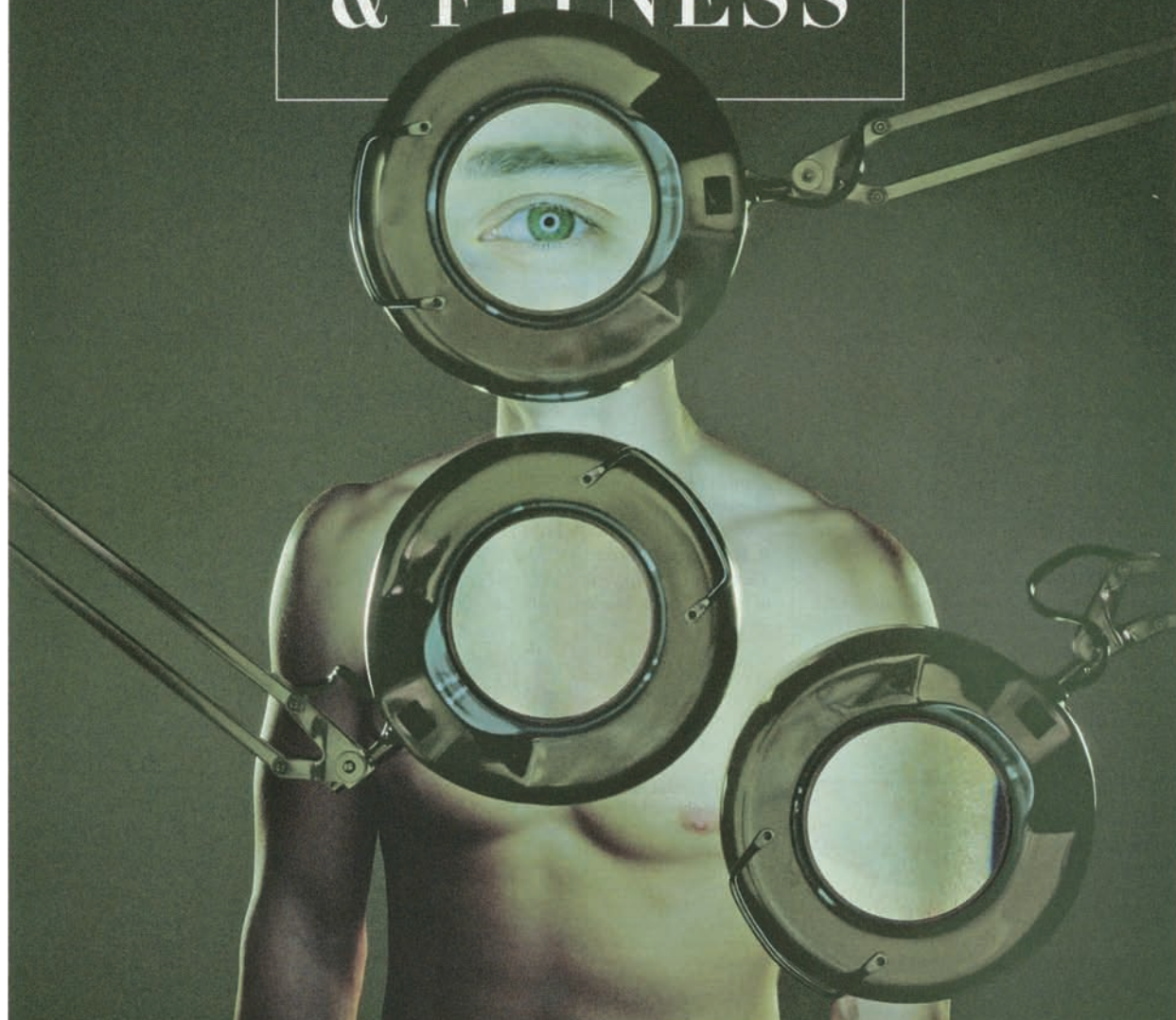


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FIT FOR A PRESIDENT

A Los Angeles clinic is providing patients with comprehensive physical exams as if the free world depended on their health. by JAMIE BECKMAN

MOST GUYS LEAVE THEIR ANNUAL PHYSICALS feeling unfulfilled, and it has nothing to do with the rubber glove treatment. The yearly speed date with the doctor always raises one overwhelming question: Is the standard 15-minute cough-and-say-ah exam enough to diagnose any ticking time bombs inside your body? One Los Angeles-based clinic, Concierge Medicine L.A.,

doesn't think so, which is why this boutique medical organization, which treats many of Hollywood's elite, has begun offering clients the Presidential Physical, the very same extensive checkup that the president of the United States receives each year.

"We want to have a very high standard of care," says medical director Dr. Raphael Darvish. "Normal doctors' offices don't have the time to provide a detailed exam, because they're not reimbursed for it."

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Concierge isn't typically reimbursed by insurance companies either (they regard the care as excessive), which is why patients have to shell out a cardiac arrest-inducing \$1,400 for the extra attention. The exam, which lasts an entire day, includes 40-plus tests and features radiation-free ultrasounds to ensure organs such as the heart and prostate are functioning properly, an eye exam, a full-body dermatological exam to check for cancer, a treadmill test to gauge cardiovascular function, and several obscure-sounding procedures like a fiber-optic nasolaryngoscopy, in which a tiny camera is inserted through the nose and aimed at your vocal cords to check for polyps (common in public speakers).

"We get to check everything that we're taught to check in medical school," says Darvish. "We also talk about wellness and strategies patients can implement in their life that will hopefully translate into a longer one." Examples of Darvish's helpful hints include recommending that patients take certain pain relievers on a full stomach (doing otherwise can cause ulcers) and request digital dental X-rays rather than standard ones to reduce radiation exposure by up to 80 percent.

Three separate general medicine doctors review your test results, compare opinions, reach a consensus, and offer their thoughts, essentially providing patients with second and third opinions right on the spot.

Getting an exhaustive physical like the Presidential Physical isn't necessary every year, says Dr. Joseph Stubbs, president-elect of the American College of Physicians. Going every two to three years should suffice for the average healthy guy. Unless you suddenly find yourself sitting in the Oval Office.