MC Roy Albiston opens the 18th of August meeting of Pattaya City Expats Club at the Amari’s Tavern by the Sea, by welcoming new members and visitors.

Find out that you have a health problem before it is too late to cure it. In essence, this was the message to the Pattaya City Expats Club on Sunday, August 18, from Gavin Waddell, International Marketing Executive from Phayathai Hospital Sriracha. He spoke on the importance of physical checkups and what all those tests are telling the doctors and us about our body’s condition. He also brought along a nurse to do blood pressure checks for those that wanted them; an important check that should be done periodically as high blood pressure is known as the “silent killer” as there are no symptoms and over time it can cause conditions that may prove fatal.

One test in any basic physical examinations is the chest X-ray. Gavin noted it is used to diagnose conditions affecting the chest, heart, lungs, and nearby structures. It can aide in identifying many conditions such as Pneumonia and congestive heart failure. The Electrocardiogram (commonly referred to as an EKG or ECG) is another common test. It measures electrical waves from the heart. A doctor can identify abnormalities in the graphic presentation of these waves which may indicate the need for more tests such as an exercise stress test to determine if you have a serious heart condition.

Another test is the ultrasound of the whole abdomen. Gavin pointed out its advantages including it is non-invasive and no advance preparation is usually needed. Doctors can learn a lot about the condition of important organs such as the liver, gall bladder, pancreas, and abdominal tissue. Gavin did note that ultrasound waves do not travel through air or gas, thus it is not very useful for examining the colon or bowels. Another test, the colonoscopy, is used to examine these...
Gavin described the chest X-ray, ECG, ultrasound and blood tests, and their role in early detection of abnormalities. He talked about the cells of the blood and their functions, in this case platelets and their function in clotting the blood when bleeding occurs.

organisms and is usually obtained separate from the basic checkup.

He mentioned that the urine examination is important as there are hundreds of compounds that can be found in urine and it can tell the doctor a lot about your current condition. By checking the color, clarity, and odor of the urine, it can disclose many things about your body. A multitude of things affect urine color, including fluid balance, diet, medicines, and diseases. How dark or light the color indicate how much water is in it, thus evidencing whether you are dehydrated. Further, urine is normally clear. Bacteria and blood along with other things can make urine look cloudy; thus indicating infection or other condition in need of treatment. Also, urine does not smell very strong. Some diseases cause a change in the odor of urine. For example, an infection with E. coli bacteria can cause a bad odor, while diabetes or starvation can cause a sweet, fruity odor.

Another important test is a blood test referred to as a CBC (complete blood count). Gavin explained how the blood is made up of red blood cells, white blood cells, and platelets. He described what each of these do in the body and how higher or lower than normal count can lead to diagnosis of infection, anemia, and other conditions. He then described two other blood tests that are important. One is for cholesterol and triglycerides and the other is for kidney function. The first of these can tell the doctor if you are at high risk for heart artery disease such as build up of plaque that can block blood flow to the heart; thus indicating a need for change in diet or medication to reduce the risk.

The BUN test is a kidney function test. BUN stands for blood urea nitrogen. Urea nitrogen is what forms when protein breaks down.
PCEC were fortunate to have Gavin Waddell, International Marketing Executive from Phyathai Hospital Sriracha (also a PCEC member) stand in for the scheduled doctor who was unable to attend due to an urgent operation. Gavin spoke of the importance of regular checkups, and the conditions that can be diagnosed with checkups. Here he discusses the role of the ECG in diagnosis.

Gavin explained that this test can be done to measure the amount of urea nitrogen in the blood. Higher-than-normal levels may be due to congestive heart failure, excessive protein levels in the gastrointestinal tract, gastrointestinal bleeding, heart attack, kidney failure, shock, and urinary tract obstruction. Lower-than-normal levels may be due to liver failure, low protein diet, malnutrition, and over-hydration.

A Creatinine blood test is another means of checking for liver function. Creatinine is a breakdown product of Creatinine Phosphate in muscle, and is usually produced at a fairly constant rate by the body. Creatinine is removed from the body entirely by the kidneys. If kidney function is abnormal, Creatinine levels will increase in the blood because less Creatinine is released through your urine. As with the BUN test, higher or lower than normal levels can indicate a number of adverse health conditions.

In conclusion, Gavin wanted to reiterate the importance of physical checkups. They can often identify conditions that can be treated before they become so severe they are untreatable or more difficult to treat.

After Gavin’s presentation Master of Ceremonies Roy Albiston brought everyone up to date on upcoming events, then called on Tony Heron to conduct the interesting and informative open forum where questioned are asked and answered about Expat living in Thailand.

To learn more about the Pattaya City Expats Club activities or other issues affecting Expat living in Thailand, visit the Club’s website at: www.pattayacityexpatsclub.com.