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Winter Edition 2016

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New West Physicians Gains National Recognition for Quality, Affordable Health Care

When you walk into any one of our 17 Denver-area offices and see the New West Physicians name, it means much more than just another visit to the doctor. Our name is not simply a nice looking sign or a fancy ad campaign with a catchy slogan. Every New West Physicians' family practice, internal medicine, and specialist office is part of a culture of caring and accountability that is making health care better for you, your family, and the community.

Working together to deliver better care is what we do every day, from our group's passionate and visionary chief medical officer to the dedicated front desk staff at each of our member offices. Our efforts to bring you and your family better care have been so successful that the American Medical Group Association (AMGA) recently named New West Physicians as the national 2015 Acclaim Award recipient for group practices with fewer than 150 physicians. The prestigious award recognizes medical groups that are "bringing the American health care system closer to the ideal delivery model: One that is safe, effective, patient-centered, timely, efficient, and equitable."

Yes, it is a national award and we are very proud of it because it recognizes New West Physicians as a premier "high performing" health care organization. It shows how hard we have worked to make sure your office visit makes you feel confident about the care you are getting, and represents how we strive to deliver the highest quality, affordable health care possible.

To win the highly coveted Acclaim Award, we had to document our efforts in great detail, with facts, figures, goals, processes, and results to justify our entry. But what does the award really mean to you, the patient? Walking through the doors of a New West Physicians' member practice means:

- You are more likely to be happy about the care you get, with more time and more attention focused on you than at other practices.
 - In our 2014 patient satisfaction survey, 97% of patient responses rated our group "excellent" or "very good".
- You are more likely to be healthier at less cost to you and the health care system.
- You are less likely to be readmitted to the hospital if you've had to seek treatment there.
 - Our hospital readmission rates are extremely low, with 30-day readmission rates of only 3.1% for commercial (private) insurance health care patients and 6.7% for Medicare patients.
- Your doctor and the medical staff who care for you are more likely to be happy about their work because we have a centralized business center that frees up the providers to practice medicine.
- You are more likely, if you are female, to be screened for breast cancer.
 - New West Physicians' patients' breast cancer screening rate is 83% compared to the national average of 77%.
- You are more likely to have your blood pressure under control.
 - 80% of the entire New West Physicians' patient population has its blood pressure under control compared to the national average of 60%.
- You are less likely to receive unnecessary, unproven or ineffective treatments.
- You are more likely to be screened for colon cancer, but less likely to receive an unnecessary colonoscopy.
- You are more likely to get the latest, proven medical technologies and treatments instead of waiting many years for such innovations to trickle down to the primary care level.
 - Our "Bench to Bedside" program brings the latest evidence-based medicine directly to patients within 6 to 12 weeks.

Visiting a New West Physicians' office also means you are at one of the best places possible to receive care; with a physician group that has gained national recognition for its success in treating and managing diabetes, cancer, mental health, and other conditions.



More Information

- [Read the New West Physicians' press release about our acclaim award](#)
- [Read AMGA's press release about the winners of the 2015 Acclaim Award](#)
- [Engage with us on Facebook or visit the MyHealthConnection Patient Portal](#)

It's not just getting an award that we are thrilled about. We're happy for our group, of course, but we're especially happy for you, the patient, which is the whole reason we're here in the first place.

"Through all the noise, fighting, and confusion about health care reform, our focus has been and remains on serving our patients through a primary care model where providers spend most of their time actually caring for patients," said Ruth Benton, New West Physicians' Chief Executive Officer. "This award means patients are directly benefiting from our insistence on a culture of accountability and continuous improvement that values the delivery of quality, affordable care, above all else."

So, the next time you see the New West Physicians' sign as you walk through the door of one of our family practice or specialist member offices, remember that you are part of what makes health care delivery better, more affordable, and more effective. And remember to spread the word about how you are part of one of the best physician groups in the entire nation.

HIGHLIGHTS

New West Physicians Expands With Endocrinologist



We're happy to welcome Dr. Andrea Salzberg to our New West Physicians' Endocrinology Services team. Dr. Salzberg earned her medical degree at the University of Maryland School of Medicine in Baltimore. She completed her internal medicine residency and her endocrinology fellowship at the University of Colorado in Aurora. She has been in practice since 2010.

