

Healthy Wealthy and Wise
By Jerry “Pops” Barnes RN, BSN

When you are healthy, you are as wealthy as you can be, and you are wise when you practice a healthy lifestyle. As always, the purpose of this column is to fulfill one of my goals, which is to provide health education so that you can make healthy lifestyle changes and, if necessary, informed health care decisions. Today, we will discuss Bell’s Palsy. Medical literature describes Bell’s Palsy in the following way: It is a physical condition, which causes temporary paralysis on one side of the face. Bell’s Palsy is a peripheral nerve disorder that is a relatively benign or non serious condition; however this condition can be very uncomfortable and bothersome. Basically nerves innervate muscles and in the case of Bell’s Palsy inflammation of the seventh cranial nerve’s innervation to the facial muscle is interrupted causing the condition.

It’s stated that seventy to eighty percent of the patients with Bell’s Palsy have a full recovery, and it affects both men and women equally. Bell’s Palsy normally affects only one side of the face, although there are cases where the face was affected bi-laterally.

Some of the symptoms experienced by Bell’s palsy are: facial paralysis on one side of the face, weakness on one side of the face, a drooping eyelid, a sensitivity to change in temperature, loss of the sense of taste, difficulty speaking, and drooling.

As always, when you feel that you have a problem, seek the help of you Health Care Provider. The prognosis for persons with Bell’s Palsy is good. Your HCP will conduct tests to eliminate the presence of other causes of the problem. The focus of treatment is to relieve the symptoms, and restore muscle tone to the affected area. Your HCP has an array of medication to reduce the inflammation. Your HCP may also prescribe other methods to increase facial muscle tone such as massage, electrical nerve stimulation and physical therapy to exercise and strengthen facial muscles. **Until next time takes charge of your health, I want you to live a long healthy life with your loved ones.**

Jerry “Pops” Barnes writes a weekly health column for the Columbus Times. Mr. Barnes also serves as Councilman for District # 1 in Columbus, Georgia. Mr. Barnes has served as a health educator and devoted patient advocate. ARxC will feature his articles in this section.