It's Winter—that means shedding clothing layers when you head outside! If you can brave the elements, routine sun exposure is very important for your body's vitamin D production. More inside about why vitamin D is important and how to get it without braving freezing temperatures...

This issue emphasizes the word “excitement” as Winter can be filled with its share of "blues'. Exciting news inside spans your good health in more ways than one. Even though Halloween is past, that didn't stop us from including a nice treat for you in the Patient Perks section. Enjoy this issue!

Warm regards,

Brian S. Boxer Wachler, MD

What the ‘Governator’ Taught Me in Junior High School

Growing up in Santa Monica and the oldest son of hair stylist parents, I went to public schools all through school and college at UCLA. Back in junior high school, a good friend Keith lived across the street from Arnold Schwarzenegger and Maria Shriver on 21st Street. Arnold is a pretty imposing guy. To get a sense of the size of his shadow, he is over 6 feet tall and weighs over 220 pounds. I was over at Keith's house all the time. We were “tinkerers” in his folk's garage, always concocting something, like building and flying gas-powered model airplanes. Since Keith was so handy, Arnold put him to good use as his “fix it” guy for things around the house. Sometimes when I was visiting, Arnold would walk over and ask us to wash his cars and motorcycle for a couple of dollars. At this time, Arnold was a mega celebrity after making the hit Conan the Barbarian movie. So here I was, a teenager, pretty much a nobody in the big star's world, yet Arnold was so friendly and down-to-earth that you'd think he was the Austrian version of Mr. Rogers.' That message was poignant, that no matter how famous one becomes, it's perfectly fine to remain a nice person.

Doctors too often take the opposite approach: “Me, doctor. You, patient” attitude. That is so “not me.” That's why I make my personal mobile phone available to patients in case they need to get in touch with me directly. Years ago when I started my career at an academic institution in Los Angeles, my chairman pulled me aside one day and remarked, “Brian I noticed on your business card that you put your cell phone. Are you sure about that? No doctor has ever done that before.” I explained to him that I wanted to break down that “great wall” between doctor and patient and wanted to provide 5-star patient service, like the Ritz-Carlton or Four Seasons Hotels. Most people are amazed that I put my cell phone on my business card, but I wouldn’t have it any other way. It's a reflection of the unique type of practice my staff and I have. It also shows who we all really are.

"Never let the status quo stand in the way of progress.” I don't know who said it, but it makes a lot of sense!

Dr. Donna Weiss Improves Vision for Keratoconus

Once the cornea is improved after treatments, or for some patients who do not have treatment, contact lenses provide a “safe haven” for further vision improvement. There are many types of contact lenses and our expert Dr. Donna Weiss is the master in this area. Like a tailor fits a suit, Donna fits contact lenses to be the perfect match for each patient. We recently held a symposium with over 60 doctors in attendance from all over the region where Donna lectured on the nuances of fitting contacts for keratoconus. Due to patient demand, we recently expanded her clinic time for patients. To schedule an appointment with Donna, please call 310-860-1900.
Advanced Treatment for Dry Eyes

During winter, outdoor humidity can be quite low making skin and eyes dry. A simple treatment for dry eyes and dry skin is taking oral flaxseed oil capsules. I advise 3 capsules a day (1000 mg per capsule). Artificial tears is another way to improve lubrication of the eyes. An advanced, no-maintenance technique to improve dry eyes is to slow down the biological drainage of the natural tears in the duct in the inner eyelid. A specialized, tiny plug is elegantly placed in the lower duct—it only takes about 1 minute and is painless. We use an advanced type so you'll never feel it since this plug rests below the eyelid surface (much like a dental filling). I have an earlier model of plugs in my own eyelids for the past 10 years and I never need to use artificial tears. To learn more, please call 310-860-1900.

Improving Your Eyesight with Lens-Based Techniques

Modern day lens procedures provide an excellent means to restore both distance AND reading vision. These embedded lenses within the eye won't make you "bionic", but they can provide "High Definition" vision. The Visian ICL can fix vision in those who rely on contact lenses and glasses. For patients with cataracts, even early stage cataracts, Natural Lens Replacement is the procedure of choice to fix both the cloudy cataracts along with distance and reading vision. More details are available at www.boxerwachler.com/procedures.

Stopping Keratoconus in Teenagers, Adults and Even An Olympic Athlete

Even though keratoconus can develop at any age, a disproportionate number of patients who develop the condition are teenagers. The good news is the cornea can be strengthened with a non-invasive process called C3-R®. The 9 year long-term results are excellent and show significant stability. Other studies including ours indicate that 99% of patients who have one a single C3-R® treatment enjoy the peace of mind of having the disease stabilized and never needing to worry about a cornea transplant. In 1% of cases, a second C3-R® treatment is used to achieve the full benefit.

