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Anodyne therapy

Treatment improves circulation, also helps in healing of wounds

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*Miranda Pederson/Daily News
 Physical therapist Carrie Sweeney (right) places Anodyne Therapy patches on patient Rosalyn Stamps at Phoenix Rehab Group on Wednesday. Stamps undergoes the therapy to improve her blood circulation.*

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A few months ago, Rosalyn Stamps fell twice because numbness in her feet caused a balance problem.

In January, she'd learned the numbness was caused by peripheral neuropathy, which is nerve damage that causes poor blood flow to extremities.

"I couldn't walk very well," the 84-year-old said.

Then Stamps heard about Anodyne Therapy at a health fair at Village Manor, where she lives.

She was intrigued by the fact that the therapy uses infrared light placed on affected areas to improve circulation.

Soon, she was a patient at Phoenix Rehab Group, a physical, occupational and speech therapy rehabilitation clinic that offers Anodyne Therapy in Bowling Green.

Now, after a few months of treatment, Stamps has enough feeling in her feet to be able to walk around her apartment without holding onto doors or walls to avoid falls, she said.



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But she's not the only one who's benefited from the therapy at Phoenix Rehab.

"We have seen improvement with all of our patients who have peripheral neuropathies," including diabetic neuropathy, with the return of sensation and the decreased episodes of falls, said Angela Norman, an occupational therapist who owns Phoenix.

In addition, Anodyne Therapy "enables nitric oxide, which is a natural pain killer, to be released more easily" in the body, further helping those who have acute pain with neuropathy, Norman said.

The release of nitric oxide also "improves nerve function and aids in wound healing," according to a letter Norman sent the Daily News in August.

That's a big deal because diabetic wounds can lead to amputations.

The American Diabetes Association Web site – at www.diabetes.org – says "about 60 to 70 percent of people with diabetes have mild to severe forms of diabetic nerve damage, which, in severe forms, can lead to lower limb amputations. In fact, diabetes is the most frequent cause of non-traumatic lower limb amputations. The risk of a leg amputation is 15 to 40 times greater for a person with diabetes. Each year, 82,000 people lose their foot or leg to diabetes."

According to Norman, patients undergo Anodyne Therapy three times a week for 12 weeks.

During sessions, patients sit in a comfortable chair while the infrared light works painlessly on their legs through padding strapped on affected areas.

Stamps said she only feels warmth during the procedure.

Each treatment session lasts 30 to 45 minutes, Norman said. Once the 12-week session is completed, results last up to six months. Then, patients can come back for weekly treatments or can buy their own treatment machine, Norman said.

Most insurance and Medicare pay for Anodyne Therapy, which has been approved by the FDA, Norman said.

An Anodyne Therapy LLC brochure says "no side effects

Do you suffer from these symptoms...

Abdominal pain or discomfort

Bloating

Constipation

Tried fiber?

Tried laxatives?

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have been reported as long as Anodyne Therapy is properly used and monitored.”

But the therapy isn't for everyone. There are “special cautions” for those who are pregnant or have cancer. And those who are sensitive to light should notify their therapist.

Also, Phoenix only administers Anodyne Therapy to patients who have been referred by their doctor.

Dr. Wayne Hendrix, who works at Graves Gilbert Clinic, referred Stamps to Phoenix.

“The physical therapist chooses the most appropriate therapy and recommends it back to the physician,” Hendrix said. “They have to get approval from us for the therapy.”

Anodyne Therapy is used at several places across the state, including Medco nursing homes in Bowling Green and Franklin; Central Baptist Hospital Outpatient Therapy Services and Good Samaritan Hospital Physical Therapy Department in Lexington; and Franciscan Health Care Center Rehab Department in Louisville.

Dana Love, a physical therapist at Medco in Bowling Green, said she has been pleasantly surprised at how well Anodyne Therapy has helped many with whom she has worked.

“I didn't expect to see results as quickly as we did on acute injuries, mostly,” Love said. “On neuropathies we saw measurable results quickly” as well.