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MAGAZINE

Charlotte/South Sarasota Edition - Monthly

December 2014

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RTR Urology welcomes Dr. Carl G. Klutke Board Certified Urologist-Fellowship trained in Female Urology, Female Urologic Surgery and Voiding Dysfunction for Males and Females

Carl G. Klutke is a Board Certified Urologic Surgeon, a member of the American Urologic Association and the International Continence Society. He received his medical education at the University of Michigan and completed his Surgical Internship and Urologic Residency at the Henry Ford Hospital in Detroit, Michigan. He subsequently completed a Fellowship in Female Urology and Urodynamics at the University of California at Los Angeles. Following Fellowship, Dr. Klutke's career brought him to Washington University in St. Louis, Missouri where he attained the academic rank of Professor of Surgery in the Division of Urology. At Washington University he was the Director of the Female Urology and Incontinence section. He also served as Chief of Staff at the Barnes West County Hospital.

Dr. Klutke has specific expertise in the field of Voiding Dysfunction, Female Urology and Urodynamics. He has published over 100 journal articles and written numerous textbook chapters on these topics as well as the surgical and non-surgical treatments of these conditions. He was listed in Best Doctors in America, 2005-2013 (Best Doctors, Inc.) and America's Top Doctors, 2003-2012 (Castle Connolly Medical Ltd.) "In medical school, I thoroughly enjoyed taking care of both urologic patients as well as gynecologic patients, ultimately I found Urology was where I wanted to be but I still liked to manage gynecologic conditions." Dr. Klutke sought out specialized training in "Female Urology" after his Urology Residency where he could combine his interest in both areas. "My Urology residency gave me the tools to treat urologic conditions ranging from cancer of the urinary tract to conditions of erectile dysfunction and benign prostate issues. The further training in fellowship has allowed me to understand and treat complex conditions that are more specific to the female patient such as incontinence and prolapse as well."

Dr. Klutke was born in Detroit and raised in Dearborn Michigan. As a youth, Dr. Klutke was heavily involved in the sport of Fencing and was Michigan state champion as well as captain of two NCAA championship winning teams. Presently, in his leisure time he enjoys cycling, tennis and spending time with his wife Britta and their three children.

Dr. Klutke will join RTR in November 2014

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Dr. Noël Crosby
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Noël has been in the audiology field for over 25 years. Having received her doctorate in Audiology from UF, Noël has applied that knowledge to her work in many areas of hearing, including clinical, manufacturing and education.

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Dr. Debbie Marks
is now back at The Animal Clinic. Her special interests include wellness and geriatric care, internal medicine, and dentistry.

Dr. John Rand
is a Punta Gorda native and UF graduate. His special interests include clinical pathology, exotic animal medicine, and diagnostic imaging.

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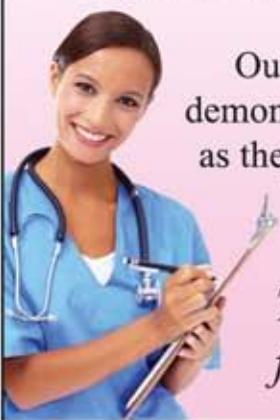
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THE FRACTURE THAT MAY CAUSE YOU STRESS!

By Myles Rubin Samotin, MD - Board Certified Orthopaedic Surgeon, Fellowship Trained in Foot and Ankle

You may have heard the term stress fracture, but just what is it and how does one get it? A stress fracture is exactly what it states it is, a fracture of the bone caused by "stress" to the bone. It is a "microfracture" of the bone, similar to a crack in the concrete of your driveway. It occurs due to several causes, but most of the time due to the muscles that support the body become overly fatigued and the stress transfers to the bone, sometimes resulting in a fracture.

The people who get this fracture are people who either do repetitive exercises, (people who constantly are running, or doing consistent exercises that over-exert the muscles) or people who have problems with bone quality or density, due to medical problems, poor nutrition, or osteoporosis. The muscles are not strong enough and the bone fractures. As you can imagine, these stress fractures rarely involve upper extremities, since we don't put pressure on these bones on a consistent basis. These fractures almost always involve the tibia (shinbone) or one of the many bones of the foot, many times involving a metatarsal bone.

Women are much more likely to suffer these, since estrogen, which helps support bones, tends to decrease as women age. Long distance runners, tri-athletes are very susceptible to these fractures, BUT, many "snowbirds" will suffer from these when they first come down to Florida, since they will start a strong exercise program without properly building up the supportive muscles.

The symptoms of stress fractures are relatively simple: PAIN. This pain will increase as you continue putting pressure and stress on the affected bone, and will subside when the bone can rest.

The first thing in proper diagnosis is to see the proper specialist who can give a correct diagnosis. Since the bones associated with stress fractures involve mainly the foot and ankle, then a foot and ankle specialist, with

orthopedic experience is the proper medical person to see. He will order the proper tests, to diagnose the stress fracture. Most normal X-Rays will NOT show any fracture, and a person may be misdiagnosed because of this. Special tests such as bone scans and MRI's can make the proper diagnosis.

When you see your orthopedic foot and ankle specialist, he will order the proper tests and will make the diagnosis of a stress fracture. He will rest your leg by placing it into a walking boot to give it the chance to heal. The most important thing to remember during this time of rest is that you MUST give it enough time for the fracture to heal. Several weeks of rest may be necessary. If you start to use the bone too early, the fracture may not have totally healed and another stress fracture may result. Therefore, care must be given to properly let the stress fracture mend. All patients must remember that the BONE IS FRACTURED. Give it time to heal.

Anytime that a lower extremity has been consistently painful over a period of time, the diagnosis of stress fracture cannot be ruled out. You should seek your orthopedic foot and ankle specialist. I am the only fellowship trained orthopaedic foot and ankle specialist, with clinical experience of over 12 years in the Naples area. I believe my combination of extensive education and clinical experience along with willingness to use new techniques in a state-of-the-art office allows me to give the best possible care to ALL your foot and ankle needs. I know that I can give you the orthopaedic foot and ankle distinction.

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What will you *RESOLVE* to do in 2015?

By Joseph Magnant, MD, FACS

As each New Year dawns, many of us spend the weeks or months preceding the turning of the calendar contemplating potential New Year resolutions. Most resolutions can be categorized into discrete compartments. Spiritual/religious, professional development, strengthening and renewing family and other relationships, and improving our health are the top ones I generally consider. From a professional and educational perspective I have resolved to renew and further my commitment to the education of the general public and physician community regarding the wide variety of presentations of correctable superficial venous insufficiency. We have extended the opportunity for patients to be screened for venous disease by offering an online interactive vein screening questionnaire, e-vein screening, accessible to the public from the home page of our website, weknowveins.com.

It is estimated that 35-40 million adult Americans suffer from significant superficial venous insufficiency, or venous reflux disease, the majority of whom do not present with ulceration or external bleeding as their initial complaint. In addition to these more urgent presentations, many patients present with other symptoms such as painful varicose veins, skin discoloration, and a host of other symptoms related to and caused by leaky veins including swollen legs, restless legs syndrome, nocturnal leg cramps and frequent nighttime urination. Until the year 2000, the only treatments for venous insufficiency (manifest as large varicose veins, skin ulcerations or bleeding varicose veins) were compression hose or vein stripping. Due to the invasive and painful nature of vein stripping, surgical treatment for venous insufficiency was limited to patients with recurrent ulcerations around the ankles or varicose vein related bleeding episodes.

Endovenous closure, which was introduced in 2000, has significantly changed the landscape for patients with venous insufficiency. Since introduced, endovenous closure (sealing of the leaky veins with a small catheter) has been used successfully to treat hundreds of thousands of patients, relieving their disabling symptoms prior to developing venous ulcers or bleeding. The availability of this minimally invasive and very effective procedure for patients with symptomatic venous insufficiency has resulted in a surge in the number of patients being referred to Vein Specialists for venous insufficiency evaluation. Sources of referrals include primary care physicians, specialists in orthopedics, cardiology, podiatry, dermatology, neurology, urology and others, as well as direct referrals from satisfied patients who have had the procedure. Since the superficial venous system (rather than the deep system) is responsible for the majority of patients' problems with advanced signs and symptoms of venous insufficiency, it seems only appropriate to offer patients thorough venous evaluation and definitive therapy earlier in the course of the disease process rather than making them suffer the pain and discomfort of untreated venous insufficiency. Complications such as bleeding, ulceration and cellulitis require frequent emergency room visits and hospitalizations. The goal should be the avoidance of these serious complications. I would like to highlight a number of interesting patients that made a resolution to make their leg vein problems a priority and who were treated in the past year.