Dr. Salzberg is Board Certified in Internal Medicine and Endocrinology, Diabetes, and Metabolism. Her specialties include: Type I and Type II diabetes, thyroid, adrenal, bone, and pituitary diseases. Through close communication and up-to-date medical practices, Dr. Salzberg strives to achieve superior outcomes for her patients.

Philosophy

"I encourage patients to take an active role in their health and wellness. I see myself as a coach, helping patients develop the tools they need to understand and face their medical challenges."

Welcome To Our New Providers



Sarah Neguse, PA-C
Park Ridge Family Medicine



Rebecca Opaluch, PA-C
Denver West Family Practice &
Internal Medicine



Michael Metros, MD
Cherry Creek Internal Medicine

LEARNING LAB

The Pitfalls of Free Standing Emergency Rooms

By Ken Cohen, MD, FACP
Chief Medical Officer



We have all become familiar with the fact that our healthcare system costs several times more than those of other advanced nations and yet provides us with inferior health outcomes. A great sadness that contributes to this truth is the profit motive in healthcare. Nowhere in medicine is the example clearer than in the proliferation of free standing emergency rooms. These are typically built in affluent neighborhoods, and often in the "backyard" of competing hospital systems. They look similar to urgent care centers by virtue of their appearance and location, yet patients receive bills in the thousands of dollars when accessing these facilities, most often for simple urgent care problems. Unfortunately, the prices charged by these facilities are not transparent and patients are not told that they will receive these large bills. These centers are so lucrative, that often less than ten patients need to be seen in a twenty four hour period to generate a profit. As a result, not only are hospital systems building them, but there are also private companies building them in our area as well.

Most urgent care problems fall into the categories of respiratory infections, skin and urinary infections, sprains, strains, minor fractures, and minor gastrointestinal prob-

lems. These are all easily handled at urgent care centers. Think for a moment about the medical conditions for which an emergency room is truly needed. These are usually serious conditions such as heart attacks, strokes, serious breathing problems, surgical emergencies, and other conditions which fortunately occur much less frequently. When these patients wind up at a free standing emergency room, they then require transfer to the hospital. This process may delay the high level care which is needed. The main beneficiary of these free standing ER's is the hospital which has now "captured" the patient into their healthcare system by transferring them to their hospital. With hospital systems tripping over themselves to capture market share, there are now over 20 free standing emergency rooms in the Denver metro area. Some of these centers are now functioning as combined urgent care centers and emergency rooms under one roof. The caveat

is, however, that the emergency center and not the patient, decide whether they are billed urgent care versus emergency room costs. This means that you could be billed \$200 or \$3,000 and not know this at the time you are receiving the service.

With the cost of our healthcare system spiraling towards 20% of our GDP, almost one in five dollars spent in this country goes to healthcare. We cannot afford this. The solution is for us to focus on and support those healthcare services that provide us true value in terms of improving our health. Free standing emergency rooms, unfortunately, do not fall into this category.

To learn more about how New West Physicians keeps you informed, visit our Website.

HEALTH UPDATES

Staying Mentally Healthy in Winter

By Linsey Harrison, MD
Behavioral Health Services

Did you ever notice feeling more fatigued or gloomy during Winter months? This phenomenon isn't solely psychological; it's physiological, too. The short hours of sunlight and long hours of darkness affect serotonin, one of the brain's chemicals that play a role in mood regulation. About 5% of Americans experience seasonal affective disorder while 10-20% of people experience a milder form of "Winter blues." The good news is there are things you can do about it!

Bright light therapy can work just as well as antidepressants to boost your mood during Winter months.

For mild symptoms, expose yourself to daylight first thing in the morning with a 30-minute walk outside, regardless of whether it is sunny or cloudy.

For more significant symptoms of seasonal depression, consider buying a special light box for bright light therapy, with an intensity of 10,000 Lux, and use it first thing in the morning for 30 minutes. Physical exercise is another way to combat seasonal depression. Increasing your heart rate reduces the production of stress hormones and increases the production of endorphins, which gives you a natural sense of well-being. If you are not into skiing and snowboarding, consider snowshoeing or cross-country skiing. These activities will also get you outside and exposed to that precious sunlight. Any physical activity will do, whether it's yoga, vigorous house-cleaning, or running up and down the stairs a few times, as long as you are increasing your heart rate.

