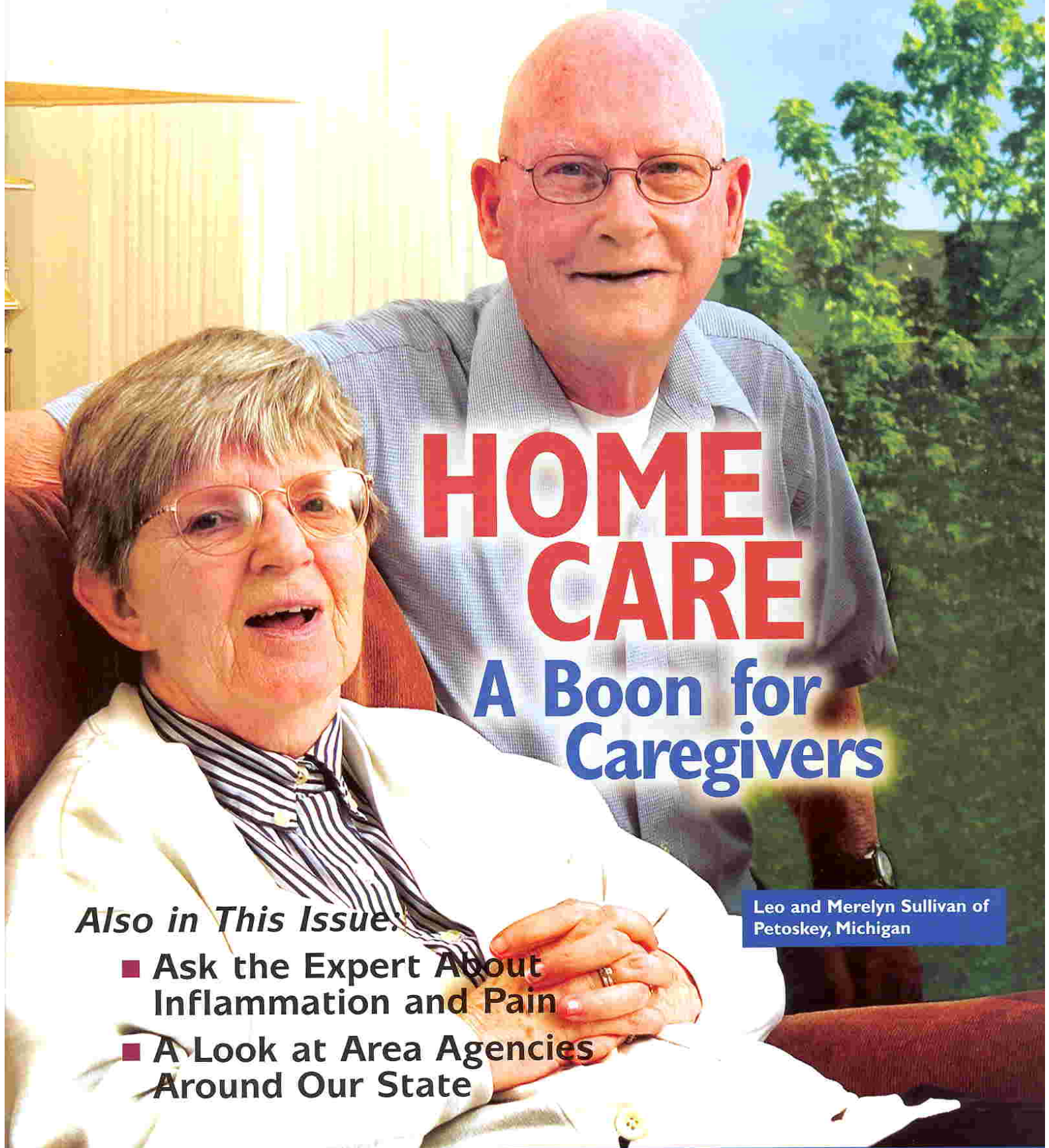


Generations



HOME CARE A Boon for Caregivers

Leo and Merelyn Sullivan of Petoskey, Michigan

Also in This Issue:

- Ask the Expert About Inflammation and Pain
- A Look at Area Agencies Around Our State



Inflammation and Pain

Countering the Effects

Inflammation: Why is it a growing concern?