K.S. is a 66 year old female who was referred for evaluation of a non-healing and painful left lateral ankle ulcer which had been present for 12 (yes... twelve) **YEARS**. Previous evaluation

had included compression hose, elevation, extensive wound care center treatments and previous vein evaluation. She and her husband made a **RESOLUTION** to obtain a second opinion to see if anything else could be done for her as she had failed to make significant progress. Ultrasound revealed severe superficial insufficiency of the great saphenous vein, a few connecting (perforating) veins as well as a cluster of varicose veins in the margin of the ulceration. She underwent staged treatment with endovenous ablation (sealing) of the main superficial veins and the connecting veins followed by ultrasound directed foam injection sclerotherapy of the marginal veins. Her ulcer is now well healed and her pain resolved and she has a beaming smile on her face as she can go about her days without pain and without the burden of caring for an open wound and without the additional infection risk an open skin wound poses.



C. D. is a 58 year old female who presented through a podiatrist (the 8th physician she had seen for her legs) for evaluation of venous insufficiency. She had been told by a number of physicians that she had "fat and swollen legs" but that since she did not have any visible varicose veins bulging out of the skin, **Venous Insufficiency** was not a consideration. Clinically, her legs were swollen, red, tender and extremely tight to the point that she could not

perform activities of daily living over the previous nine months. She **RESOLVED** to search further for a curable cause and her podiatrist, Dr. Doerr, referred her for venous evaluation. Her ultrasound subsequently confirmed severe superficial venous insufficiency. Other symptoms included severe leg cramps and nighttime urination. Endovenous closure was performed on both legs, 2 weeks apart and she returned for her post-op follow-up, smiling from ear to ear, with ankle bones she could actually see (as the swelling had resolved) and remarked that she was wearing shoes (as opposed to flip flops) for the first time in nine months.

M.T. is a 52 year male whose wife researched the internet to see what might be causing the severe swelling, skin discoloration and ulcerations of his lower legs. He had noted varicose veins and leg swelling for many years prior and had seen a number of primary care physicians who were not familiar with presentations of venous insufficiency **other than varicose veins**. His wife had **RESOLVED** to educate herself through the internet and find the right specialist for her husband. Ultrasound evaluation confirmed severe bilateral great saphenous vein insufficiency and he underwent endovenous ablation with rapid improvement and subsequent closure of the ulcer within one month of his procedure. Years of open ulcers, daily wound care, severe swelling of the legs, nighttime urination 3-4 times per night and daytime narcolepsy are now all things of the past.



Leaders in Vein Treatment

The modern evaluation and treatment of venous insufficiency is the singular focus of Dr. Magnant and his professional and compassionate staff at Vein Specialists at Royal Palm Square in Fort Myers, FL. He can be contacted either by calling **239-694-8346** or through his website, www.weknowveins.com, where patients can submit their request for an appointment. He encourages readers to review his website which is specifically written for his patients and also take the time to view his photo gallery. Venous disease is not a laughing matter, but sometimes it is only through humor that some of us are motivated to act.

S. G. is a 41 year old mother of two who underwent endovenous ablation of her left anterior accessory and great saphenous veins as well as varicose vein removal through two tiny incisions. Her procedure was performed under local anesthesia in less than one hour and she returned to work in 24 hours. Her **RESOLUTION** to find the cause of her swollen achy legs and varicose veins took her to Vein Specialists for her initial evaluation three months prior. She underwent ultrasound evaluation which confirmed severe leakiness in the above veins and she completed a three month trial of compression hose and elevation with improvement of her symptoms. She desired a long term, definitive therapy for her venous insufficiency rather than the less practical, ineffective compression hose option.

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So...in 2014, will you RESOLVE to address your leg complaints? RESOLVE yourself to live without swollen achy legs, tight and red legs, nocturnal leg cramps and urination, or restless legs syndrome.

RESOLVE to have your large bulging veins evaluated earlier for the underlying cause and possible treatment options rather than waiting for the veins to clot off on an airplane or car ride.

RESOLVE to minimize your risk of deep vein thrombosis by seeking evaluation of your swollen legs for deep vein clots or leaking veins.

RESOLVE to empower and educate yourself through all available resources, health screenings, educational articles and materials or internet resources and be persistent in your search for the cause of and cure for your leg problems.

Our collective **RESOLVE** in medicine should be to improve the well being and functional quality of life of our patients by offering evidence based treatments directed at prevention of the end complications of disease processes. Endovenous ablation is the treatment ticket to the improvement of millions of Americans being held back by the lifestyle limiting symptoms of venous insufficiency.

1 1510 Royal Palm Square Blvd., Suite 101, Fort Myers, Florida

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CARING FOR THE CAREGIVER

How Does Caregiving Put Caregivers at Risk?

By Lynn Schneider, Director of Community Relations, Park Royal Hospital

Having a spouse who is battling a serious illness can bring about a multitude of emotions. Estimates have shown that families provide 80% of the long-term care for chronically ill individuals in the United States. When someone has a spouse who is suffering from a serious illness, he or she often finds him or herself taking on the role of primary caregiver. These people want to be there for their loved ones in their time of need, but they do not always realize the immense amount of physical and psychological stress that they are imposing on themselves by doing so.

Studies have shown that caregivers consistently report experiencing greater feelings of depression and other mental health conditions than do individuals who are not providing care for loved ones. Additionally, research has shown that between 40% and 70% of caregivers display clinically significant symptoms of depression, with approximately half of those individuals meeting diagnostic criteria for a clinical diagnosis of depression. When caregivers are suffering from depression, they are highly susceptible to experiencing other emotional and behavioral disturbances. These individuals are more likely to experience the onset of coexisting mental health conditions, such as an anxiety disorder. Additionally, people who are depressed and who are responsible for providing care to their spouse may find that they can experience a sense relief from their own symptoms by using drugs and/or alcohol.

Caregivers also consistently report feeling extreme levels of stress as a direct result of having to provide ongoing care for their loved ones. In many cases, in addition to caring for their spouses, these individuals are also responsible for financially supporting their loved ones. These people often have to maintain steady, full-time employment in order to keep their families financially afloat. In such instances, these people have no choice but to work full-time, only to then come home and once again take on the role of caregiver. The amount of

pressure that these individuals are under can understandably elicit ever-increasing levels of stress. They ultimately find that they do not have any time to relax, which leads to their feeling overwhelmed and exhausted. Not only does this affect them psychologically, often increasing their feelings of depression and anxiety, but it can also begin to negatively impact them physically. The presence of chronic stress, in addition to lacking the ability to rest, can ultimately result in the onset of physical illnesses. Yet, despite becoming physically ill, the responsibilities that these individuals have placed on them do not cease, meaning that they continue to provide care for their loved one. The physical strain of continuing to provide care despite being sick can further perpetuate the feelings of stress, depression, and anxiety.

Another trial that caregivers face is that they often begin to question their own ability to provide care to their loved one. When they are consistently caring for their spouse and do not see any positive results from that caregiving, they can easily begin to feel as though they are failing their loved one. Now, in addition to the stress, depression, and anxiety that these individuals experience from the actual task of caregiving, they are faced with decreasing feelings of self-worth and uncertainty as they doubt their own effectiveness at helping their spouse. Such feelings ultimately exacerbate the already present feelings of emotional distress.



Additionally, as caregivers witness the suffering that their loved one is going through, their own level of distress is heightened. They may begin to blame themselves that they are unable to relieve their loved one's suffering.

So what can be done to help alleviate some of the pressure that caregivers are under? Perhaps the biggest thing for these individuals to remember is that there is no shame in asking for help. Because they are caring for their spouse, they may feel as though it is solely their responsibility. However, seeking out support from other family members or other individuals in your loved one's life can make a monumental difference in regards to alleviating some of the stress that they are under. Additionally, it is imperative that caregivers take care of themselves. If symptoms of anxiety and depression are present, seeking treatment from a mental health professional is the most beneficial way of addressing such concerns.

