

Tristate Pain Institute Fall 2015

WHAT'S NEW IN 2015

FOR TRISTATE PAIN?

So far 2015 has been a whirlwind for the TriState Pain Institute! First and foremost, January marked the TriState Pain Institute's five-year anniversary of providing diagnosis-driven pain management for those residing in and around Mohave County. Concurrently, our administrative facility began operations in Las Vegas, affording our Arizona staff the ability to focus solely on patient care. Last May, TriState – Lake Havasu opened and continues to grow rapidly. Finally within the next four to six weeks, our Ft. Mohave facility will move into its new 7,000 square foot clinic, just a block south of the present location.

SO WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR OUR COMMUNITY AND FOR YOU?

When you arrive at our new clinic, there will be more parking in addition to a waiting room that is double the size of our current waiting room. A secondary waiting room will provide more confidentiality, as well as accommodate private educational sessions and group meetings in the future. Ten exam rooms, including one specially designed for wheelchairs and scooters, will speed patient flow while decreasing wait time. Toxicology, bracing, and pharmacy services will be relocated conveniently near the exam rooms. We also plan to integrate telemedicine into our treatment plans, initially for the management of addiction problems, psychological issues, and behavioral and mental health issues.

For five years the TriState Pain Institute and its providers have stressed that successful pain management starts with

a precise anatomic diagnosis, continues with a thoughtful analysis as to why you hurt, and leads to a treatment plan with realistic expectations and goals. Beyond just treating pain symptoms however, options for improved lifestyle and better overall wellbeing are planned. Within the next six months, we plan to gradually implement weight loss and wellness programs, smoking cessation, and healthful alternatives to traditional pain management. Our goal is to treat your pain beyond just medications and injections. Two of the most common (and untreated) causes of pain - poorly controlled diabetes and obesity - will be the initial objectives for this aspect of our comprehensive care. Now there is no reason to procrastinate as you start changing your lifestyle for the better while easing your pain.

Twenty-four years ago our founder and medical director Dr. Benjamin Venger began an outreach program for brain and spine surgery in Mohave County. Now he still remains the only full-time board certified neurosurgeon practicing in the northern half of our county. Combined with his experience in pain medication management, interventional pain procedures and addiction medicine, Dr. Venger can continue to expedite and direct care for all spine and most brain-related entities.

Consequently patients will no longer be forced to wait weeks or months for a neurosurgical or spine opinion, or for pain management either. Should a neurosurgery be recommended, Dr. Gene Khavkin and Dr. Ippei Takagi from the Khavkin Clinic in Las Vegas are available to see you at our new

Ft. Mohave location. If either Dr. Khavkin or Takagi perform surgery, Dr. Venger will assist in your post-surgical care, all at the TriState – Ft. Mohave location.

Beyond this, other TriState providers each bring a unique perspective to the new clinic and our expanded programs and offerings. Dr. Mary Janikowski has practiced in the TriState region since the early 1990s. She utilizes both internal medicine and pain management backgrounds to address and treat the medical aspects and complications of pain management. Carolyn Huang, NP grew up in Lake Havasu City and brings experience and a perspective from both her nursing and critical care qualifications.

We are also proud to share, promote, and advertise the best of healthcare in our region. We hope to raise the bar and improve access for local pain medicine and addiction treatment, in addition to neurosurgery. Thus we can offer our community members both opportunity and convenience, while supporting our local healthcare facilities. The creation of both tax revenue and jobs as a result will add to our economic recovery.

Finally, the providers, administrators, and staff of the TriState Pain Institute have listened to your expectations. The new Lake Havasu and Ft. Mohave facilities are first steps to be followed by expanded and novel programs, additional providers, and improved access for all our patients. We thank you for your confidence and continued encouragement, while always providing the best pain management for you future good health.

“IF YOUR PAIN CAN’T WAIT...CALL TRISTATE!”

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1510 E. WAGON WHEEL LANE | SUITE 101  
FT. MOHAVE, AZ 86426

Across the street from the emergency room at ValleyView Hospital

LAKE HAVASU CITY LOCATION  
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Fall 2015

# PAIN news

News from Tristate Pain Institute [www.TSpain.com](http://www.TSpain.com)



COMMON ISSUES IN THE  
**LUMBAR & CERVICAL SPINE**

TAKING CARE OF YOUR PAIN  
**DURING THE HOLIDAYS**

WHAT'S NEW IN 2015 FOR  
**TRISTATE PAIN?**

EMPOWERING PATIENTS TO ELIMINATE PAIN





## COMMON ISSUES IN THE LUMBAR & CERVICAL SPINE

The spine is made of 33 bones (vertebrae) that are held together by and support surrounding muscles, ligaments, and tendons. Due to its unique anatomy, the spine has three natural curves. These curves are located in the cervical (neck), thoracic (mid-back), and lumbar (low-back) regions of the spine.

