.



- **Dr. Mark Zafereo Jr., MD**
MD Anderson Regional Care Center

If you have a question for our panel of experts, email editor@katymagazine.com.

*Special thanks to our panel of Katy Magazine experts
Dr. Robert B. Andrews, Dr. Ulises Baltazar, and Dr. Mark Zafereo Jr.*