Park Royal Hospital, a premier provider of behavioral healthcare services, offers a number of treatment options for individuals who may be suffering from the distressing emotional symptoms that may arise as a result of being a loved one's primary caregiver. With a holistic approach to treatment, the highly trained and qualified staff at Park Royal can help these individuals address their concerns, find relief from their distress, and ultimately work towards rebuilding their sense of self-worth, allowing them to be the best help, support, and source of caregiving for their loved one.



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KNEE PAIN DOES NOT MEAN YOU NEED KNEE REPLACEMENT SURGERY

By Physicians Rehabilitation

A person with knee pain knows how often it gets in the way of doing the things they want and need to do in daily life. Because the knee is a weight bearing joint, knee pain affects almost everything we do that requires mobility, including those things most of us have usually taken for granted.

For many, knee pain makes it hurt to walk, stand, stoop, get out of a chair, or to go up or down stairs. Additionally, routine activities of living, work, social and recreational activities are often inhibited, restricted or avoided because of knee pain.

If you have been suffering from constant or intermittent knee pain that just won't go away no matter how much ibuprofen you take, don't worry – there is another option.

If you have tried other treatments and experienced little to no relief, you may still be a candidate for our treatment program. Call (239) 687-2165 to schedule a no-cost, no-obligation consultation today!

At Physicians Rehabilitation, it's very important to understand that we are not just addressing knee pain. Our goal is to give you the best chance we possibly can of Preventing Knee Replacement Surgery in the future, which is what knee arthritis frequently evolves into if left undetected and unaddressed.

For this reason, we encourage you to schedule an appointment to determine if you are a candidate for the Hyalgan treatment for knee arthritis. You can always have more radical procedures performed later, if necessary. However, with knee replacement surgery, once done, there is no turning back to a more conservative approach. Knee replacement surgery is indeed necessary for some people with extreme conditions that Hyalgan is unable to help, but as we have seen with many of our patients... A Total Knee Replacement is a Very Extreme Measure To Take without considering all your options for a condition as common as knee arthritis.

What are Hyalgan Injections?

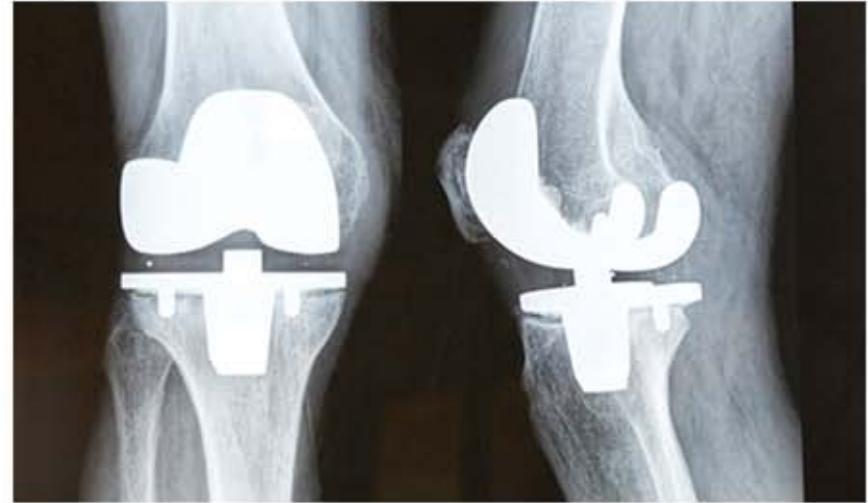
Hyalgan injections treat knee osteoarthritis. Hyaluronic Acid (Hyalgan) is a natural substance extracted from rooster combs and purified to mimic the lubricating substances that occur naturally in the joint called synovial fluid. When Hyalgan is injected into the knee, it provides replacement for diseased synovial fluid, which is the cause of your pain. Hyalgan specifically targets the osteoarthritis in your knee, unlike over the counter oral medications or non-steroidal inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs) that affect all parts of your body.

What's the process?

It's a very easy and quick process. Our Doctors will inject Hyalgan directly into your knee joint using a high tech medical device called a Fluoroscope to pinpoint the exact location intended with extreme accuracy, which provides the best possible outcome from each injection. Then, an injection of dye confirms needle placement to ensure that the pain relieving drug Hyalgan reaches the knee capsule where it bonds with the naturally occurring joint fluid to create a lubricating and cushioning layer. That's why if you have tried any type of pain reduction injection elsewhere without success, we may still be able to assist you as your original injection may have never wound up in just the right place. Most patients compare the treatment to getting a flu shot and report little pain or discomfort.

When will I feel results?

Most feel an immediate reduction in pain and return to normal activities in weeks.



Avoid Unnecessary Surgery! This FDA-approved treatment is proven to relieve knee pain, while eliminating the need for surgery. Treatment is safe, easy and covered by most insurance companies, including Medicare.

Will my insurance cover this treatment?

Yes, most major insurances and Medicare will pay for this treatment.

What are other people saying about it?

"My knee feels great. I had already had a total knee replacement and wanted to try something rather than go through another painful surgery. After completing the program, I can now dance again which I have not done in years, and my lifestyle is on its way back to normal!" - Elizabeth B.

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Speech, More Than Just Talk

Most people associate speech therapy with the ability or lack thereof to speak, and therapy associated with that. Speech rehabilitation is only a small part of what speech therapist do. In fact, speech-language therapists have many responsibilities in acute-care settings, medical inpatient rehabilitation, outpatient rehabilitation and rehabilitation in the home care setting.

Speech Therapist work closely with physician specialists (ENTs, neurologists, neurosurgeons, physiatrists, internists, family practitioners) to diagnose a range of problems, and initiate treatment. Speech Therapist also play a role in hearing conservation. They are qualified to screen patients' hearing to determine if a referral to an audiologist is necessary.

One of the more common clinical uses of speech therapy, especially in the homecare setting is in the diagnosis of neurological conditions. Speech Therapist are often asked to evaluate both cognitive (thinking, knowing, perceiving) and physiological (physical) problems. The way in which a person speaks and uses language reveals a great deal about thought-processing skills, memory deficits, and the ability to focus attention. Deficits in these areas can indicate brain injury, stroke, Alzheimer's disease, Parkinson's disease, and a host of other neurologic conditions. Because Speech Therapist are trained to identify unusual patterns in speech, their assessment can be extremely important to an accurate diagnosis and an effective treatment plan.

Speech Therapy is highly effective with those who have difficulty in swallowing. Difficulty in swallowing is common among patients who have suffered a stroke or who have other neurological diseases, like multiple sclerosis and amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS or Lou Gehrig's disease). Speech Therapist use a variety of diagnostic tools to detect swallowing problems and treat patients to overcome swallowing difficulties associated with their disease.

One of the most under utilized uses for speech therapy in Home Care is for cognitive uses. Often patients have difficulty retrieving words, sequencing activities, and understanding what they hear and



what they read. Cognitive therapy is designed to provide clients with strategies to improve their thinking skills and their every-day functioning.

At Nurse On Call we utilize speech therapist for more than just talking, we utilize their expertise for all forms of communication. The ability to communicate is more than just talking. It involves listening, understanding, reading, and writing. For communication to make sense it also involves being able to think clearly and remember information. Speech Therapy is covered at 100% to those who meet the Medicare guidelines for home health, and we have a therapist for that!

For more information on speech therapy and other home health services, please call your local Nurse On Call branch.



941.627.1650

HHA: 299993683



Where's the Nearest Restroom?

Dr. Carl Klutke

Many people don't realize how common urinary incontinence (UI) and overactive bladder (OAB) are. In fact, these two conditions are among the top 10 chronic conditions effecting American women. For millions of Americans, incontinence is not just a medical problem. It is a problem that also affects emotional, psychological and social well-being. Many people are afraid to participate in normal daily activities that might take them too far from a toilet. Unfortunately, many of those with UI or OAB suffer in silence unnecessarily, and choose not to participate in various activities which ultimately prevents them from living the life they want to lead. Incontinence issues oftentimes leave sufferers feeling embarrassed and many are under the false presumption that these conditions are a natural part of the aging process and that there is no effective treatment available. When in fact, incontinence is successfully managed and treated in nearly everyone who seeks help. The following information should help you discuss this condition and what treatments are available to you with your urologist.