Due to the amount of mobility for the cervical and lumbar regions, as well as ribs stabilizing the mid-back, the neck and lower back are the most common areas for spinal pain. Furthermore, pain is proportionately more common in the lumbar spine, as the back supports most of the remainder of the body.

When it comes to conditions that affect the lumbar and cervical spine, bulging discs (also known as a slipped disc or when severe, a herniated disc) are one of the most common reasons for a painful spine. This occurs when intervertebral discs bow

out (bulge) or break (herniate or rupture) due to aging or trauma. Degenerative disc disease (also known as spondylosis) can result in a deformity of the spine if ignored, in addition to discomfort. Stenosis is another condition that may develop in both the lumbar and cervical spine. Patients with this condition suffer from the narrowing of the canal where their spinal cord is located, or a narrowing of the openings where each nerve root exists (foraminal stenosis).

During your visit at the TriState Pain Institute, our providers will be able to determine what area (or areas) of the spine are the likely source of your pain. For example, patients with pain that travels down the buttocks and legs are more likely to suffer a lumbar spine-related problem. On the other hand, patients complaining of shoulder and arm pain, as well as frequent headaches, are more likely to have a cervical spine-related issue. Furthermore, the shoulders, pelvis, and sacroiliac joints can also cause pain.

Accordingly, our providers may recommend pain medication or an injection directed either at the spine, joints, or both. These will not only decrease pain by lowering inflammation, but also have value in diagnosing the cause of your spinal pain. Dr. Venger, Dr. Janikowski, or Carolyn Huang (our nurse practitioner) often injects a combination of a pain medication and a steroid into a region of the spine or a joint. If less pain is the end result, then that region may be a cause of the pain (pain generator). Additional treatments or medications could then be directed to the spine, the adjacent joints, or both.

If you are experiencing pain in either your lumbar or cervical regions, please schedule an appointment at TriState Pain Institute. We have the expertise and resources to locate and effectively manage your pain. With three providers and three locations, help is just a phone call away.



## TAKING CARE OF YOUR PAIN DURING THE HOLIDAYS

The holidays are a joyous time of year typically spent with family and friends. The providers and staff of TriState Pain Institute are here to help you cope with chronic pain throughout the year. During the holiday season, however, this can be especially challenging. The stress of travel, frequent changes in your daily routine, and eating (okay, overeating) that rich holiday food can impact your pain management. For the most part, work and other responsibilities dictate our day-to-day schedules. During the holidays, however, normal routines change or are placed on the backburner. This begs the question: with the holiday season around the corner, how can you stay on track with your pain management?

Generally speaking, pain medication works best when taken at the same time(s) during the day. Holiday activities during the day and night, traveling, and, of course, festive undertakings, all disrupt established daily routines. Thus, the extent of overall pain control enjoyed throughout most of the year often vanishes during the holiday season. Whether it is your prescribed pain medication, over-the-counter remedies, light exercise, or stretching, each works best as part of habit, not just when you remember to partake.

It's also easy to get caught up in holiday festivities and then forget to take your medications. While traveling, always keep in mind your final destination's time zone. Start adjusting to the time changes before you leave. In doing so, your body can acclimate prior to your arrival. Set reminders either in a day planner or on a cell phone so extra medication can be considered during times of added activity, stress, or when you think you may feel additional discomfort. Make sure you have enough medication for your entire trip. Many also plan a pain injection, see a chiropractor or physical therapist, or schedule other treatments in advance of a departure date. In this way, you can lessen or prevent future flare-ups while you are out of town.

If traveling, preparing for your holiday destination may also be difficult. Long car or train rides, as well as airplane flights (especially with connections) are often accompanied by uncomfortable seating for an extended period of time. Consider wearing or traveling with a lumbar support. When in a car, stop as needed to stand and stretch. This will keep your blood flowing properly throughout your body. Be sure to move around frequently. Not only will this avoid the risk of blood clots, but it may also reduce discomfort from muscle tenderness and inflammation.

The holidays would not be "the holidays" without delicious treats. Admittedly, these may satisfy your appetite or sweet tooth, but at the same time, they can adversely affect your pain. For our diabetic patients, controlling your sugar consumption throughout the holiday season is of great importance. Furthermore, even small amounts of relative holiday weight gain can be treacherous for pain patients. It can put added stress and pressure on the joints, especially the joints in the torso and legs. Since the back, hips, knees, and ankles support the body, the additional weight often adds pressure resulting in more pain. Implementing or maintaining an exercise routine prior to, and during, this season can maximize your holiday enjoyment while avoiding debilitating discomfort.

The TriState Pain Institute providers and staff can offer you additional tips about managing your pain both during the holiday season and throughout the rest of the year. Whether you're leaving the state or inviting family and friends to the TriState area, always remember to stay on top of your pain treatment plan. On behalf of all three TriState clinics (Ft. Mohave, Lake Havasu City and Las Vegas), we wish you great rest of your 2015, and an even better 2016. Now about those New Year resolutions...