

# ITHACA HEALTH ALLIANCE NEWSLETTER

## Alternative Eye Care

By Larry B. Wallace

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Routine eye care often is limited to examining for pathology and refractive errors, with treatment limited to prescribing spectacles, contact lenses, or pharmaceuticals. Preventive care involves catching pathology early. In the field of behavioral optometry, vision is viewed as a whole body/mind process, is learned and developed, and therefore can be trained. A comprehensive examination probes the integrity and efficiency of over 20 different visual skills. These include visual acuity, eye health, eye movements, refractive errors, binocular coordination at far and near, focusing ability, peripheral vision, and visualization skills. Each of these components can be isolated and treated individually and as an integrated whole for greater efficiency, comfort, and improvement.



Dr. Larry Wallace with patient

Vision is the dominant information mode of processing, which allows you to relate to your environment and who you are. The vision system uses over 60 percent of your brain and 40 percent of all your nutrition. Deficits in the visual system are central to reading and many attention problems, and are common after most brain injuries. Visual therapy is a necessary component of rehabilitative care. Vision enhancement can also improve sports performance, restore comfortable and efficient vision at the computer, and prevent the need for refractive corrections in children, if begun at an early age. If vision testing is limited to 20/20 acuity on an eye chart the opportunity for preventive care can be lost. Routine exams should begin by age three. Symptoms of visual dysfunction are often ignored or attributed to developmental delays in children or to general stress in an adult. These symptoms include headaches, eyestrain, poor hand-eye coordination, reading problems, reduced job efficiency, or avoidance of near-centered tasks.

Vision therapy can employ lenses, prisms, instruments for binocular and focusing skills, home exercises, visual biofeedback, and energy medicine approaches. Activities are created that involve a person learning to make conscious their visual skills, learning to control these abilities, and making the skills more efficient or restoring them to an expected level of performance. The skills are measured against the normative levels and maintained often by home exercises. Therapy is typically prescribed twice a week for approximately 10 weeks for a complete treatment series. This empowers you to have control and awareness of your visual system. Because vision involves the total person, working on your vision is a gateway to expand consciousness as well.

(continued on pg. 5)

**Volunteer with the  
Ithaca Health  
Alliance.**

**Our committees  
want and need help  
on a variety of  
projects.**

**Contact the Ithaca  
Health Alliance for  
more information.**

**607-330-1253**

**Be part of creating a  
healthier community!**

## A Lifetime of Good Nutrition, Part 2

By Michele Wilbur

This is the season in which many people start diets. As a dietitian, I get many calls from people wanting to start the new year fresh, make healthy changes, and go on a diet. However, a lifetime of good nutrition does not mean going on a diet or making extreme changes only to revert to old ways in six days, weeks, or months. A lifetime of good nutrition happens daily. Sometimes we practice a little bit harder and, sometimes, good nutrition takes a back seat to holiday cookies and New Year's champagne. But a lifetime of good nutrition is an ongoing practice. A lot of people get frustrated because good nutrition is something to think about and work at. Again, if it can become part of your daily routine, it becomes easier and easier. I've included a couple more habits to start thinking about as part of your lifetime of good nutrition.

**1. Eat breakfast.** This is a standard rule that I encourage everyone to follow. Your mother was right: breakfast is the most important meal of the day. According to research, those who eat breakfast on a regular basis manage their weight better. Those who eat breakfast daily also report having more energy through the day and can think more clearly. A good breakfast includes some whole grains, a little bit of protein, a fruit and, if desired, some low fat dairy. An example might include oatmeal made with skim or soymilk, a banana, and some walnuts. Or try scrambling an egg with onions and peppers, then putting it into a whole-wheat tortilla. Add some salsa and some low fat cheese and you have a breakfast burrito. Starting your day out on the right track also keeps you from snacking late at night. Try it—it works!

