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### Happy Valentine's Day!

The first person to stop by the PTC office will receive a gift certificate to the *Sweet Tooth Candy & Gift Company!* Previous winners are not eligible.



## CARTILAGE CARE: TLC FOR YOUR KNEES

It's easy to see why soft, weakened cartilage can be a pain. When your foot hits the ground, the reactive force (which is nearly *6 times* your body weight), reverberates up your leg into your knee—then to your hip and spine.

Joint cartilage, with the help from your muscles, helps soften the blow of the force much like a shock absorber on a car. When the cartilage is too soft, the force travels into the bone and other tissues at a higher level and speed. Therefore, the softer your cartilage, the sooner you will feel pain.

Although prevailing thought is that cartilage cannot repair itself once injured or damaged due to the lack of blood supply, PTC's Janna Ogle Geiger explains there is cartilage training available for those suffering. "The research for cartilage training has been available

for a long time, but few practitioners apply the information for an appropriate exercise program," she says.

To strengthen cartilage, you must first determine how much pressure the joint can tolerate. Mechanical stimulation is, after all, critical for life (which means it is also important for your cartilage). Also, in order for your knee to function optimally, you need strong hips and a stable foot. A biomechanical exam is needed to determine if you are ready.

Patients with softened cartilage respond best when the injured tissue (cartilage) is properly stimulated, biomechanics are optimized, and a positive mental attitude is adopted. If you would like to know more about cartilage training, feel free to contact the therapists at PTC.



## KNOWING YOUR INSURANCE

Stay in the Know!

Although thinking about your insurance coverage may not seem like a very exciting way to spend your time, it's a very important part of getting the physical therapy you need and deserve.



fits (as a courtesy to you and the rest of our patients) and inform you of your amounts due based on what we are told. Nonetheless, *you* are ultimately responsible for knowing about your plan.

As a patient, it is imperative that you know what your plan covers, your deductible and copay amounts, and any restrictions on the number of visits or length of time you can be seen per diagnosis.

Based on what your employer decides, your plan specifics can change from year to year. The staff at PTC will always check these bene-

fits (as a courtesy to you and the rest of our patients) and inform you of your amounts due based on what we are told. Nonetheless, *you* are ultimately responsible for knowing about your plan.

It's also very important to communicate with your doctor. A lot of physicians will routinely send patients to a particular clinic out of habit. But remember, as a patient, you have the right to *choose* where you would like to receive your therapy. An HMO may only direct you to the clinics they contract with if you want it covered, but you *still* have the option of going where you want.

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PATIENTS KNOW THEY  
HAVE BEEN HELPED AT  
PTC!

What's the best way to cool your mouth after eating a chili pepper? Immediately consume dairy products like milk, sour cream, or ice cream. The more fat in the product, the better. Also, starchy foods tend to absorb the heat!



## ONE SPICY HUNK OF BURNIN' LOVE!

Looking for a tasty way to spice up your Valentine's Day meal? This year, why not surprise a special someone with a delicious dish containing the exotic flavor of the chili pepper?

Best of all, with their glistening skin and heat-infused bite, chilies are an excellent source of Vitamin C. There are several varieties of chili peppers, with each differing in flavor and heat intensity. Even within each variety, there may be differences in how "hot" a particular chili is.

Contrary to popular belief, the hottest part of the chili pepper is not the seeds but where the seed attaches to the white membrane inside the pepper. This area has the highest concentration of capsaicinoids. Capsaicinoids are flavorless, odorless substances that act on pain receptors in the mouth and throat. The seeds are often hot because they are in such close contact with the membrane.

Since chili peppers are available year round, they make a perfect addition to your favorite recipes.

When selecting chilies, look for firm, glossy varieties with taut, unwrinkled skin and fresh green stems. Dried hot peppers should be glossy yet unbroken.



After purchasing your chilies, store them unwashed and wrapped in paper towels; they can chill in the refrigerator for up to three weeks. Dried chilies should be stored in airtight containers at room temperature for a maximum of four months. To keep dried chilies for more than four months, simply pop them in the fridge.

Chilies are great in pizzas, pastas, meat loaf, even macaroni and cheese. Or, for a little something special at your next dinner party, spice up your dishes by using them as an edible garnish!

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