It's important to just take care of yourself in the Winter. Get outside whenever you can, get some exercise, maintain a healthy diet, and do what you enjoy! Remember that Spring is just around the corner!



Remember You Can Pay Your Bill Online

To make paying your bill more convenient, New West Physicians has selected Authorize.Net to provide an easy, safe, and secure way to pay your bills online with a credit card.

- Authorize.Net accepts MasterCard, VISA, Discover, and American Express credit cards.
- Payments post to your account within two business days.

Visit our website today at www.nwphysicians.com and click on the "Online Bill Pay" icon located on the Home Page near the 'Search' feature.

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Stay up-to-date on area happenings at New West Physicians' health topics and provider information.



Take a moment to "Like" us today at www.facebook.com/newwestphysiciansgolden

Laughter and Chocolate For Happy Hearts?

By Tatiana Tsvetkova, MD
Cardiology Services

What if protecting your heart may be as simple as enjoying some sunshine, laughing daily, and popping in a funny DVD while cozying up next to a box of chocolates?

Laughter, along with a sense of humor, may help protect you against a heart attack, according to a study by cardiologists at the University of Maryland Medical Center in Baltimore. In the study, researchers compared the humor responses of 300 people. Half of the participants had either suffered a heart attack or undergone coronary artery bypass surgery. The other 150 did not have heart disease. Miller said that the most significant study finding was that "people with heart disease responded less humorously to everyday life situations." They generally laughed less, even in positive situations, and they displayed more anger and hostility.

"The ability to laugh -- either naturally or as learned behavior -- may have important implications in societies such as the U.S. where heart disease remains the number one killer," says Miller. "We know that exercising, not smoking, and eating foods low in saturated fat, will reduce the risk of heart disease. Perhaps regular, hearty laughter should be added to the list."

Miller says it may be possible to incorporate laughter into our daily activities, just as we do with other heart-healthy activities, such as taking the stairs instead of the elevator. "We could perhaps read something humorous or watch a funny video and try to find ways to take ourselves less seriously," Miller says. "The recommendation for a healthy heart may one day be exercise, eat right, and laugh a few times a day."

Source: Laughter is the Best Medicine for Your Heart | University of Maryland Medical Center

In another study, researchers from the University of Cambridge analyzed the findings of several separate studies done on dark chocolate



and its effect on heart disease. All told, the studies combined to have over 114,000 participants.

According to the researchers, chocolate was a winner in reducing heart disease risk, as people who ate the highest quantity of chocolate were 37% less likely to develop a cardiovascular disorder.

The authors say the findings need to be interpreted with caution, in particular because commercially available chocolate is very caloric (around 500 calories for every 100 grams) and eating too much of it could in itself lead to weight gain and risk of diabetes.

The University of Cambridge article will provide further details, if interested.

Wishing you a happy new year, lots of laughter, and some good chocolate this Winter!

The Perils of Snow Shoveling!

Ken Cohen, MD, F.A.C.P.
Evergreen Internal Medicine Chief Medical Officer

There are a few things in Colorado more wonderful than awakening to a tranquil, fresh blanket of snow...until you realize that you need to shovel out!

Health concerns associated with shoveling fall into two categories:

The less common but potentially more dangerous involves the individual with underlying heart or lung disease. Both the cold and the altitude increase the physical stress of snow shoveling. People with these conditions need to be careful that the exertion they apply to shoveling doesn't exceed that of their normal daily activities. Asking your doctor whether it is safe to shovel is important. If you need oxygen to exercise, be certain to wear it while shoveling. Maintain a pace that does not cause shortness of breath, and stop and call your physician if you experience any new chest symptoms or difficulty breathing.

For the rest of us, the major stress of shoveling falls on our back, shoulders, and elbows. The repetitive twisting and lifting is particularly hard on the low back. Techniques to reduce potential injuries are important, especially



with heavy wet snow. Some tips to consider: decrease the load per shovel to avoid strain, switch sides regularly, avoid abrupt twisting and throwing motions as they can result in shoulder tendonitis and tennis elbow pains, and consider an ergonomic shovel to reduce back strain.

Ice any sore spots after shoveling and, if pain develops, stop and recruit someone willing to help.