Incontinence occurs because of problems with muscles and nerves that help to hold or release urine. The body stores urine – water and wastes removed by the kidneys – in the bladder, a balloon-like organ. The bladder connects to the urethra, the tube through which urine leaves the body. Some people may lose a few drops of urine while running or coughing. Others may feel a strong, sudden urge to urinate just before losing a large amount of urine; many experience both symptoms.



A Division of 21st Century Oncology

842 Sunset Lake Boulevard, Suite 403
Venice, FL 34292



Women experience UI twice as often as men. Pregnancy and childbirth, menopause, and the structure of the female urinary tract account for this difference. But both women and men can become incontinent from neurologic injury, birth defects, stroke, multiple sclerosis, and physical problems associated with aging. But incontinence is not inevitable with age. UI is a medical problem with treatments and solutions. No single treatment works for everyone, but many women can find improvement without surgery.

There are various treatment lifestyle changes that can help manage incontinence. Being mindful of limiting your intake of things that tend to act as stimulants for the bladder (carbonated beverages, spicy foods, citrus, alcohol). Smoking and excess weight can cause incontinence; so quit smoking if you do and maintain a healthy weight. Eliminating caffeine intake two to three hours prior to bedtime can reduce incontinence during the night.

Other treatment options include Botox, kegel exercises, biofeedback, and tibial nerve stimulation. Botox can also be injected into the bladder

wall to increase bladder size and alleviate incontinence associated with uncontrolled frequency. When performed correctly, kegel exercises rehabilitate the pelvic floor muscles through isometric contractions. Biofeedback

uses instrumentation to provide information on how well the bladder is performing to control urgency incontinence, displayed in a form that the patient understands. Biofeedback bladder training plans, generally consists of 45 minute visits for six weeks. The tibial nerve may also be stimulated with a tiny needle connected to a low voltage to help manage incontinence.

In addition to the treatment methods discussed above, oftentimes medications are used, especially in those with urgency and frequency of urination. Stress incontinence (loss of urine with activity) is surgically corrected with outpatient 20-minute surgeries that use small incisions. These surgeries, known as "sling" procedures, utilize revolutionary artificial support tapes that compress and support the urethra to prevent leakage. Patients often resume normal activities in less than one week in most cases.

For more information please contact RTR Urology | (941) 485-3351 | www.rtrurology.com



Hearing Resources Part 3

By Dr. Noël Crosby, Au.D.

Another great tool for the hearing impaired is mental exercise that can improve the part of the brain that processes sound. This is even more important in today's world because recent studies from John Hopkins and the National Institute of Aging have linked hearing loss to dementia. These studies revealed that those people who experience severe hearing loss are 5 times more likely to develop dementia than those with normal hearing. Even mild hearing loss may double the risk of dementia. Treatment options may or may not help, but it only makes sense that the earlier you receive treatment for hearing loss can only lessen the chance that you may suffer from dementia later in your life. There is now more emphasis on diagnosing hearing loss earlier. Also, did you know that we hear in our brains and not in our ears? Sound is carried in waves to our eardrum, which then sends the message to the brain.

The brain processes the stimuli our ears hear. This is a simplistic description of a complex process, but that is basically how the sound is transmitted. This means that for us to process speech well, especially in crowded places with several simultaneous conversations being carried on around us, our brains must be strong and alert. Brains weakened by either age or disease and they cannot keep up with the constant stream of conversations. This has a profound effect on someone's ability to listen, hear, and understand. Many studies in recent years have demonstrated this correlation between a strong brain and good hearing. One of these studies, conducted by neuroscientists at the International Center for Hearing and Speech Research in Rochester, N.Y., has found that even patients with normal hearing may have trouble understanding a conversation because their brains are not agile enough. In other words, they have auditory processing issues, not necessarily hearing issues. When you go to a social gathering with many other people, there are always many conversations going on at the same time. People with hearing loss have to put in extra effort to refocus on each new speaker. This can be a frustrating and exhausting experience. It is fortunate for those whose auditory processing abilities have begun to

diminish that there is a way to maximize our brain-power, even as we age. It is called mental exercise. Just as our bodies need a good workout to stay healthy and strong, so do our brains. A joint US-Swiss study, found that computer-based tests that challenge the individual according to his or her ability may be just what is needed. Oticon, a major hearing aid company has now embraced the importance of brain fitness as a path to better hearing and understanding and has partnered with luminosity to promote brain fitness. The more that I learn about the link between a strong brain improving hearing, and better hearing decreasing the chance of dementia, has convinced me to exercise my brain. I can't say with certainty that I will never suffer from dementia and be driven out to the woods by my husband, but I can say that I will better my odds of this never happening.

A resource that is often overlooked are the many organizations that are available on-line and in communities that allow the hearing impaired to get together and share experiences and strategies with each other. These organizations keep their content up to date with the latest news of advancements in technology for the hard of hearing.

A national organization with local chapters is the Hearing Loss Association of America (HLAA). Their website is www.hearingloss.org. There is a Sarasota chapter that conducts regular monthly meetings that features expert speakers who share their knowledge on a variety of topics that concern the hearing impaired. The contact information for the Sarasota Chapter is www.HLAS.org or 941-706-4312.

The Alexander Graham Bell Association for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing is a national organization that provides information for the hearing impaired with an emphasis on hearing loss in children. Their website is www.listeningandspokenlanguage.org. This is a great resource for parents of a hearing impaired child.

The Better Hearing Institute provides a wealth of information about all aspects of living with and treating hearing loss. Their website is www.betterhearing.org.

The Association of Late-Deafened Adults is about communication and the acceptance of every deafened or hearing impaired individual. ALDAs official communication philosophy is "Whatever works! Their website is found at www.ALDA.org.

As an Audiologist, my advice to everyone with hearing loss or deafness is to embrace and use any resource available that can assist you in living your life successfully with your hearing loss.



PROFESSIONAL BIO

Dr. Noël Crosby, Au.D., owner and audiologist at Advanced Hearing Solutions in Englewood, FL is a licensed professional whose 26 year career has been devoted to helping people of all ages hear and understand more clearly. Dr. Crosby received her BS and MS degrees from FSU and her Doctorate in Audiology from UF. Her credibility as an authority grew during her tenure as the Director of Audiology at the Silverstein Institute in Sarasota, FL from 1991-1998. Today, in addition to managing a successful audiology practice, Dr. Crosby is involved in creating hearing loss awareness through her jewelry and accessory company AuDBling.com. She has served and is serving on various professional boards and committees and was president of the Florida Academy of Audiology in 2000 and 2010. She has been married to Michael for 23 years and has one daughter.

For more information contact Noël's office at 941-474-8393 or you can visit her website at www.advancedhearingsolutions.net.

Advanced Hearing Solutions
Where Better Hearing Happens

Safety First

Contrary to what Hollywood portrays, aging can be a wonderful thing. Getting to see our children grow up into mature adults and live out their goals is a very rewarding process. One of the main purposes on this earth, besides our own happiness, is to pass our knowledge and wisdom to the next generation. "Leave this place better than we found it" is a great slogan to live by. However, as we age, even simple tasks may become more daunting and even risky to our health.

Although moving to an assisted living facility can be beneficial to you and your family, it is usually viewed as the last resort. Most people prefer to stay in their own home for as long as possible. Making the home safe for you or an elderly relative can help extend a lifestyle that is both familiar and comfortable. Sometimes it is hard to come to terms with difficult facts, but the number one cause of death for seniors is falling. A broken hip bone can have a difficult time healing due to the age of the individual; which can lead to further complications. In order to keep "home" a safe place, there are definitely some basic changes that must be made.

In case of a fire, it is important to keep an escape route clear of obstacles. Like all home safety plans, this is always at the top of the list, because it can be the most extreme emergency we can encounter. Next, keep all the fire alarms in working order with good batteries. Our sense of smell can diminish over time, so the ability to detect fire on our own is at risk. When night falls, being able to see is crucial. Even in a familiar house, adding light switches for more convenience is helpful. There are lights that can be turned on and off by a clap reducing the amount of time searching in the dark for a switch. Nightlights in high travel areas are a simple solution to avoiding furniture while getting up for a midnight feast or bathroom trip.

