



Modern medicine, old-fashioned care.

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THE *Wellness* REPORT

Winter 2016

The Diabetes Dictionary

**Presenter Sandy Sinnes
Diabetic Educator**

**March 8, 2016
1:00 pm – 3:00 pm**

**Olympic Medical Park
840 N 5th Ave, Sequim
Second Floor Conference Room**

**Definition
Signs and Symptoms
Diagnosis
Self Blood Glucose Monitoring
HBA1C
Healthy Meal Planning
Physical Activity
Living with Insulin – pens and syringes**

**Please call Sara at 582-2850 to sign up.
Family and friends welcome...**

Let me introduce myself...

I am Dr. Jennifer Swanson, a proud first generation American raised in Atlanta, Georgia. My childhood was an eclectic mix of traditional Southern culture and summers abroad in Europe. From these exposures arose my interest in exploring both the unique stories of every individual and the experiences common to all humanity. Along with my devotion to health and fitness, these interests led me to the study of medicine. I am truly grateful for a profession that allows me to connect in a vital way to such a diversity of people. I studied at both the Medical College of Georgia and the University of South Carolina School of Medicine earning my Doctorate of Medicine in 2006. I completed my residency in internal medicine at Greenville Hospital System in 2009. My husband, who is also a physician, and I settled on the Olympic Peninsula in 2009 because of its natural beauty, abundance of outdoor recreation and sense of community. We couldn't be happier raising our two sons, practicing medicine and revitalizing a lavender farm in this very special place. After six wonderful years of serving this community as a hospitalist at Olympic Medical Center, I have decided to get back to the root of my interests in medicine. These include preventative healthcare, optimization of health and overall sense of well-being in patients with chronic medical conditions and supportive end of life care.



4th Annual Vision Fair

The National Federation of the Blind of Clallam County (formerly the Visually Impaired Persons of Sequim, VIPS) is holding their 4th Annual Vision Fair on Friday, April 22, 2016, 11 am to 3 pm, at the upstairs Conference Room A, Olympic Medical Center, 840 N. 5th Avenue, Sequim.

Everyone is welcome and admission is free. Featured exhibits and topics include; available visual aids, mobility training, guide dog programs, free audio books and magazines, low cost public transportation services and more.

For further information call: 360-582-6931 or Email: nfbclallamcounty@gmail.com

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REFILLS: CALL YOUR PHARMACY
EMERGENCY: **DIAL 911**

New Billing System

We are implementing a new billing system. Patients who still have a balance in our previous system will be receiving a statement from that system. For some patients that will mean two statements for a while.

As we are moving to the new system we are finding we need to update information such as address and phone numbers. Again, please be prepared to show your current insurance cards so we may scan them into the new system.

Legal Name & Insurance Cards...

As we know many of you by your preferred name, to better serve you we need legal names in our system. We use the information for referrals, medication authorization and insurance billing. Please be prepared to show your insurance cards and your prescription Part D or any prescription cards when coming for your appointment. There have been many changes with insurance companies in the last year and we want to make sure we have your most current scanned in our system.

Help us Help You.



How to get the most out of your doctor visits...

The Only Thing That's Constant is Change. Lifelong learning and keeping up with the constantly changing medical field is what physicians are trained to do. We welcome the evolution that occurs with scientific advancements and experience. Applying science to improve the condition of a unique individual - that is the art of medicine. But cultivation of the patient-physician relationship requires time.

• **Behind the scenes.** We spend as much time working to get things done for our patients outside the office visits as we spend face-to-face with our patients. In addition to recording everything in the chart, reviewing all labs, reports, imaging and consults that come in throughout the day, we coordinate care and communicate with patients, their families, other doctors, radiologists, nursing homes, and home health providers. Now more than ever, we have to fight for and justify the prescriptions that we write or tests that we order. We need to get preauthorizations and fill out numerous forms for different insurance companies and government agencies. The coverage and requirements for these change every year and varies amongst the different companies. This is labor intensive and requires research and multiple staff members. If they are denied, we often appeal their decision and fight on behalf of our patients. Add to all of that, new electronic medical records and the new ICD-10 coding system for Medicare, and you might wonder how we get to see our patients at all!

Working together in a coordinated way and being efficient is more important than ever if we are to provide the best care possible to each of our patients. In that endeavor, we would like to enlist your help and feedback.

• **Plan ahead.** Don't wait until the last minute to schedule or request routine things. If you know you will need to see the doctor for a refill of a medication, make your appointment ahead of time. That way, you know you'll have your Rx on time and that your doctor is working in the office that day.

• **Scheduling an appointment.** When you call, let the receptionist know the scope of the visit so that enough time is booked out. Is this an annual physical? a follow-up visit? Is it for management of chronic conditions like diabetes or high blood pressure? Or do you have new symptoms or concerns?

• **Need to be seen right away?** We always make time to see our patients who need help urgently. However, keep in mind that there are already patients scheduled to be seen that day. If you call ahead, that gives us advance warning and allows us time to reschedule or at least warn the other patients about the delay. It is not uncommon for us to have one or more emergencies occurring in our office at the same time.

• **Make a list** of your concerns to bring to your visit. Think bullet points, not essays. Rank them with the most important ones first. That way, if we don't make it through the whole list, we can be sure that your greatest concerns have been addressed by the end of your

appointment time. Another appointment can always be scheduled to go over any unfinished business.