How Medical Nutrition Therapy Can Lower Cholesterol

Medical nutrition therapy (MNT) is evidence based nutrition counseling to an individual or group provided by a Registered Dietitian. Counseling may include one or more of the following: nutrition assessment/re-assessment, nutrition diagnosis, nutrition intervention and nutrition monitoring, and evaluation that typically results in the prevention, delay, or management of a disease. MNT may benefit those who are trying to lose weight, gain weight, reduce risk of heart disease and diabetes, or better manage these conditions as well as people with gastrointestinal problems and cancer. Dietitians work with clients to set health and wellness goals and identify specific and practical steps to reach those goals.



"I started working with Mary Ann and Jeff when their New West Physicians' doctor referred them to the Diabetes and Nutrition Center for nutrition therapy in January of 2016. They both had cholesterol levels that put them at higher risk for heart disease, but wanted to try dietary changes rather than start a cholesterol medication right away. I evaluated their eating habits and made suggestions of changes that could help lower their LDL cholesterol level. The changes included:

- An evaluation of lifestyle and food preferences
- Decreased saturated fat intake
- Increased soluble fiber in their meals

They had one appointment in the office and contacted me throughout the year with questions as needed. They were delightful to work with because of their sincere desire to decrease their risk of heart disease. It was great to hear back from them after their next lab tests."

Kathleen Peralta, RD
Diabetes and Nutrition Center

A few months later, Kathleen heard the following from the patients: "We wanted to let you know that our blood work shows that our cholesterol and LDL's have returned to normal. Our readings taken at this year's 9 Health Fair for HDL, LDL, and total cholesterol were 23% lower since we have been working with you! We are so happy about the results, are feeling better, and it is all thanks to you! We will stay on the low saturated fat and high soluble fiber diet as our weight has stabilized. At this point, we won't be taking any statins and we are grateful to you for that too."

Thank you so much for helping us do this – you're the best!"

Mary Ann and Jeff, Patients

Ask your doctor if a referral for medical nutrition therapy provided by a registered dietitian nutritionist is right for you. A variety of individual and group classes are offered at our Diabetes & Nutrition Center.

The Patient Portal – A Patient's Perspective



"While I was resistant at first to join the portal because I viewed it as just one more electronic item to keep track of, I did so because I liked the idea of my patient records being in one location. I have lived in various cities and have been bringing hard copies or attempting to transfer my records from one place to the next. Upon joining the Portal, the staff at Golden View Family Medicine uploaded all of my records, creating a full snapshot of my medical history. I was hooked and intrigued. When I had my annual physical, Dr. Atkins simply pulled up my records to see what had occurred, in order to determine what was needed. Impressed again! I have since enjoyed the fact that when I have a question or need a prescription refilled, I can just send her an email through the portal. Super easy and no waiting on hold or phone tag. Thank you."

- Kathryn, Patient



Get started today by downloading the MyHealthConnection Brochure, completing the Request an Invitation to Join section, and taking it with you to your next visit so they can verify your information in person to protect your privacy.

**The Patient Portal should not be used for emergencies or urgent health needs.
 For medical emergencies, always call 9-1-1 immediately.**