You can decrease the risk of falling by getting rid of loose or slippery carpets. If an elderly person uses a cane or walker, you can add or clean the rubber at the bottom to keep firm resistance. Non-skid floor wax is a good addition to tile or wood floor. Loose wires should also be straightened up and kept out of the way. All these changes might seem small, but every accident is usually caused by something small and overlooked.

These safety tips have been brought to you by Banyan Assisted Living. Their main goal is to see that everyone stays in their home in a safe and responsible way. However, if you or a loved one are ever in a position to seek out alternative living arrangements, please contact them at **(941) 412-4748**. Their facility revolves around safety and comfort and is located in Venice at 100 Base Avenue East. You can also visit their website at www.abanyanresidence.com.



A Banyan Residence has the following features to do so:

- Custom Shuttle
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- Physical Therapy Room
- TV satellite service
- Movie theatre popcorn
- Family & Friends BBQ
- Tropical Garden
- Fruits & Vegetable Garden
- Walking Club
- Waterfall
- Physical fitness activities
- Salon Room
- Custom Shuttle Bus
- Koi Fish & Duck Pond
- Butterfly Garden
- Special Events: Annual Red Carpet Fashion Show

What is a PET Scan?

Advanced Imaging of Port Charlotte

Positron Emission Tomography (PET) is a powerful imaging technique that holds great promise in the diagnosis and treatment of many diseases, particularly cancer. A non-invasive test, PET scans accurately image the cellular activity of the human body. PET scanning provides a more complete picture, making it easier for your doctor to diagnose problems, determine the extent of disease, prescribe treatment and track progress.

What is a PET/CT scan?

Positron Emission Tomography (PET) and Computed Tomography (CT) scans are both standard imaging tools that physicians use to pinpoint disease states in the body. A PET scan images the cellular activity of the body at a very early stage, often before anatomical changes take place. The CT scan provides information about the body's anatomy such as size, shape and location. By combining these two scanning technologies, a PET/CT scan enables physicians to more accurately diagnose and identify cancer, heart disease and brain disorders.

How does a PET scan differ from CT or MRI scans?

CT and MRI scans are anatomic imaging modalities, which means that they look at the size and shape of organs and body structures. A PET scan is a metabolic imaging modality, which means it looks at cellular activity. The information collected from a PET scan is different from any other test that is available.

Why is my doctor recommending a PET or PET/CT scan?

A single PET or PET/CT exam can provide information that once would have required several medical studies and possibly surgery. PET scans are most often used to help the physician detect cancer and monitor response to treatment. PET scans are also used to evaluate heart disease, neurological conditions and other physiological problems.





What are the benefits?

PET scans provide the physician with valuable information. For cancer patients it may help diagnose the extent of disease, guide the most effective therapy, and then help evaluate if the treatment is effective. PET scans aid in the diagnosis of heart disease and neurological diseases. This type of imaging can show changes much earlier than other imaging tests like CT or MRI.

Is PET safe?

The risks associated with a PET scan are very minimal. The quantity of radiation is low and the radiopharmaceutical degrades quickly so that no detectable radioactivity is present after several hours. In addition to the radioactive decomposition, the remaining radiopharmaceutical is eliminated from the body through urine. Family members are not at risk for exposure since most of the radioactivity has left the body or decomposed before the patient has left the center.

What should I expect?

If you are having a PET scan for an oncologic application you will usually be scheduled for your scan at Advanced Imaging. Upon arrival you will receive an injection of radioactive glucose, which will take approximately 60 minutes to distribute throughout your body. You will be asked to empty your bladder and then lie down on the scanner bed. The scan takes

approximately 15-35 minutes, depending upon the type of scan you are having and the type of scanner being used. It is important that you lie still during this process. If you need pain medication please bring it with you. You should plan on being at Advanced Imaging for approximately 2 to 3 hours.

What is a radiopharmaceutical?

A radiopharmaceutical is a radioactive drug. The most commonly used PET radiopharmaceutical is a radioactive form of glucose (sugar). To begin the PET procedure, a small amount of glucose is injected into your bloodstream. There is no danger to you from this injection. Glucose is a common substance that every cell in your body needs in order to function. Diabetic patients do not need to worry; it would take 1,000,000 doses of this radiopharmaceutical to equal the glucose in 1 teaspoon of sugar. Radiopharmaceuticals must pass multiple quality control measures before it is used for any patient injection.

Advanced Imaging
of Port Charlotte
2625 Tamiami Trail
941.235.4646

What happens after my scan?

Once the PET scan is complete, you will be able to leave the imaging facility. Make sure you drink plenty of water or other fluids throughout the day to help flush the FDG from your body.

Are there any potential side effects to a PET scan?

There are no side effects to having a PET scan. Make sure you drink plenty of water and check with your physician if you have any concerns.

When will I get my results?

The PET scan is interpreted by a trained nuclear medicine physician or radiologist and results are usually sent to the referring physician within 24-48 hours. You should contact your doctor to discuss the results.

How often should I have a PET scan?

If you are under a physician's care, you should follow your physician's recommendations for frequency of PET scans.

Are there alternatives to PET?

Yes and no. There are examinations that can be performed. However, there is no other metabolic (biological) scanning technique other than PET at this time. CT and MRI, for example, both examine the anatomical (physical) structure. Therefore, they can be useful in determining the size and location of a tumor. However, neither of them can determine whether a tumor is still metabolically active.

Is a PET scan painless?

The only pain involved is the needle prick when you receive the radiopharmaceutical injection, which does not differ from any other type of injection.

Does my insurance cover PET scans?

Many PET scans are covered by private insurance and Medicare; pre-authorization may be needed and is advised.

Advanced Imaging of Port Charlotte provides the highest standard of care available today. Our technologists are highly skilled and available to explain the exams and any concerns you may have. Advanced Imaging is open Monday thru Saturday from 7-7. Call 941-235-4646 for more information or you may review our website at www.advimaging.com.



Better Health for the Holidays

Optimal Health is Achievable!

Written by, Carolyn Waygood, Certified Natural Health Professional

The holiday season is a joyous one, filled with gatherings of family and friends, festive parties, and delectable gifts! But for those who struggle with health challenges, be it excess weight, blood sugar management, digestive disorders, or painful inflammation, the holiday season is a time of anxiety. Temptations of over-indulgence lurk around every corner, and feelings of "failing" your health goals can darken this blessed and happy season! NO MORE!

Let me introduce you to an incredible line of natural wellness products formulated to help you achieve greater health and wellness! Plexus Worldwide, based in Scottsdale, Arizona, is a company committed to our health, the use of natural ingredients to help address America's most common health challenges, and specialize in life-changing products. Best known for their complete approach to weight loss, Plexus has grown 16,457% during the past 3 years, as worldwide sales QUADRUPLED in 2013! This incredible growth occurred, in part, because their wellness products are effective, and customers are seeing the results!

Their most popular product, Plexus Slim, is a powdered drink mix that helps people maintain healthy blood sugars, promotes healthy blood pressure and cholesterol levels, increases willpower over food and reduces binge eating. Formulated using a proprietary blend of natural ingredients such as chromium, chlorogenic acid extract from green coffee beans, Garcinia Cambogia, and alpha lipoic acid, Plexus Slim helps the body drop excess weight naturally. "The Plexus Slim formula is so unique", explains Carolyn Waygood, Certified Natural Health Professional, "and I consider it the most complete approach to natural weight loss on the market today." It is also the simplest approach to weight loss we've discovered. Just mix the powdered packet into a bottle of water, shake it, and drink it 15-30 minutes before breakfast, and customers report feeling more energy and less hungry throughout the day. "Since Plexus Slim helps maintain healthy blood sugars, people enjoy an even level of energy daily, as well as reduce food cravings caused by drops in blood glucose", notes Carolyn.

