



July 25, 2011 – Grand Rapids, MI

Don't Delay

Thank you all for the birthday sentiments you sent. I can't respond to them all, but I read them and appreciate them. As long as I'm still in the glow of turning 60, here's one more piece of advice that I'd like to share. If you hurt yourself by falling, twisting, or any other injury to joints or soft tissue, get checked out sooner rather than later. Sure, ice, rest, and elevation to start with, but if normal function doesn't return in a week, get it checked.

About five years ago, Paula twisted her foot while falling from a ladder. She wasn't hurt in the fall, but that twist of her foot has caused much pain and discomfort over the years. She got it x-rayed, and nothing appeared broken or torn. Everybody said sprains take a long time to heal, so we let it go, and by the time she did see a podiatrist, the damage to the bones was extensive—even surgery hasn't solved the problem.

Three years ago, I slipped and severely twisted my knee. I waited two months to see a specialist. In that case, all that was required was rest for the torn ligament to heal. Had I gone immediately, I would have started the rest sooner instead of trying to run despite the pain. It set back my running, and I still haven't recovered completely yet.

Earlier this year, the disk in Paula's left jaw joint slipped out of place; she saw her dentist, and then one expert, and then another. At her request, she started physical therapy three weeks ago, and it's greatly improved; she wishes she'd insisted on PT several months ago.

As I said last Thursday, we can have a \$1 million body by taking care of it with eating right and exercise. But when it comes to accidents which will inevitably happen, don't delay—give it up to a week, but no more. Get it checked as soon as possible. Injuries to joints or soft tissue respond well to physical therapy, so find a good therapist and get going again.

What are you prepared to do today?

Dr. Chet

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