Breaking A Sweat On A Quiet Wintery Trail

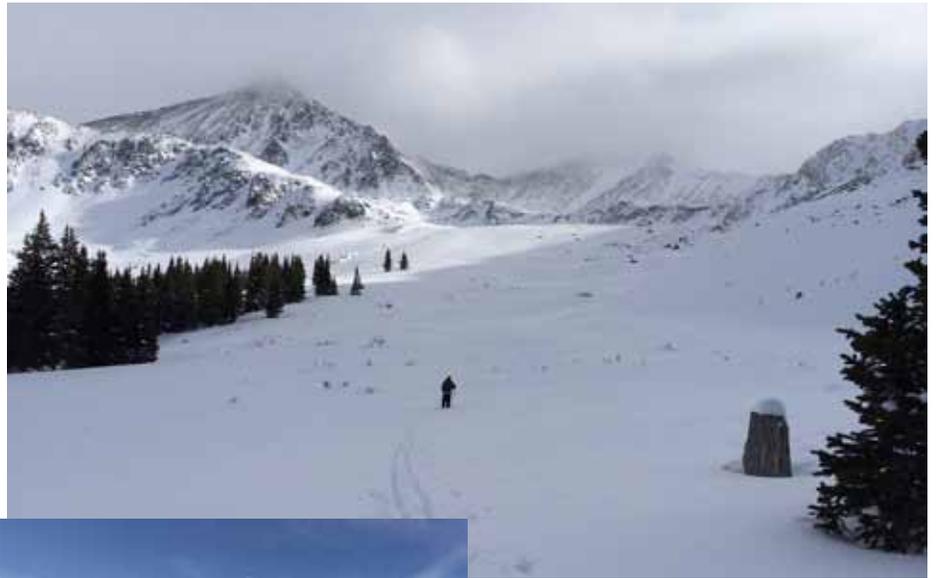
I like exercising outdoors, and I love experiencing nature in the mountains. Many of us enjoy summer hiking for just those reasons. Finding a quiet high country trail in the Winter can enhance the exhilaration of breaking a sweat with a great view. With just a little more planning, warm clothes and snowshoes or skis, we don't have to wait until May or June for our next outing!

When people hear that I enjoy backcountry skiing, they often ask if that is the same thing as crosscountry skiing. They surely are related terms, but are usually used in different ways. Backcountry skiing refers to skiing done outside of ski resort areas, and without their accompanying lifts, well-marked trails and services. Crosscountry skiing refers more often to a type of skiing and gear, rather than where it is done. Traditional cross-country skiing, also called Nordic skiing, involves relatively long and narrow skis used in a classic "kick-and-glide" motion to cover ground. Textured ski bottoms have largely replaced waxes to provide grip on uphill terrain.

There is a general trade-off in which the better a ski is at gliding in a straight line; the more difficult it is to turn. So accessing the steeper and more varied terrain of our Rocky Mountains with traditional cross-country skis can be overly difficult for many.

In recent times, it has become much more common to access mountainous winter terrain with wider shaped skis, very much like those we use for alpine skiing at resorts. The bigger differences in gear appear in the bindings, which must allow free movement of the heel away from the ski, and the use of climbing "skins", actually a fabric strip attached to the bottom of the ski. These two features allow for uphill travel. One more basic distinction to make among the bindings used, involves the downhill action. Bindings which leave the heel unattached for downhill require learning the Telemark technique of turning, while other bindings lock the heel to the ski for descents, allowing for the same turning motion familiar to downhill skiers. A general term for the latter type of binding is Alpine Touring.

Some examples of popular Front Range destinations for backcountry skiing include Vail Pass, Berthoud Pass, and Butler Gulch/Jones Pass (accessed from Hwy 40 just as you begin up Berthoud Pass from the I-70 side).



BELOW: Different boot, binding, and ski options for backcountry skiing. From back to front: Cross Country, Telemark, and Alpine Touring.



Are you interested in learning more about this sport? At a minimum, one must find others to go with on backcountry winter outings, and do enough homework on trail selection and weather conditions to avoid avalanche risk and maintain personal safety.

Here are some excellent resources for further exploration:

- **Colorado Mountain Club** and the **Colorado Mountain School** offer relevant classes and outings from beginner to expert.
- **www.wildsnow.com**. This richly informative website is operated by Colorado's Founding Father of Backcountry skiing, Lou Dawson.
- **Front Range Ski Mountaineering** - Use tabs "about" then "resources" to find an excellent list of trail books, weather and avalanche info, and other online links.
- **Colorado Avalanche Information Center** is the authoritative site for backcountry weather and avalanche forecasts.

DELICIOUS RECIPE

Roasted Winter Root Vegetables

Ingredients:

- 2 cups sliced sweet potato (about 1 large)
- 1 1/2 cups coarsely chopped peeled turnip (about 2 medium)
- 1 1/2 cups coarsely chopped parsnip (about 2 medium)
- 1 1/2 cups sliced carrots (about 2 medium)
- 1/4 cup honey (tupelo if available)
- 1/4 cup chopped parsley
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 1/2 teaspoon kosher or sea salt
- Cracked black pepper to taste
- 4 shallots, halved
- Cooking spray
- Rosemary for garnish



Preparation:

1. Preheat oven to 450°.
2. Combine all ingredients, except the cooking spray in a large bowl, toss to coat.
3. Place vegetable mixture on a jelly-roll pan coated with cooking spray.
4. Bake at 450° for 35 minutes or until vegetables are tender and begin to brown, stirring every 15 minutes.