Most people enjoy indulging during the holidays, which is a staple part of gatherings of family & friends. "I don't preach about eating a perfect diet", admits Ms. Waygood. "I help people balance real-life with better health." By helping the body better metabolize and utilize unhealthy substances such as sugary carbs and glucose-laden sweets, you can enjoy holiday fare without the guilt of gaining weight! Carolyn's suggested products for **HEALTHY WEIGHT MANAGEMENT** during the holiday season include Plexus Slim together with either Plexus Boost or Accelerator, and the optional BLOCK supplement formulated to help slow the absorption of starch & sugar for healthier glucose levels. Features and benefits of this powerful product set include;

- Vitamin B & Green Tea extract to aid in metabolism
- Yerba Mate shown to Increase thermogenesis
- Alpha Lipoic Acid helps turn glucose into energy
- Chlorogenic acid to help maintain healthy cholesterol/lipid levels
- Garcinia Cambogia to help control the appetite & cravings
- A proprietary seaweed blend to help slow conversion of starches/sugars to glucose
- Caralluma Fimbriata to help Improve endurance
- Supports overall healthy weight control



Plexus also offers help for those suffering from digestive challenges, and the need for better detoxification. As a result of the modern lifestyle, most of our bodies are burdened with toxic waste and sluggish metabolisms.

Having an excess of toxic waste can leave the body tired, achy, and bloated, with a low energy level and weakened immune system. Detoxification is a process



that expels excess waste and accumulated toxins from our body. Fortunately, Plexus has developed products to help the body detoxify and cleanse the gastrointestinal tract and arteries. Carolyn's suggested products for **HEALTHY DIGESTION & DETOXIFICATION** during the holiday season include Plexus Slim together with Plexus ProBio5, and the Plexus BioCleanse supplement. Features and benefits of this powerful product set include;

- Chitosinase supports Yeast organism (Candida) & fungal cleanse
- Lactobacillus Sporogenes helps provides proper probiotic balance in the intestinal tract
- A cleaner GI tract helps increase nutrient absorption
- Improves Energy Levels by Oxygenating the entire body
- Ascorbic Acid helps cleanse the GI tract & arteries
- Bioflavonoids enhance weight loss
- Magnesium helps relieve constipation & supports overall healthy weight control

With over 76 million Americans suffering from discomfort each day, finding relief from soreness can be a life-changing gift this holiday season! If you've been living with discomfort, such as back problems, muscle tension, and joint soreness, you may be searching for natural lasting relief. The good news is Plexus has developed Fast Relief™, a cutting-edge, three-product system with a proprietary ingredient blend that will help you live happier, healthier, and discomfort-free. "Pain is the body's way of signaling that something's wrong", explains Ms. Waygood. "And it's typically associated with inflammation – the body's normal response to injury. However, when the inflammatory process doesn't shut off, and chronic inflammation yields long-term pain – it's difficult to enjoy the holidays!"

Carolyn's suggested products for **RELIEVING SORENESS & DISCOMFORT** during the *holiday season* include Plexus Slim together with Plexus Fast-Relief Cream, and the Plexus Fast-Relief daily supplement. Features and benefits of this powerful product set include;

- Anti-inflammatory benefits of ETArol™ and Aloe
- Improved joint & muscle function from MSM
- Pain relief from cooling Menthol, as well as Tumeric, Serrapeptase, and Bromelain
- Joint tissue repair from Chondroitin, Glucosamine, and Hyaluronic Acid

"I have personally worked with dozens of people, and know of thousands of others, who have achieved greater health as a result of the Plexus products", Carolyn says. "The important thing is to make that initial step to address your personal health challenge, and then be guided by the experience of a wellness professional." Carolyn's wellness advice is FREE to Plexus customers, including a complementary 90-Day Challenge Program for customers who initiate their wellness routine during the month of December. For more information, contact Ms. Waygood at (941) 713-3767, or via email at Carolyn@LoseWeightFL.com. For more information about the Plexus products she refers to, visit www.Waygood.MyPlexusProducts.com today!



"I started taking Plexus Slim with Accelerator 4 months ago and I have lost 26 pounds. I went from a size 12 to a size 8. Even during the Holidays when the food craving was at its worst, I was able to enjoy and eat what I wanted without gaining a pound!" – Hope S.



"When I started taking the Plexus products I weighed 185 pounds and was wearing a size 14. I used Plexus for five months and lost a whopping 52 pounds. I am in a size 5 now. I feel great thanks to Plexus Slim. And the best part is that I haven't gained a single pound back. What an amazing product. I would recommend this to anyone." – Rochelle D.



"At first I was skeptical about the Plexus products. However, I went ahead and tried them and I am very blessed that I did. I have gone from a size 22 (211 pounds) to a size 14 (174 pounds). I have lost a total of 32 inches." – Brandi S.

Are you eager to see and hear MORE Plexus success stories? You can! An inspiring collage of Plexus customer testimonies can be viewed on You Tube by visiting <http://youtu.be/HWD9vLFjVcc>. If you are still skeptical of the amazing health benefits people have achieved with Plexus products, watch this brief 8 minute video and hear a compilation of life-changing Plexus testimonials from real people seeing real results!

This holiday season, give yourself the GIFT OF HEALTH, and learn more about how natural products from Plexus Worldwide can help you experience a healthy, more joyful holiday this year! Contact your local Plexus Ambassador today to discuss your personal health goals this season! These Independent Ambassadors are ready to support you in achieving optimal health now, and into the New Year!

Happy Holidays

Carolyn Waygood, CNHP
Plexus Ambassador # 91719

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ABC's of MEDICARE!

Answers to help you make the right decisions.

The annual election period runs from October 15 through December 7. During this time, those on Medicare have to make decisions and select options that will affect their health and financial wellbeing.

In the weeks leading up to October, Medicare beneficiaries will receive between five and ten pounds of printed materials, all containing information about Medicare benefits and options. Most of this unsolicited mail is required by the Center on Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS), to inform beneficiaries of any changes to the plans they currently have and to reinforce the basic benefits of original, or standard, Medicare.

Medicare does not lend itself to simple explanation. With the influx of information pouring in, many people become overwhelmed and can get easily confused when it comes to making decisions about Medicare and supplement coverage.

Medicare does not lend itself to simple explanation. Like all health insurance coverage, little appears to be in black or white, with gray areas dominating specific landscape. Sifting and sorting through all of the Medicare paperwork is a daunting task, most people simply want to know where they can easily find answers to their specific questions and concerns about their coverage.

The best place to start is at the beginning, which is original Medicare, often referred to as standard Medicare. Original Medicare consists of two parts, A and B, both of which carry annual deductible amounts that the patient must meet before Medicare coverage begins.

Part A covers services of medical entities: hospitals, skilled nursing care facilities, home health care and hospice care treatment. Part A does not have a cost for those that have worked over 40 quarters and contributed into the fund.

Part B is optional but it non-institution expenses, like doctor office visits, inoculations, medical tests and other outpatient services. This optional coverage currently

costs \$104.90 per month, unless your income exceeds \$85,000. For those receiving monthly Social Security payments, the government will deduct this premium for you.

Generally, original Medicare will pay 80% of the approved medical bills, leaving the beneficiary to pay the balance out of pocket. This is where the need to make informed decisions begins. And this is where the typical beneficiary needs assistance to sort through the stack of printed material on the kitchen table.

There are currently three different choices for Medicare recipients:

1. A popular choice is to do nothing or add an Rx plan, called Part D, to reduce the cost of prescription drugs. Part D coverage can be a wonderful benefit for seniors who must continue a regimen of expensive medications on a regular basis.
2. Another is to enroll in a supplement plan. Supplement plans are offered by independent insurance companies and regulated by CMS. Supplements are identified by alphabet codes (A, B, C, H, K, L, N, etc., etc.) adding to the confusion. Each letter defines what the plan pays for and how much the beneficiary is responsible for. For example, all Plan F supplements cover the balance that original parts A & B do not cover, no matter which insurance company offers it. However, regardless of which insurer offers a supplement, all plans with the same alphabetic designation are the same in benefits although they may not be priced the same. This is an area where a trusted, unbiased advisor can offer great assistance.
3. A third choice, rapidly gaining in popularity is Part C, or Medicare Advantage Plan. These plans, offered by independent insurers under CMS regulation, most times offer a combination of Parts A, B and D. The advantage plans offer a lower cost of reducing the medical expenses because CMS pays a major part of the premium to the private insurer. Part C enrollment is increasing because it effectively replaces Parts A and B and it contains additional services like dental and vision as well.

Here is just one example of how a Part C plan helped a particular client save substantial out of pocket expenses. This person was hospitalized for over 30 days, the bill was over \$600,000 but after his Advantage Plan benefits, he was personally responsible for less than \$3,000 and he has no monthly premium.

