

## Bruno Bytes – February, 2015

### On Issues Related to Surgery 2/28/15

Comment: Next week I'm going under the knife to repair the meniscus in my right knee. This is the good leg, so to speak, so I am hoping that I will be more mobile. I have faith that it will be a good surgery.

Dr. Bruno's Comment: Please make sure the surgeon and the anesthesiologist know about precautions for a polio survivor who is undergoing surgery (info available at [postpolioinfo.com](http://postpolioinfo.com)).

Another Comment: Please...don't forget to ask for blankets after surgery....we get so cold.

In fact, you could tell them to cover you up in the recovery room right from beginning.

Dr. Bruno's Response: There is a device called a "bear hugger" that actually surrounds you and blows warm air to keep you warm. It's even better than warm blankets!

### On The Topic of Polio Survivors Being Susceptible To Hearing Issues 2/26/15

Question: Are we PPS survivors susceptible to a troubling hearing disorder that causes an especially tough time hearing others on our cell phones? Or how about it being harder to hear when there are outside noises or even noises that are inside a paratransit bus? Directional sources (even by the ear such as a handheld cell phone) drive me nuts. I only have this hearing problem using the cell phone or land line earpiece. (An audio doc told me he could send in my Motorola Bluetooth for an extended cone permanent earpiece, which I have yet to try.)

A polio doctor told me that we could have nerve damage in or around the inner ear that only becomes a problem that affects us later. (I think that my associated problem of answering before a person is done talking to me is also related to this.) I'm wondering if this sensory nerve area is somehow related to my hearing and answering problem.

Thanks Dr. Bruno.

Dr. Bruno's Response: There is no evidence that the poliovirus damaged any brain area or nerves that affect hearing. (It is the same for visual acuity or touch.) General Rule: If anything sensory is wrong it's not polio-related.

A Comment Related to this Question and Answer: What is visual acuity? I have blurred vision (left eye only of course) that my doctor's think is due to the Herpes Zoster (Shingles) damaging nerves that were already compromised from the polio. Dr. Bruno – given your explanation above, that makes so much sense to me. Polio was not the cause of the vision issues. Another issue that causes additional nerve damage was simply the 'icing on the cake'.

Dr. Bruno's Response: Visual acuity is focusing your eyes. The muscles that focus were not affected by the poliovirus. None of the hearing taste or other sensory nerves were damaged by polio, but that doesn't mean that another virus couldn't do damage, as in your case, the Herpes virus.

### On the Benefits of "Dry Needling" Physical Therapy 2/25/15

Question: My trip to the orthopedic doctor ended with some hopeful solutions. As of now, surgery is not an option for my neck & spine issues. Due to being on Warfarin I can't have epidural injections.

One solution is another round of prednisone and Valium (for me, that is not an option). In addition, he did recommend "dry puncture" physical therapy. Has anyone had this done and if so, how successful was it?

Dr. Bruno's Response: Dry needling is a technique that is sometimes used to break up muscle spasms. A much more effective technique is injecting local anesthetic, sometimes with a steroid, into the muscles that are in spasm. Then the physical therapist can put their thumb into the specimen and break it up. If bleeding is not an issue I would recommend a local anesthetic injection instead of dry needling since no one knows how that works! (You could also ask about deep tissue massage). Good Luck!

### On Anemia Adding to PPS Fatigue 2/24/15

Question: I just discovered that I am "Border-line anemic" after a recent blood test. Could this be part of the PPS fatigue?

Dr. Bruno: Anytime a polio survivor has an abnormal finding, even one point above or below the norm, it should be considered abnormal and should be treated. If you were borderline anemic, it could certainly contribute to fatigue and the cause needs to be found. The anemia needs to be treated.

### On Getting Polio from the Vaccine in 1955 2/22/15

Question/Comment: I'm asking a question for a friend - He was in the hospital for 15 months in an iron lung from 1943-1944. He got polio for the 2nd time after getting the vaccine in 1955. He was back in the hospital, that time for 9 months. He remembers being told that he got the virus the second time from the vaccine in the sugar cube. Wasn't the sugar cube the Sabin Vaccine in 1960?

This article <http://time.com/3714090/salk-vaccine-history> mentions the Salk vaccine only being by injection. But, some people remember getting their first vaccine (which would have been Salk) by sugar cube. I got my first (1955) by injection and later one by sugar cube. In reading all the history, it's pretty confusing.

Dr. Bruno's Response: The Sabin vaccine was released in 1962 so that was not the cause. But you have to remember that the vaccine was not 100% effective and that individuals did not develop the same degree of immunity to all three types of polio virus. It's also possible that the individual who got polio twice was inadequately immunized to all three types of poliovirus. Finally, he could have been a victim of the "Cutter Incident". Talk about bad luck!

Additional Question: Was the Salk vaccine always injected (or) was it also given on sugar cubes?

Dr. Bruno's Response: The Salk vaccine was always injected, never given by sugar cube. The Sabin vaccine came out in 1962 and people should've received three sugar cubes.

By the way the injectable vaccine was killed, or should have been, and the oral vaccine was live and could cause polio if it mutated.

The Cutter Incident was only caused by Salk vaccine, in which the virus wasn't completely killed, it did not involve the sugar cube. It involved a company thought to be not following the protocol in the manufacturing of the Salk vaccine.

The Salk vaccine was likely more than 80% effective.