**2. Start getting to know what hunger feels like.** Often, especially during the holidays, we eat out of boredom, celebration, anger, loneliness, etc. This is hunger from the head. If you can really start to get to know hunger from the belly—the real physiological hunger—and start to manage the emotional hunger, not only will you be able to control your weight, but also food may start to take on a whole new role. Eating because of emotions is an unhealthy pattern to try to break out of; when we eat due to emotion, we often don't even taste or enjoy the food. We are using food as a support, a hug, or a way to fulfill ourselves. Then we may eat more or eat things that we wouldn't normally eat. So, next time you find yourself opening the refrigerator out of emotional hunger, ask yourself what else might satisfy you. Maybe a cup of tea, a walk outside, or a hot bath would satisfy the emotions. And those are calorie free!

Michele Wilbur, RD, CDN, is a registered dietitian and personal chef of Green Cuisine. Visit her website at [www.grcuisine.com](http://www.grcuisine.com) for more information and links.

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**IHA Board Meetings are held every month.**

**IHA members are welcome to attend.**

**We hope to see you there.**

**Call 330-1235 for dates and meeting places.**

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**Erratum:** In our last issue we misidentified Dianea Kohl's recent publication, which is [Everybody Cries](#).

## UPDATES AND EVENTS

### Free Clinic News

The Ithaca Free Clinic (IFC) regrets to inform clinic providers and visitors, as well as IHA and community members, that Marie Constant, IFC clinic coordinator, has resigned from her position in order to complete a family medicine residence in Syracuse. Marie was a real motivator to all who worked with her. We're certain she'll be as good a family physician as she was a clinic coordinator. We'll miss her, but we wish her well in her pursuits.

The IHA is now accepting applications for the Free Clinic Coordinator, contact the IHA office at 273-1254 for more information.

### ITHACA FREE CLINIC HOURS OF OPERATION

MONDAY 2 to 6pm

THURSDAY 4 to 8pm

**Location: 225 S. Fulton St., Suite B, Ithaca**

The pediatric clinic is on the fourth Tuesday of every month from 4 to 8 pm.

No appointment is necessary.

Call the IFC at 330-1254 for more information.

### Somatic Education Class Open for Enrollment

Give the gift of health to yourself this winter. Sign up now for an eight-week class in somatic education, a scientific system based on mechanical, neuromuscular, and developmental approaches to the body. It teaches you how to get back in touch with your own physical being through your kinesthetic system of awareness. In short, it gets you out of your head and back into your body!

The class starts on February 8 and will be held for one hour from 8 to 9 pm. on Thursday evenings at the Foundation of Light.

Cost: \$120/Ithaca Health Alliance Members and FOL Members \$100.

Registration deadline January 31, 2007, although late registrants will be considered. One scholarship will be made available to an IHA member.

To sign up or for more information, contact the instructor:

Richard Eshelman  
280-6788 (office)  
[re16@cornell.edu](mailto:re16@cornell.edu) or: [upstatehse@aol.com](mailto:upstatehse@aol.com)

### How to Join the Ithaca Health Alliance

The Health Fund was established to facilitate access to health care and increase wellness in our communities. IHA general members are eligible for grants or interest-free loans to help with specific healthcare expenses. These include preventive care, certain emergency procedures, and dental care. Health fund offerings also include IHA Community Grants for other organizations performing health-related projects.

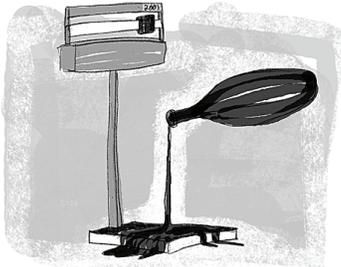
General Membership in the Ithaca Health Alliance entitles you to request medical grants or loans for specified health problems. Please note that IHA general membership is available to residents of New York State only.

To learn more go to [www.ithacahealth.org](http://www.ithacahealth.org).