Olympic bobsled driver Steve Holcomb was interviewed by USA Today about his own experience with keratoconus and how it affected him as one of the top five drivers in what can be a dangerous sport. To read his full story and how his keratoconus was fully cured, please click on www.boxerwachler.com/usatoday.

NEWSFLASH! Keratoconus Webinar

Earlier this year, I conducted a one-time only live webinar over the Internet for people across the United States. The webinar began with patients on the call discussing their own experiences with having their keratoconus treated and then detailed how keratoconus can be fixed. This webinar was recorded and you can now access it on our website www.keratoconusinserts.com.

BWVI Dodger Game

Emotions ran high when the Dodgers took on the San Francisco Giants at the end of the season. I've never seen such an exciting nine innings with the score 0 to 0. In after innings, the Dodgers succumbed to the Giants, but that didn't stop our patients and us from having a grand time. More photos are at www.boxerwachler.com/dodgers2008.
 BEFORE ANYONE GETS FUNNY IDEAS about slathering on some cod liver oil, please note: it’s for internal use only. Sometimes you can’t be too clear. For dry skin and dry eyes, flaxseed oil is very therapeutic. One time I advised a friend to use this flax oil for dry eyes. She called me the next day to say her vision was really blurry–she misunderstood and put the oil directly in her eyes. Oops! Back to the cod liver oil story.

Decades ago taking cod liver oil was popular during winter months because of its high levels of vitamin D. Outdoor sun exposure in modest amounts provides the body with very important vitamin D. Vitamin D is good not only for your bones, but research points to vitamin D as a means to reduce cancer risk, including breast cancer. Vitamin D has the potential to reduce half of serious invasive cancers and make the remaining ones milder and far more treatable. Other research shows vitamin D reduces risk of multiple sclerosis and this vitamin may help protect against the flu among other viruses. In summer, moderate sun exposure provides most people with enough vitamin D, but how can you obtain enough during Winter? Cod liver oil packs loads of vitamin D. Taking a daily multivitamin with at least 2000 IU would be adequate. There are options, but the key is to remember you need vitamin D during Winter.

Where is ‘Boxer Wachler’ From?

I ROUTINELY RECEIVE THE QUESTION about my last name, “Is your last name of English origin?” and sometimes I get “Is Barbara Boxer your mother?” Recently Selina and I had our 15 year wedding anniversary and that’s where this story begins. Before we were married, we discussed that we wanted each other to have the same last name. It made perfect sense to me! She moved from Selina Boxer and I from Brian Wachler. I recently realized that in jumping to the top of the alphabet our daughters Jordanna and Micaela won’t be at the tail end of the line when they go to school–happily breaking a tradition for generations of Wachlers. I won’t say that there weren’t more than a few raised eyebrows with the announce-ment of our last name change, especially from some family members, but at the end of the day, it was Selina I was marrying. After our wedding, a friend of the family gave us sage advice, “The most important person in your lives is each other.” Those wise words have provided stunning clarity to help guide Selina and I over our past 15 years. Oh, and Barbara Boxer isn’t my mother.
Dear Dr. Boxer Wachler and wonderful staff,

I cannot thank you enough for your professionalism and sincerity in your treatment of my 15 year old daughter, Elizabeth, with the C3-R procedure to halt the advancement of her Keratoconus. She was diagnosed 2 years ago, and being as young as she is, was looking at years of possible cornea deterioration.

Before the procedure in your office, Liz’s vision was obscured by lines and “wavy reflections”. She said it was hard to describe, but if you looked into the bottom of a swimming pool on a sunny day you will get a good idea of the lines and ripples that she had to constantly look through. Before the procedure we were quite confident in the Boxer Wachler Vision Institute’s ability to halt any further progression, as we had researched and talked to cornea specialists for the last year. The wonderful side benefit was the removal of Liz’s sight distortion as well. The morning following the procedure, she commented that the lines and waves were almost gone and she was thrilled to have most of the problem taken away. The day after that, she noticed that ALL of the lines and distortions were gone and she could see for the first time in years without the lines in front of whatever she was looking at.

She will be able to wear glasses and soft contact lenses without any problems from now on and we are extremely thankful. When she is old enough and her vision/prescription even out, we will be back to the Institute to discuss the insertion of the VISIAN ICL lenses so she can enjoy a life without glasses or contacts!

We came into the Los Angeles area a few days before the procedure, so as an added benefit, we had a lovely vacation on top of the gift of healthy vision!

Thank you all again,
Kathy Wisnoski
Chesterfield, MI