### On PPS and Medication Reactions 2/19/15

Question/Comment: I've never seen a warning on a drug that says polio/post- polio is a contraindication. I think this should change. I had an adverse reaction to Topamax (topiramate) (my doctor is throwing all these drugs at me for my head pain, since Tramadol is suddenly out of favor). that. These drugs are kicking my butt in the muscle department. This last one had my legs so weak I could not walk. Spent several days mostly in bed except to bathroom, put the dog out the door, etc. I really needed a cane or something. It's been a week, still not completely back to normal. I don't think doctors have any legal mandate to report these things. I'm starting to call manufacturers EVERY time I have an adverse muscle reaction. When you call a manufacturer, there is an option on the auto system that says "to report an adverse event", and I'm going to call the FDA. Drug companies are "supposed to" report these to the FDA, but I'm not sure if they really do, who knows if they're honest. I want to start this campaign for ALL people with post- polio syndrome to call both the manufacturer and the FDA if you think you have an adverse effect from a drug, related to your PPS condition. I've been in a major brain fog, too, and this doesn't even say what it's done to my asthma.

No one will put these warnings on the drug info/inserts that come with the drugs unless we start reporting. It goes without saying, this has not been the best week of my life, but I've dealt with it.

Dr. Bruno's Response: "What a wonderful idea! All polio survivors should contact the FDA if they have a problem with a drug. The form is easy to compete. The chance of a warning on the package or FDA issuing a warning is very unlikely. Doctors reading such a warning (even if there were one) are even less likely. But the

FDA should know and Coffee House members need be made aware of drug issues.

So if anyone has a problem with a drug, please start a new thread for EACH drug. Write DRUG WARNING: Drug Name (e.g. DRUG WARNING: Generic Ditropan XL) and describe the dose, the reason for prescription, explain the effect, the problem and how it was dealt with.

Bravo, for a great idea!"

As a result of the above conversation –  
Dr. Bruno as initiated the following "Coffee House Initiative"

If you have a problem with a medication – you can go to this website and download the Voluntary Form FDA 3500 and report the adverse effects.

(Please use a separate form for every medication).

For Example: write "DRUG WARNING:" Generic Ditropan XL

Describe the dose, the reason for the prescription, the effect, the problem side effect you've experienced and how it was dealt with. By submitting this form, either by US Mail or Online, you are reporting the adverse effect to the FDA.

<http://www.fda.gov/.../.../howtoreport/downloadforms/default.htm>

### On Barium Test with Throat Paralysis 2/16/15

Question: I am in the hospital right now with COPD. I had Bulbar polio and my throat is paralyzed. The doctor insists that I have a barium swallow test to see how thick my food should be. I do not want this test. I had it years ago and it was horrific for me. My blood pressure went through the "roof". Do I have to have this done?

Dr. Bruno's 3 part response:

1. "A video swallow study would let the doc see what thickness of liquid you need that doesn't pool in your throat or go down toward your lungs. If you're coughing or choking or have had pneumonia I would recommend the study but tell the doc about your blood pressure reaction."

"The other option is to work with a speech therapist, starting with a thick liquid that you know DOES NOT cause trouble swallowing then dilute it until you find the "thinness" that causes symptoms."

2. "Speech therapists do more than deal with speaking. They teach swallowing techniques like turning the head, tucking then chin, thickening liquids.

If you're having significant swallowing problems but don't know what's happening in your throat with a video swallow study you can't compensate except by trial and error. It's like bracing a leg without doing a manual muscle test. But trial and error with thick to thin liquids is better than no trial at all."

3. "There are different kinds of swallowing problems. The "throat" trouble -- swallowing thin liquids -- is due to the poliovirus damaging the swallowing control centers in the "bulb" of the brain, the brain stem. Every polio survivor had "bulbar" polio, i.e., damage to the brain stem, but some had more damage than others. You may remember when you first had polio that liquid didn't go down but came out of your nose! "

"As the woman who asked the question and her esophageal web remind us, not all swallowing problems are due to polio. Anyone can develop a pouch in the esophagus that holds liquid or food. That's why a video swallow study is important if you have consistent or intermittently severe swallowing issues."

By the way, there is NO ANESTHESIA with a swallow study. It's not painful. Besides, how could you eat or drink barium if you were asleep?

[CFDA Approves First Inactivated Sabin Vaccine](#) 2/6/2015

Article Posted by Dr. Bruno:

<http://www.asianscientist.com/2015/02/topnews/cfda-approves-inactivated-sabin-vaccine/>

“This is almost a non-story story. I'm certainly glad the Chinese are working on developing enterovirus vaccines. Maybe they will come up with a vaccine for EV 71 and EV D68. But what is needed is an oral version of the Sabin vaccine that has the areas of the poliovirus RNA removed that mutate and make the vaccine cause paralysis.”

[On Omega 3 Supplements](#) 2/3/2015

Dear Dr. Bruno - What about PPS and taking Omega's3 supplements ? I have been taking this for 12 years.

Dr. Bruno's Response - “There is absolutely no scientific evidence that any supplement provides any medical benefit for any condition except weight loss, since paying for the supplement makes your wallet lighter.”

[On the Article from the New Yorker “When Ike Trusted a New Vaccine”](#) 2/4/2015

<http://www.newyorker.com/news/daily-comment/ike-trusted-new-vaccine>

Dr. Bruno's Comment – “Unfortunately, the White House meeting that took place had a foregone conclusion: the vaccine must be produced immediately, this in spite of at least two individual speaking directly to Eisenhower and saying that it was too soon to produce the vaccine safely. But the decision had already been made before the meeting and resulted in the "Cutter incident" where an inadequately killed polio virus caused children to be paralyzed. “