## News You Can Use

### **High Fructose Corn Syrup: The “Crack of Sweeteners”?**

Compiled by Brooke Hansen and Bethany Schroeder



A brief look at the scientific and popular literature on the ubiquity of high fructose corn syrup (HFCS) may not definitively answer consumers’ questions about the safety of this product, but it will certainly raise concerns. HFCS is found in almost everything we eat from bread, muffins, drinks, Ritz crackers, and Campbell’s tomato soup, to hundreds of other commonly eaten items. Some scientific studies raise concerns about links between HFCS and obesity, elevated cholesterol levels, diabetes, and pathologies in the liver, heart, and pancreas. One methodological problem is that some studies do not differentiate between high fructose corn syrup, fructose, glucose, and sucrose, which have different chemical properties and metabolic pathways in the body. Skeptics of the numerous studies pointing to negative health consequences of HFCS (in publications such as The Journal of the American Medical Association, The American Journal of Clinical Nutrition, and Obesity Research) mention that any substance consumed in excess can be detrimental to health, and the small amounts found in food and drinks should not be significant.

The problem is that if HFCS appears in the majority of our consumables, are the amounts still insignificant? Our role as consumers is to educate ourselves about these issues and make our concerns known to manufacturers, some of which use cane sugar already or are switching to other less controversial sweeteners. Those residents who have been (unsuccessfully) searching Ithaca for tonic water without HFCS may be heartened by the news that Brooke Hansen has contacted the Manhattan-based Q Tonic to include Ithaca in its distribution area; currently the company is so new and its regional demand is so high that Ithaca is on a waiting list.

Several sources that document scientific and medical studies and provide a list of products containing HFCS include:

<http://www.accidentalthedonist.com/print.php?p=1251>

<http://www.accidentalthedonist.com/index.php?cat=304>

[www.westonprice.org/modernfood/highfructose.html](http://www.westonprice.org/modernfood/highfructose.html)

“Consumption of high-fructose corn syrup in beverages may play a role in the epidemic of obesity.” The American Journal of Clinical Nutrition, Vol. 79, No. 4, 537-543, April 2004. You should always consider who is sponsoring sites on HFCS, as some are maintained by corn growing associations and affiliated companies.

### **Tobacco Companies Still Targeting Teens**

If you’ve noticed Phillip Morris ads that inveigh against the dangers of smoking and wondered what the tobacco company could be up to, you’re not alone. According to research recently published in The American Journal of Public Health and supported by the National Cancer Institute, the National Institute on Drug Abuse, and the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, no benefit has been shown among the teenagers, at whom some of the ads were targeted. Researchers concluded specifically that the more teenagers were exposed to the ads the greater was the teens’ intent to smoke. Ads targeted at teens’ parents, if seen by the teens themselves, were also more likely to have an adverse effect on the teens.

One theory about why the ads have contrary results is that the message conveys adults’ advice against smoking on the basis of teens being young, rather than because smoking causes cancer and other deadly conditions. A judicial analysis of the ads and Phillip Morris’s strategies in developing them suggests that the company has used insufficient research and hired advertising staff with inadequate expertise to do a good job at preventing teenagers from smoking.

From The New York Times, November 27, 2006, “When Don’t Smoke Means Do,” Editorial

Brooke Hansen is an associate professor of anthropology at IC and Bethany Schroeder is a local writer and healthcare consultant.

## Tompkins County Prevention Point: A Public Health Initiative

By Meredith Zaslowe

Did you know that Ithaca is home to the only rural syringe exchange program in New York State? The program, part of the Southern Tier AIDS Program, is a syringe exchange program developed to prevent the spread of HIV and Hepatitis C.

The Tompkins County Prevention Point Syringe Exchange Program (SEP) has been operating in Ithaca since 2002. The SEP began as a four-year collaboration between the NYS Department of Health, local law enforcement, city and county governments, and health and human service agencies. The SEP currently serves over 150 people who visit the program from Tompkins County and neighboring counties. The SEP participants range from injection drug users to people with diabetes and other syringe disposal needs.

The SEP is an example of a harm reduction model, whose goal is to ensure the safety of those at risk for HIV and the community in which they live. Harm reduction is a philosophy of public health, intended to be a progressive alternative to the prohibition of certain lifestyle choices. The central idea of harm reduction is the recognition that some people always have engaged and always will engage in behaviors that carry risks, such as casual sex and drug use. The main objective of harm reduction is to lessen the potential dangers and health risks associated with the behaviors themselves (Wikipedia®, 2006).