If you or a loved one have any questions about the different parts of Medicare and their costs, please don't hesitate to speak up and ask questions. As you can see, from the above example, the right decision can affect both health and wellbeing for years to come.

Overwhelmed by your MEDICARE OPTIONS?



Choosing the right Medicare coverage can be confusing. I can help you find the Medicare plan that's right for you and your budget.

Call today for personalized service!

Henry Martinez

Licensed Insurance Agent

941-625-5559

hmartinez@HealthMarkets.com

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HMIAD00554



Avoiding Animal Emergencies This Holiday Season

By Dr John Rand, D.V.M.



This time of year the ASPCA Animal Poison Control Center (1-888-426-4435) receives considerably more phone calls than usual. Friends and relatives who come to visit may leave bags out where pets may have access to their medications. Keep any and all medications, both prescription and over-the-counter, safely away from your pets at all times. The innumerable cold medicines, vitamins, supplements, pain killers, cold medicines, blood pressure drugs, etc. that may find their way into your home can easily lead you and your pet into a serious situation.

In addition to drugs, protecting your pets from ingesting various human foods is a must. Everyone should know by now that chocolate is toxic to pets - especially baker's chocolate, dark chocolate, and semi-sweet varieties. Furthermore, pets are also much more sensitive to even tiny amounts of coffee, onions, alcohol, and salts. Avoid giving your animals any foods that are fatty, rich, or spicy. While they may eagerly devour them, these types of foods can incite serious inflammation of the pancreas that can require intensive hospitalization. Cooked poultry bones are also a no-no, as their splintered edges can pierce the stomach and intestines as they pass.

Although not typically thought of as edible, several plants bear mentioning. Many holiday flower arrangements contain various lilies: all *Lilium* species (Tiger, Easter, Stargazer, Asian, etc.) are **HIGHLY** toxic to cats. Even nibbling on a leaf or petal warrants a trip to the vet. If not treated quickly, the kidney damage would be irreversible. Every year poinsettias get a bad rap as far as their danger

to pets. The truth of the matter is, though, poinsettias (along with mistletoe and holly) have an over-hyped potential for poisoning. If ingested, the sap of these plants will usually only cause some irritation to the mouth and skin, along with some potential for vomiting and diarrhea.

Perhaps the biggest plant to be wary of is the Christmas tree. The tree itself poses a risk to cats that may climb, fall from, or be toppled by it. Another problem is the water at the base of live trees; if drunk, it can cause nausea, vomiting, and diarrhea from the fertilizers and bacteria within. Tinsel on trees can be quite tempting for cats to play with and eat. When eaten, the tinsel poses a very common cause for becoming lodged in the intestines, a surgical emergency.

If any of these situations happen while you are out of town, be sure that you have spoken with your pets sitter so they know what to do. Informing your veterinarian as to who will have authority for making decisions for your pet in your absence is always recommended, too. Know your veterinarian's holiday hours, as well as the number and location of your nearest veterinary emergency clinic. Follow these general tips with some good common sense, and you should have a happy holiday season.

***Disclaimer:** No article, journal, webpage, breeder, or friend of a friend can take the place of personalized, veterinary medical advice. If you have any questions, always consult with your veterinarian.*



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New Advances in Compression Therapy for Limb Swelling

By Alyssa Parker

A common challenge faced in the medical field is finding the cause of an individual's limb swelling. Any limb swelling may be your body's way of letting you know there is a potential underlying condition that can cause even more damage if left untreated. When swelling in a limb becomes chronic, pinpointing the origin is vital to getting proper treatment. Some of the most common diagnosis are venous insufficiency and lymphedema.



Fluid accumulation can cause painful swelling, non-healing wounds, heaviness, and discomfort decreasing your mobility. Recent studies show that nearly 7 million people in the United States suffer from venous disease. While 2 to 3 Americans suffer from secondary lymphedema.

Chronic venous insufficiency (CVI) is when blood is unable to circulate from the lower limbs back to the heart. CVI is caused by incompetent valves and venous hypertension, in both parts of your venous system. The venous system is comprised of two parts, deep circulation and superficial circulation which are interconnected by perforating veins. Your venous system is an important component to delivering blood to the heart, then passing it through the lungs to obtain oxygen. The oxygenated blood is then delivered to the lower limbs.

Venous hypertension leads to secondary Lymphedema from the lymphatic system's inability to keep up with an abnormally high demand of protein rich fluid. Lymphedema is chronic swelling from protein-rich fluid accumulation in the tissue. Lymphedema occurs secondary to CVI when the lymphatic system is obstructed causing damage, blockage, or abnormal development. Primary Lymphedema can be hereditary or congenital, where an individual is born with a compromised lymphatic system.

Risk Factors

Once your circulatory system has been obstructed leading to venous insufficiency or lymphedema this may lead to an interruption in the venous and lymphatic flow. Both diseases are manageable and treatable however there is no cure for either one.

Risk factors may include:

- Unknown swelling of a limb
- Family history
- Invasive surgical procedure i.e. radical cancer surgery
- Chronic open wounds
- Decreased mobility
- Infections such as cellulitis/ lymphangitis
- Skin changes such as discoloration or hardening



Management: Compression Pump

Understanding the ongoing management of both venous insufficiency and lymphedema are important in preventing irreversible damage to the body. Compression therapy along with proper nutrition a healthy diet and exercise are the foundation of a treatment plan. Compression stockings are often difficult to get on with little results for chronic swelling. Diuretics may be harmful for long-term treatment. Compression devices are widely recognized and highly effective treatment. This is a safe and effective way to assist your body's circulatory system in moving the excess fluid which has accumulated in the limb.

A pneumatic compression device mimics the muscle contraction that naturally occurs when performing a cardiovascular activity. A compression device is used for both acute care (short term in the hospital) as well as chronic care (long term in the home). The compression pump increases blood flow and lymphatic flow. By increasing the circulation in the affected limb many painful symptoms will be alleviated. When compression treatment is used on a limb the excess fluid is removed and worked back into the lymphatic system the natural way. For patients with chronic ulcers using a compression device will help heal the wound from the inside out, by increasing the circulation in the return of the blood from the heart. The heart delivers oxygen rich blood back to the legs and the tissue speeding the recovery time.

For patients who many have Chronic venous insufficiency a test called a vascular or duplex ultrasound may be used to examine the blood circulation in your legs.

The compression pump is approved by Medicare and covered by many commercial insurers; Actual coverage varies with individual commercial insurance policies. Acute Wound Care, LLC is a highly focused local provider of wound products and compression pumps working with select area physicians highly versed in treating swollen limbs and chronic wounds.

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and speak with a specialist.



WHEN HAVING CATARACT SURGERY, YOU HAVE CHOICES OF SEVERAL INTRAOCULAR LENS IMPLANTS

By Jonathan M. Frantz, MD, FACS

If you've been told that you have cataracts, one of the first things you'll learn about are Intraocular Lens Implants (IOLs), the artificial lenses that replace the eye's natural lens that is removed during cataract surgery.

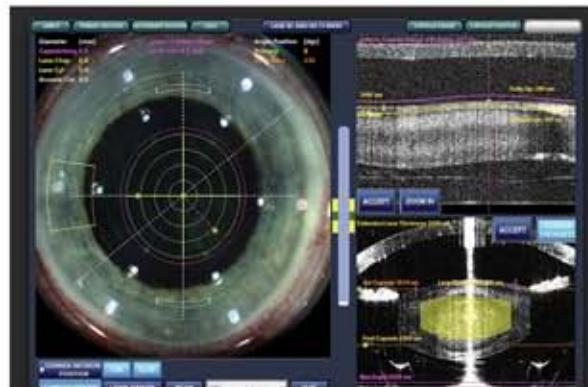
When you have your cataract evaluation at Frantz EyeCare, Dr. Jonathan Frantz, one of our country's TOP 5 Bladeless Laser Cataract Surgeons, and his Specialty Lens Counselor will help you select a lens implant that fits your specific lifestyle and eye health needs, whether you are having a premium refractive procedure with the LenSx laser or traditional cataract surgery.

