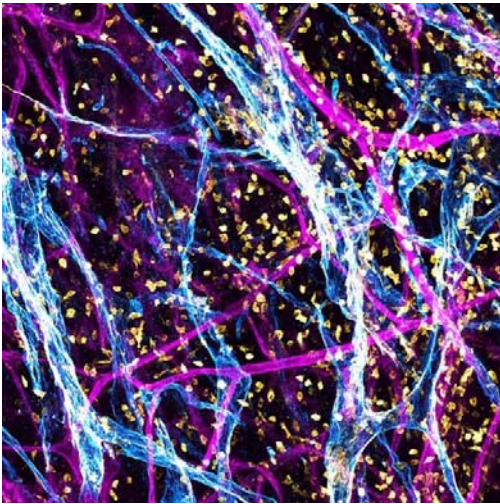


Ask a Patient Health News March 7, 2023

Health News: March 7, 2023

- The **Great Ormond Street Hospital** announced the winners of its second annual "A Moment of Discovery" image competition. Entries in the contest aimed to "capture a moment of life changing research" done from Great Ormond Street Hospital (GOSH) and its affiliated institutes across the **United Kingdom**. The overall winner was titled "3D snapshot of the hidden highways in childhood kidney cancer."



Winning image: A 3D snapshot of the hidden highways in childhood kidney cancer. Image source: gosh.nhs.uk

- Researchers at Nagoya University Graduate School of Medicine in Japan have identified three intestinal tract bacteria (*Collinsella*, *Ruminococcus*, and *Bifidobacterium*) that are involved in one of the most common forms of dementia, **Dementia with Lewy bodies** (DLB). Previous studies suggested that **gut bacteria**, the microorganisms that live in the human digestive tract, play a role in Parkinson's disease, another neurodegenerative disorder, but the bacteria involved in DLB had not been identified until now. The authors suggest the study results can be used to explore new avenues for diagnosis and treatment of DLB. The study was published in *npj Parkinson's Disease*.

<https://www.nagoya-u.ac.jp/researchinfo/result-en/2023/03/20230301-01.html>

- According to American Cancer Society's latest colorectal cancer report, **colon cancer** cases are **increasing** among patients **younger than 55**, with rates for that age group increasing almost 2% each year from 2011 to 2019. Researchers estimate that there will be 153,020 colorectal cancer cases diagnosed in the US this year and an estimated 52,550 colorectal cancer deaths, with 3,750 of them – or 7% – among people younger than 50. Overall, more people are surviving colorectal cancer, with the relative survival rate at least five years after diagnosis rising from 50% in the mid-1970s to 65% from 2012 through 2018.

<https://www.cnn.com/2023/03/01/health/colorectal-cancer-statistics-2023-report/index.html>

Hospital News

- University of Pittsburgh Medical Center (**UPMC**) and James Luketich, MD, its top **cardiac surgeon**, have **settled a whistleblower lawsuit** that alleged the hospital and surgeon knowingly submitted hundreds of **false claims** for payment to Medicare, Medicaid, and other government health programs over the past six years. Luketich was accused of leaving patients under **anesthesia** for unnecessarily long periods of time while he "simultaneously" operated on as many as three patients at a time, running between procedure rooms and even leaving critical parts of some procedures

to others. He and the hospital then filed claims for payment for surgeries that he didn't actually perform according to Medicare's rules. UPMC said in a statement that it continues to believe that Luketich's practice complied with federal requirements.

The case was originally filed in 2019 by a former cardiothoracic surgeon at UPMC under the federal **False Claims Act**, which allows private parties to bring lawsuits on behalf of the government and collect a portion of any recovery. The [government took over the case](#) in 2021 and the \$8.5 million settlement will be paid to the U.S. government.

<https://www.reuters.com/legal/government/hospital-top-surgeon-pay-85-mln-whistleblower-suit-over-simultaneous-surgeries-2023-02-27/>

- UPMC's practice of "**concurrent surgeries**," also known as "**overlapping**" or "**simultaneous**" surgeries, or "**running two rooms**," is controversial and some hospitals don't allow it. For many teaching hospitals, however, it is common practice. Medicare billing rules permit it as long as the attending surgeon is present during the critical portion of each operation — and that portion is defined by the surgeon. It is believed to be most common in orthopedics, cardiac surgery and neurosurgery.