Since 1987, the number of AIDS cases among Injection Drug Users (IDUs) has surpassed the number of new cases among men who have sex with men. Fifty-five to 57 percent of AIDS cases in NYS are associated with injection drug use (users, sexual partners, and their children). It is now estimated that approximately 90 percent of IDUs are infected with Hepatitis C. Since syringe exchange programs began in 1990 as a response to the AIDS epidemic, there has been a marked decline (50 percent) in new HIV cases among IDUs who frequent these programs. In the communities where a syringe exchange program exists, needle stick injuries to law enforcement personnel have decreased by 87 percent.

The Tompkins County Prevention Point is a free and anonymous program. It is open Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday from 1:00 pm to 5:00 pm. It is located in the back of the STAP Ithaca office at 501 South Meadow Street. For more information please contact STAP, 607- 272-4098 or email [mzaslowe@stapinc.org](mailto:mzaslowe@stapinc.org).

Meredith Zaslowe, MSW, is a harm reduction educator for Southern Tier AIDS Program.



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## Alternative Eye Care (continued from pg. 1)

By Larry B. Wallace

In addition to providing a learning process, energy therapies are employed to balance the physiological and emotional underpinnings to the visual system. This can include optometric photo and micro current therapy. These modalities also provide alternative treatment for ocular diseases, such as macular degeneration. The treatment of eye disease with energy applications is still investigational but very promising.

In using phototherapy, different colors are prescribed and viewed through different instruments for 20-minute intervals, for varying lengths of time depending on the goal of therapy. Eleven different color filter combinations are used. The main action is to balance the autonomic and endocrine systems, which are essential to normal visual function.

Neural pathways leaving the eye also connect to the neck, inner ear, hypothalamus in the mid-brain, pituitary and pineal glands. Colored light entering the eye has neural, biochemical effects on many brain functions. Light can modulate the energetic and information communication systems in the brain and throughout the body. Light therapies are a leading part of the new paradigms in energy medicine. In vision therapy the best approaches attempt to include considerations of the whole individual in treatment and provide opportunities not just for health but for a higher level of wellness and preventive care.

Larry B. Wallace, O.D., has been in private practice in Ithaca for over 30 years. He specializes in vision therapy and rehabilitative eye care. More information is available at [www.doctorcolor.com](http://www.doctorcolor.com).

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Online @  
[www.ithacahealth.org](http://www.ithacahealth.org)**

*Growing Well Together*

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## **A Personal View: Community Herbalism**

**BY 7SONG**

One of the many things that I like about Ithaca is our community's trust and belief in things local. As an herbalist, one of the ways this translates is in people purchasing my (and Jan's-Herbology) tinctures at GreenStar over much fancier looking labels from larger companies. While it may seem a small thing, I know of few other towns where my fellow herbalists have this advantage. This in turn inspires me to be freely available to people who have questions concerning herbal medicine.

Herbal medicine is a beautiful medicine, in which preparing medicines takes us outdoors, gets us dirty, and lets us appreciate the plants and our surrounding eco-systems. It can help us harken back to a not-so-long-ago era when community medicine thrived and households had at least a light reckoning on how to treat common ailments and could remember that many medicines are easily prepared and can be sequestered around the home for those times when they become necessary. It is a gift to re-inspire folks back in this direction.

This is not an anti-modern medicine rant, whose medicines can be life-saving, as many of us know. But there are many times when our pains, sicknesses, and fragilities do not reach this level of need, and many safer local plants will do the trick. Try witch hazel bark for scrapes, yellow dock root for constipation, and yarrow for a multitude of injuries. There are many such remedies close to our back doors. And there are many folks around willing to share this useful information.

So, if you choose to broaden your herbal education, learn to treat the easy non-threatening sicknesses first, those that will pass on their own if just left alone, but for which herbal medicine can help alleviate some symptoms and speed up recovery.

7Song is director of the Northeast School of Botanical Medicine and a practitioner at the Ithaca Free Clinic. More information can be found at his newly revamped website, [www.7Song.com](http://www.7Song.com).