A NUMBER OF RECENT STUDIES HAVE shown the direct relationship that inflammation has not only with pain (in the form of arthritis and other joint-related pain) but with various forms of cancer and cardiovascular disease as well.

What causes inflammation?

INFLAMMATION OCCURS WHEN CHEMICALS from the body's white blood cells are released into the blood or affected tissues to protect the body from foreign substances. This release of chemicals increases blood flow to the area of injury or infection and may result in redness and warmth. Some of the chemicals cause a leak of fluid into the tissues, resulting in swelling. This protective process may stimulate nerves and cause pain.

What are signs of inflammation?

ONE MAY EXPERIENCE REDNESS, swollen joints that are warm to touch, joint pain, joint stiffness and loss of joint function.

Why did you develop a nutritional system to reduce inflammation?

A FEW YEARS AGO, I HAD CUT BACK ON my running due to inflammation in my hip associated with arthritis. In 2002,

I decided to run the Detroit Marathon. I attempted to conquer my hip pain in a natural fashion without the use of drugs. I developed a nutritional program to protect my joints and to prevent musculoskeletal pain. I ran the race to completion and, in April 2005, I accomplished a lifetime goal of running the Boston Marathon.

How did you develop your nutritional program?

FIRST, I CREATED A REGIMEN THAT worked for me — intensifying my program of diet, vitamins and other supplements. I then completed extensive secondary research to thoroughly educate myself on the topic of inflammation and the relationship to pain.

What can be done to counter the effects of inflammation?

THERE ARE A NUMBER OF SIMPLE and affordable lifestyle changes people can make to reduce their “index of inflammation” and live healthier as they grow older.

- **Fish oil** — Take five grams of fish oil per day. Make sure to get a brand that is high in EPA and DHA.
- **Minimize dairy except for yogurt** — It provides bacteria that helps break down food in your digestive system, reducing food allergies that can contribute to arthritis and headaches.
- **Avoid red meat** — You can get most of your protein from chicken and seafood, as well as the new eggs with high Omega-three oils that are now available in grocery stores.
- **Increase fiber** — Incorporating fiber into your diet will reduce the risk of colon cancer and heart disease by binding the cholesterol in your stool and preventing reabsorption in the small intestine. Take Metamucil at least once a day.

- **One alcoholic beverage a day** — A little bit of alcohol each day is good for your cholesterol, but no more than one drink a day is recommended.

- **Green tea** — Drink green tea instead of coffee. Green tea helps unlock your metabolism. It's recommended to drink at least four cups per day.

- **Soy milk** — Drink two glasses a day. Silk-brand vanilla flavor is tastiest and available at all grocery stores.

- **Seven helpings of fruits and vegetables a day** — Fruits and vegetables are high in antioxidants, which help relieve inflammation. Apples, berries and dark greens like spinach are very beneficial.

- **Low-glycemic diet** — We know that insulin causes inflammation. Try to eat just high-quality protein like chicken and seafood with fruits and vegetables, avoiding bread, pasta, white rice and potatoes. Nuts, beans and whole grains are excellent. Eating a handful of nuts twice a week reduces your risk of heart disease by about 40%.

- **Herb turmeric** — Season your food liberally with turmeric, which is a yellow spice found in mustard. It has an earthy flavor like cumin and is used in curry, an Indian spice mixture. It has potent anti-inflammatory qualities.

- **Glucosamin sulfate** — Take 1,500 mg of this supplement per day for joint protection.

- **Walk/exercise** — Walk at least two miles per day. You may never run a marathon, but you will feel better.

MARK GOSTINE, M.D., is a nationally recognized pain management specialist and co-founder of Michigan Pain Consultants, a comprehensive interdisciplinary pain management program. For information, call 616-940-2662 or 1-800-281-3237, or visit www.michiganpain.com.

Do you have a caregiving question?

Write or email your question to our “Expert” at: Jenny Jarvis, Area Agency on Aging 1-B, 29100 Northwestern Highway, Suite 400, Southfield, MI 48034; jjarvis@aaa1b.com. We will make every effort to answer your question in an upcoming issue of *Michigan Generations*.