In 2017, Kaiser Health News' Sandra Boodman interviewed surgeons with different perspectives on the topic. One of the physicians provides this advice to patients: if you are having surgery at a teaching hospital and want to avoid the "overlap" practice, **ask detailed questions** well in advance and put your request in writing and on the consent form. You might ask, "Are you going to be in the room the entire time during my surgery?" and then repeating that statement in front of the OR nurses the day of surgery.

<https://khn.org/news/double-booked-when-surgeons-operate-on-two-patients-at-once/>

Patient Case Studies

- Dennis Pearsall's mysterious pain came on in 2017 as an attack seemingly out of the blue: "All of a sudden I had a jolt in my throat that went straight up into my eardrum and just exploded," he said. "It was like someone had taken an electric prod and hit me. I didn't know what to do." He **rated his pain** as being at "15" on a scale of 1 to 10. As the pain attacks increased in frequency, an Ear Nose and Throat (ENT) doctor believed he might have **glossopharyngeal neuralgia**, a condition in which the glossopharyngeal nerve, which extends from the throat to the ear, is wedged against an adjacent **blood vessel** in the brain. But because the condition is so rare, most doctors do not recognize it and his doctors didn't see it on his MRI scans. Years later, Columbia University neurosurgeon Raymond Sekula could see what no one else could and performed a life-saving surgery.

<https://www.cuimc.columbia.edu/news/he-was-healthy-then-excruciating-pain-took-over-his-life>

Food News & Research

- A *Consumer Reports* (CR) investigation found "unpredictable" spikes of **mercury levels in five popular canned tuna brands**. While it has been established that canned albacore tuna can contain three times more mercury than light tuna (albacore tuna is larger and lives longer than the tunas that make up the light tuna or skipjack tunas), the recent CR testing revealed that individual cans of tuna (any kind) may contain varying levels of mercury. For that reason, CR's food safety experts suggest that pregnant people may be best off **avoiding tuna** altogether. In fact, CR's food safety experts disagree with the FDA's guidance that 2 -3 servings (4 ounce of light tuna) a week is healthy for pregnant people.

While mercury contamination in tuna caught in the Pacific Ocean is on the rise, levels are dropping in tuna from the Atlantic Ocean, says Nicholas Fisher, PhD, of the School of Marine and Atmospheric Sciences at the State University of New York at Stony Brook. CR testing found that for four out of five of the brands it recently tested, the mercury levels

were actually **lower** than the averages the FDA measured from 1990 to 2010.

CR Tested: Mercury in Tuna

How many 5-ounce cans of tuna you can consume each week*



*CR's recommendations for nonpregnant adults. Based on a 5-ounce can of tuna drained of water, leaving 4-ounces of tuna. Assumes no other fish eaten that week. Fewer and smaller servings are recommended for children and depend on age.

Best Choices		
Anchovy	Herring	Scallop
Atlantic croaker	Lobster,	Shad
Atlantic mackerel	American and spiny	Shrimp
Black sea bass	Mullet	Skate
Butterfish	Oyster	Smelt
Catfish	Pacific chub	Sole
Clam	mackerel	Squid
Cod	Perch, freshwater	Tilapia
Crab	and ocean	Trout, freshwater
Crawfish	Pickereel	Tuna, canned light
Flounder	Plaice	(includes skipjack)
Haddock	Pollock	Whitefish
Hake	Salmon	Whiting
	Sardine	

- In a recent "In Conversation" podcast, *Medical News Today* explored the potential benefits and drawbacks of a **ketogenic** ("**Keto**") diet for the management of chronic pain and inflammation arising from autoimmune conditions. The diet is characterized by a very low consumption of carbohydrates—less than 50 grams a day, offset by a higher proportion of fat. Dr. Susan A. Masino of Trinity College and author of "Ketogenic Diet and Metabolic Therapies: Expanded Roles in Health and Disease" weighs in as does a lupus patient who tried the ketogenic diet.