It does help for your doctor to glance at a brief list in advance because sometimes multiple symptoms turn out to be related. Or, treatment of one condition might help or might worsen another condition. And sometimes we have different priorities than our patients. For example, you may be most bothered by hair loss and knee pain, but if we see symptoms that we consider "red flags", we may need to prioritize those first for your safety.

• **Keep an up-to-date list** of all medications and supplements that you take, and bring it to your doctor's appointment. Include the name, dose and how many times per day you take it. Always note if a medicine is long-acting or extended release, "ER". Or, you can simply throw all of your pill bottles in a bag and bring them to your office visit.

When being roomed, let the medical assistant (MA) know the gist of the issues you'd like to discuss. She does not need to know all the details, but she does need to know enough to make sure that you and the room are prepared for your exam or procedure in a timely manner. She may need to have you change into a gown or do some preliminary testing such as a urine test or an electrocardiogram.

Doctors are detectives. When you are describing your symptoms, we are alert and listening for clues to help us figure out what is ailing you. Pay attention to your symptoms in the days before your appointment. When did they start? What makes them worse? What makes them better? Do they occur at a certain time of day? Jot notes down on a calendar or keep a log or diary.

Keep in mind that each issue takes time for us to evaluate. Whenever we hear a symptom, we don't assume it's due to a known condition, but consider whether it can be due to any of a multitude of other conditions. We need to consider the symptom in context of your entire past medical history, your family history and your individual risk factors. A review of recent and past laboratory studies, imaging studies and consults with other doctors or old records may be necessary. We then do a physical exam and consider additional testing, and discuss our findings and thoughts with you. Choosing a treatment involves discussing pros and cons of your various options, possible adverse effects, possible interactions with other meds or effects on other conditions you may have. And, of course, we want to have time to answer your questions and have a plan for follow-up.

• **Annual Wellness Visits** - Medicare created these specifically to allow the primary care doctors time to focus on preventive care and coordinate the care a patient gets from multiple specialists. This is important as preventive care can be overlooked if we are only focused on acute issues when a patient comes in. The AWV is the time dedicated to updating your medical, social and family history, making sure medications and allergies are accurate in our records. It is when we review to see when different preventive measures have last been done and when they will be due next. The Wellness Visit does not actually include a physical exam but our doctors almost always combine it with an annual physical exam.

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Please do not have your Wellness Visit done by LifeLine. If it is performed by someone outside of your doctor's office, it undermines the purpose of the Wellness Visit.

• **Email** can be a convenient way to give a quick update or ask a non-urgent, general question that only your doctor can answer. If it will take more than a couple of minutes to read or to answer, then an office visit consult is more appropriate. Email is not for urgent issues, new symptoms or things that office staff can more easily help with.

Things such as Rx refills, f/u on referral status, insurance questions, or scheduling appointments are handled by the front office staff. Call the office for these issues, so they can address your concerns promptly. They will get the doctor involved when authorization is needed or gather info so that the doctor can respond quickly with all supporting information available.

• **Regular follow-up** is important. Anyone with chronic illness that needs monitoring or medications to control, should be seen and have a physical exam at least once per year. How in-depth and whether or not certain screening is indicated depends on your age, gender and risk factors.

Chronic conditions, such as high blood pressure, diabetes, chronic kidney disease, need to be reassessed periodically. We need to ensure that the conditions are well-controlled, that medications are still appropriate and not causing harm or side effects. Any adjustments in medications and prescription refills are generally done at this time.

If you take controlled substances such as opioid pain medications or benzodiazepines, you need to be seen every month. If you are doing well and your underlying condition is well-managed and doses are stable, that may be extended to every three months on a case-by-case basis. ■

Welcome Sara...

MY NAME IS SARA YOUNG.

I am very excited to have joined Sequim Medical Associates as lead receptionist. I joined the medical world in 2011 and worked as a receptionist and biller for OMC/OMP. Prior to that, I was a successful business owner of a pottery studio. I am looking forward to getting to know everyone by name. I was born in Denmark and



moved with my family to the United States in 1982. We settled in Port Townsend where I spent my high school years. I have lived in Sequim for the past 20 years and am delighted to call it home. I love spending time with my son and traveling back to Europe to visit family with my fiancée who also happens to be from Denmark. ■

To my work family and dedicated patients

I want to thank you all for the wonderful and heartfelt send off into my retirement. Working with a lot of the same staff over the years has been a blessing. We have watched our families grow, our kids graduating, getting married and the wonderful addition of grand kids. We have leaned on each other in dark times, laughed during others and created friendships with each other. The support and "family" I found in my job is something I will forever be thankful for.

Every day for the last 22 years, I have felt honored to serve you. I've always considered you "my patients"

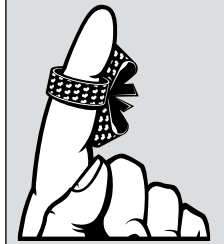


and hope you know that I always did my best to give you a smile and maybe tease you a little to make you smile. You made my job better by allowing me to be a part of your life and your family. Thank you very much for the wonderful words, hugs, cards and gifts on my last day. Your love and support humble me.

As some of you may know, I was hesitant about retiring but I will tell you, it is turning out just fine...just like everyone told me. I'll be barefoot on the beach in no time.

Love, Casey

Check out this Frontline Investigation: Supplements and Safety.
www.pbs.org/wgbh/frontline/watch



Remember...

We're here to provide you quality healthcare. Part of our job is to educate and assist you with your healthcare needs. Use the numbers below to get in touch with the people who can answer your questions.

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Office Fax 582-2851

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or 888-810-3116

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