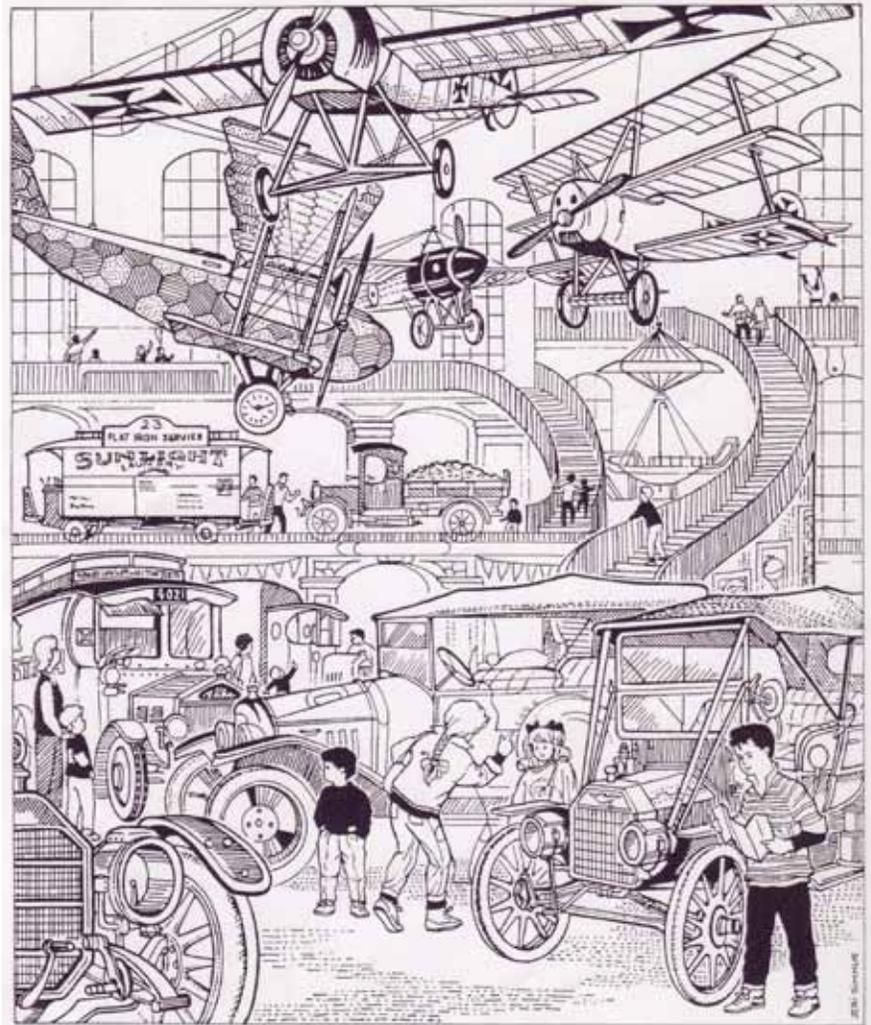
FUN AND GAMES

Fun Hidden Picture Game: Transportation Museum

With the help of a museum, it's easy and fun to learn about life in the past. In this museum picture there are **twenty hidden objects**.

Can you find a...

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> pocket watch | <input type="checkbox"/> nail |
| <input type="checkbox"/> golf club | <input type="checkbox"/> paintbrush |
| <input type="checkbox"/> flag | <input type="checkbox"/> cowboy boot |
| <input type="checkbox"/> diamond ring | <input type="checkbox"/> ladder |
| <input type="checkbox"/> megaphone | <input type="checkbox"/> spinning top |
| <input type="checkbox"/> skate | <input type="checkbox"/> envelope |
| <input type="checkbox"/> umbrella | <input type="checkbox"/> vase |
| <input type="checkbox"/> sailboat | <input type="checkbox"/> scrub brush |
| <input type="checkbox"/> comb | <input type="checkbox"/> table |
| <input type="checkbox"/> needle | <input type="checkbox"/> top hat |





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