<https://www.medicalnewstoday.com/articles/in-conversation-is-the-ketogenic-diet-right-for-autoimmune-conditions>

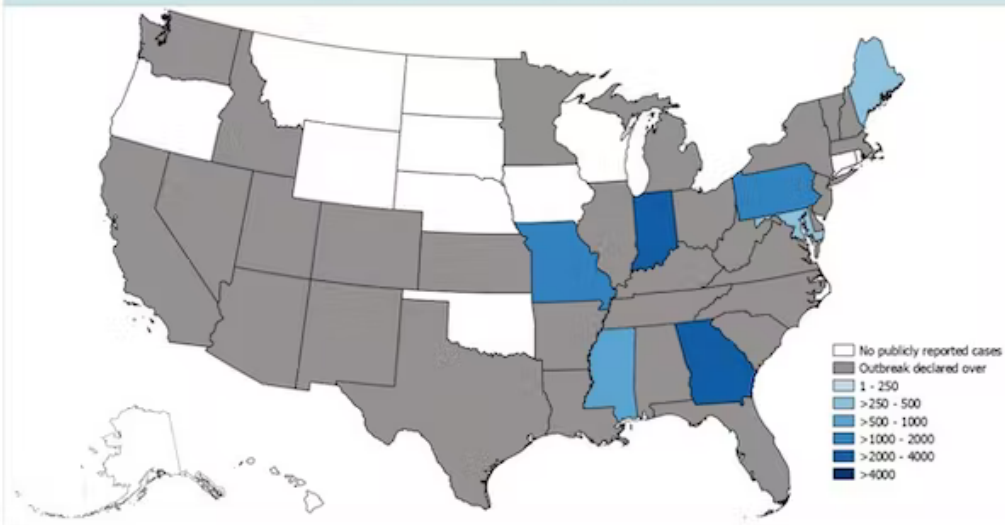
- The sugar substitute **erythritol**, used in the sweetener **Truvia** (and often used by those on a "Keto" diet), may lead to a **higher risk** for stroke, blood clot, death according to research by the department of cardiovascular and metabolic sciences at the Cleveland Clinic. The team collected blood from 1,157 volunteers undergoing cardiac risk assessment. They looked for chemical signatures for erythritol in the blood and tracked who had a heart attack, stroke or died over the next three years. The study was published in *Nature Medicine*.

<https://www.msn.com/en-us/health/other/sugar-substitute-erythritol-common-in-keto-foods-may-increase-your-risk-for-stroke/ar-AA17ZLkx>

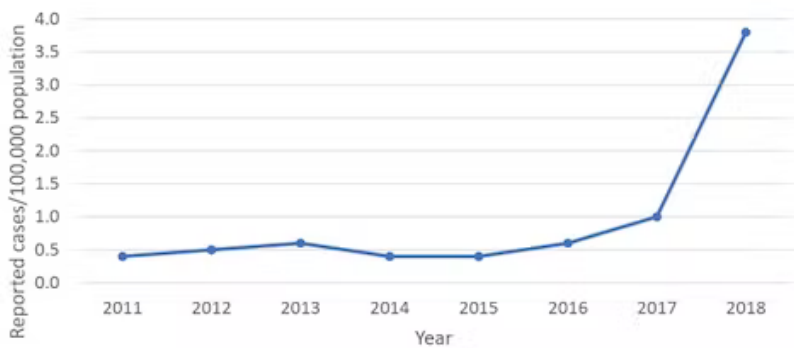
Contagious Disease News

While most of the U.S. has declared the **Hepatitis A virus (HAV)** disease outbreak to be over, seven states are still dealing with an outbreak (see map below). After years of dramatic decline since the HAV vaccine was introduced in 1996, cases began to surge again in late 2016 because of a large community hepatitis A outbreak with person-to-person transmission among persons who used drugs, persons experiencing homelessness, men who have sex with men (MSM) and, to a much lesser extent, in association with consumption of HAV-contaminated food.

State-Reported Hepatitis A Outbreak Cases as of March 3, 2023



Incidence of hepatitis A – United States, 2011–2018



Most people recover within weeks from the disease and do not have lasting liver damage but some will require hospitalization and may suffer long-lasting effects. In 2015, there were only 1,390 reported cases of hepatitis A in the nation. However, since late 2016, there have been more than 44,000 cases reported, mostly among groups most at-risk. It is recommended that all children age 12 – 23 months receive **two doses** of a Hepatitis A vaccine and that unvaccinated children or adolescents age 2 to 18 years receive a **catch-up vaccine**. Some adults in certain risk categories are also advised to get a vaccine.

<https://www.cdc.gov/hepatitis/outbreaks/2017March-HepatitisA.htm>

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