

## 2/3/16 Patient Education Questions

- 1) Can someone explain the SCIU Home Care Program? What services are provided, who is eligible and how far will they go to see a veteran in their home?

Home care is part of the Spinal Cord Injury (SCI) outpatient clinic. SCI veterans eligible for the SCI Home Care must live within a 100 miles radius or 2 hour one way drive. Areas include; Stockton, Modesto, Monterey. SCI Home Care follows veterans with complex medical issues including pressure sores and respiratory problems. Also, all new injuries are followed when they go home the first time to help with the period of adjustment. Any SCI veteran is eligible not just individuals that are service connected. Services include training of family members in areas of SCI care, including bowel and bladder management and wound care. If a person is outside the catchment area arrangements can be made for a community home care agency to visit you if your SCI doctor feels this is needed. The Home care team includes Nurses and Nurse Practitioners, Therapeutic recreational therapists, Occupational therapists, Social Worker and a Psychologist. Telephone access is an important requirement for the team to be effective in helping you. If you think enrollment to the SCI Home Care Program would benefit you, please discuss it with your SCI physician or NP and they can contact the Home Care team.

- 2) What are some of the causes of spinal cord injury and what are the physical effects?

Spinal cord injuries are sustained from traumatic injuries such as motor vehicle injuries as well as falls. They can also occur from less traumatic injuries such as infection, loss of blood supply, compression and degenerative changes of the spine. There are 12,000 new spinal cord injuries a year and there are between 250,000 people living with spinal cord injury in the United States. Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis (ALS) and Multiple Sclerosis (MS) are diseases that create paralysis that is similar to spinal cord injury. Bladder and Bowel function are primary areas of focus during the acute injury. It is important to know that individuals with spinal cord injury are quite capable of living highly productive lifestyles within a normal lifespan. Injuries can be complete, that is sensory and motor loss below the level of the injury or incomplete where there is some intact motor and sensory function below the level of injury. Individuals with incomplete injuries have more of a chance of some function coming back whereas complete injuries have less chances of recovery in effected areas of motor and sensory loss.

- 3) What is the ASIA system? What does it mean to be an A,B,C,D type of injury?

The ASIA classification stands for American Spinal Injury Association (ASIA). This association is made up of a multidisciplinary group of health professionals. The ASIA classification system is used to match services to level of injury. The letters are designated A, B, C, D, E. For example, a person with a C5 cervical injury could be ASIA A would mean below C5 there is not movement or sensation, B would mean some sensation but no movement, C would mean no functional movement, D would mean there is functional movement to get oneself around, E would mean the person has functional mobility but has for example spasms that were caused by the spinal cord injury. Levels can change and the most improvement is seen 12 months after the acute injury, however improvement can continue on a slower time course after that.

4) What are some of the challenges with respect to fertility and having a baby someday as a spinal cord injured individual? Is there technology available to help with the fertility-conception challenge?

The sexuality clinic can help you understand how to improve your sexual performance as well as understand fertility issues. A lot of one's physical abilities still work but may need assistance to increase performance. These include the use of medications as well as gadgets that can enhance physical function. For example the use of vibrators or even electrical stimulators can heighten the physical stimulation needed to provide an erection. Orgasm can cause a sudden increase in blood pressure similar to Autonomic Dysreflexia (AD) and it is important to understand this phenomenon and have an orgasm in a controlled situation to see if you experience AD. The "Yes You can Book "contains valuable information on sexuality and fertility.

5) Is swimming bad for my skin? Can I still swim if I have an open, un-healing wound? Will chlorine have a bad effect on my skin healing?

Swimming is not bad for the skin in general. It is important that one skin is intact. Open wounds place individuals at risk if they go swimming.

6) How does the Robo-Form software work?

Roboform is a password manager as well as a web form filler that can help you quickly fill out information in web based forms. This Roboform software stores your passwords for ease of access to websites that require your username and password each to me you want to log in. Essentially it can log you on saving you retyping the same information over and over. For standard forms for example when you want to order something that requires you address and billing formation can be filled in by Roboform with single key clicks. You can remotely log into the Robform program so you can easily access your Robform account and use all the features without having your personal computer. Roboform has been deemed as a very safe place to store your personal information and passwords by industry leaders.

7) Can anyone discuss the status of the use of olfactory ensheathing cells in the treatment of spinal cord injuries? I read a recent article in the New Yorker Magazine about research taking place in Europe with this treatment. Will this treatment ever be available in the US?

The use of olfactory ensheathing cells as a treatment for spinal cord injuries is not new. These types of cells have been used in animal models and have the property of helping stimulate the regeneration of the lesioned axons. Specifically they are involved with remyelinating growing axons. The use of these cells in the animal models to help growing axons remyelination have had some ability to help animals regained regain sensory and some motor improvements. The importance of the restitution of white matter tracks is important because these tracts carry the electrical signals down the spinal column. Phase 1 trials have shown the use of olfactory stem cells to be safe. Good sources of information regarding stem cell therapies can be found at websites including California Institute for Regenerative Medicine (CIRM) <https://www.cirm.ca.gov/patients/stem-cell-basics> as well as informational publications "Experimental Treatments for Spinal Cord Injury: What you should know [http://www.asia-spinalinjury.org/elearning/FINAL\\_Version\\_2\\_Experimental\\_Treatments\\_for\\_SCI.pdf](http://www.asia-spinalinjury.org/elearning/FINAL_Version_2_Experimental_Treatments_for_SCI.pdf)