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b. a Monofocal Toric IOL: If you have astigmatism, a Toric IOL makes it possible to treat the cataract and correct the corneal astigmatism at the same time. If you have both a cataract and a corneal astigmatism, you will not regain high-quality distance



vision after surgery to remove the cataract unless the astigmatism is also corrected. The unique design of this lens provides significantly improved distance vision and may reduce the need for corrective lenses.

c. a Standard Monofocal Lens with Limbal Relaxing Incisions (LRI): If you have a lower amount of astigmatism, you can have your corneal

astigmatism corrected with limbal relaxing incisions (LRI) at the same time as your cataract surgery.

2) Traditional Cataract Surgery with Standard Monofocal Lens: If you choose to have traditional cataract surgery with a standard monofocal lens implant for your after surgery visual outcome, you may decide to have both eyes corrected for distance vision and wear reading glasses for near vision, or have both eyes corrected for near vision and wear prescription glasses or contact lenses for distance vision. Another option is to have monovision, where your dominant eye is corrected for distance vision while your non-dominant eye is corrected for near vision. With monovision, you may not need reading or distance glasses.

Jonathan M. Frantz, MD, FACS, is named in The Guide to America's Top Ophthalmologists. He and his team of doctors at Frantz EyeCare offer a broad spectrum of patient-focused comprehensive care from eye exams and eyewear to bladeless laser cataract surgery, treatment of eye diseases, bladeless LASIK laser vision correction, and eyelid surgery with office locations in Fort Myers, Cape Coral, Punta Gorda, Lehigh Acres, and Naples.

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Visiting Angels Help You Beat the Holiday Blues

The holidays are supposed to be a joyful time of good cheer, parties and family gatherings, but it is not unusual for many of us to feel sad, lonely or even anxious during the holidays. This condition, which has come to be called "holiday blues," can occur with any holiday or vacation time. It commonly happens at the end of the year when it can seem that just about everyone is celebrating in some way. High expectations, loneliness and stress can lead to holiday blues during the season from Thanksgiving to New Year's. In most cases symptoms are temporary, but they can be serious if they last for more than two weeks, leading to clinical anxiety and/or depression.

Why are seniors susceptible?

Many factors can contribute to feelings of sadness that seniors may feel around the holidays. The holidays can heighten feelings of grief and loss for seniors adjusting to changes related to the process of aging, such as life without a loved one or close friends, ill health, or a move from a lifelong family home into a retirement home or senior community. They may feel guilty about having feelings of sadness which may in turn intensify those feelings of sadness.

How to manage the holiday blues?

The holiday blues can be a normal response to a stress-filled time of the year, but seniors don't have to suffer unnecessarily. Mental Health America, a non-profit dedicated to helping Americans lead mentally healthier lives, offers the following tips for coping with stress:



- Keep expectations for the holiday season manageable. Try to set realistic goals. Make a list and prioritize the important activities.
- Remember the holiday season does not banish reasons for feeling sad or lonely; there is room for these feelings to be present, even if the person chooses not to express them.
- Leave yesteryear in the past and look toward to the future. Life brings changes. Don't set yourself up in comparing today with the "good ol' days."
- Do something for someone else. Try volunteering some of your time to help others.
- Enjoy activities that are free, such as taking a drive to look at holiday decorations.
- Be aware that excessive drinking will only increase your feelings of depression.
- Try something new. Celebrate the holidays in a new way.
- Spend time with supportive and caring people. Reach out and make new friends, or contact someone you haven't heard from in a while.
- Find a family member, friend, member of the clergy, or a physician or professional counselor you can talk with who can help you through this difficult time.

When is it more serious than just the holiday blues?

While they may be intense and unsettling, holiday blues are usually short-lived, lasting for a few days to a few weeks prior to or just after the holiday. However, it is important for family members, physicians and other caregivers to be alert to signs of something more serious than just seasonal sadness. Many elderly individuals may feel that depression is a natural part of aging and may not seek treatment on their own.

Depression is a very real and serious disease that can be treated and managed, but can be life-threatening if left untreated. The signs of depression include: sadness that won't lift; loss of interest or pleasure; changes in appetite and weight; thoughts of death or suicide. If you notice that a loved one seems depressed, encourage them to talk to their healthcare provider.

How can Visiting Angels help?

The friendly, experienced, and knowledgeable Visiting Angels team members can help reduce your stress during the holidays by assisting with any home care services needed. During this time of year, we are often busy and having someone to help manage daily health activities can prevent stress and allow you to enjoy the festivities to the fullest.

If health issues prevent you from participating in social events, or if you are lonely and missing loved ones during this time of year, a Visiting Angel can keep you company and make sure you are properly taking care of yourself to prevent holiday blues and worsening health conditions.

If diagnosed with depression, elderly patients may respond more readily when receiving care in the comfort of home, surrounded by their family and possessions. Visiting Angels offers an in-home care program to assist patients, families and caregivers affected by depression and other behavioral health disorders to journey towards wholeness. Services include stabilization, medication management, family interventions and long-term management.

If you have any questions about the various home care services provided by Visiting Angels, please call 1-800-365-4189 today. We are here to help in any way that we can.



What Motivates You to Give?

By Arlene Knox, Senior Director of Development, Florida SouthWestern State College Foundation

I have a pile of envelopes on my desk. Some are multi-colored, some with pictures of children and families, others with printed messages of hope, and still some with beautiful stamps and graphics. It is the holiday season, and while many are from friends and family, many were mailed to me from non-profits seeking donations.

Have you received these yet? Maybe you get them year-round. In the next six weeks, non-profits will spend millions of dollars on mailings, and some will supplement these with additional emails and phone calls to seek charitable support from donors. As the end of the year approaches, it is commonly believed that most donors want to receive a tax-deduction before December 31.

But study after study shows that a tax-deduction is one of the least motivating factors as to why donors

give to a charitable cause. A cross-section of national studies shows that donors have a multitude of motivations for giving, and tax benefits are rarely ranked high.

Here is a sampling of some of the top motivations for giving, gleaned from a variety of surveys of donor behavior:

To Honor or memorialize a loved one. Parents, teachers, coaches, neighbors, aunts, uncles, grandparents—we all have at least one person who has helped us along the way, and often times, we want to honor them for the impact they have on our lives.

To respond to a critical need. Hurricanes. House fires. Health emergencies. We are hard-wired as humans to help each other and alleviate suffering, especially when we see vivid images of people in desperate situations.



To help fulfill your life's goals and passions. As we age, we become more reflective about our life journey, and our time is precious. Giving to charity is an intentional act of caring and concern, and helps us to focus on the values that are truly important.

To connect with others who share your interests and passions. Have you heard the expression “birds of a feather flock together?” Non-profits are a great way to meet other people who share similar values, and humans like to be a part of something bigger than themselves.

December 18, 2014 – January 1, 2015

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January 7, 2015
First Day of FSW Spring Classes

To pay back. We all have varied backgrounds and circumstances that led us to our present situations. Many donors express an overwhelming feeling of gratitude for succeeding in life, however this is defined. Donations are a way of “paying back” those who helped us in the past.

Think about why you give to a charity. Did a friend ask you? Did you see a person in need? Have you volunteered for an organization? When you can determine your real motivations for giving, this will help you in future decision-making about the impact of your gift.

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ESTATE PLANNING TO AVOID GUARDIANSHIP

By James W. Mallonee

Consider the following situation, the children come to visit over the holidays and they begin to remark about your confusion or failing to manage your day-to-day activities. They also begin assisting you frequently and state that you seem to be having difficulty with your vision and remembering things. Moreover the children begin asking questions about what estate planning tools you have in place and ask to see them. If you have not thought about considering an estate plan then consider the concerns stated by your children as warning signs that you might want too. The children return to their home and your next visit is from an attorney who announces to you that he or she has been appointed by the Court to protect your interest in a guardianship proceeding. The question that faces most persons in this situation is "what are my options?"

Surprisingly, you have many but it will require you to pre-plan with the lawyer of your choice.

Florida's Guardianship Laws provide that no removal of ones rights may be implemented on an individual if there are alternatives available to prevent such loss of rights. In the situation given above, one of the least restrictive alternatives to the loss of your rights are a set of estate planning documents, namely, Revocable Trust, Durable Power of Attorney and Healthcare Surrogacy coupled with a Living Will (sometimes called advanced directive).

Generally speaking, if you have a trust that is funded, your vulnerability to having your property placed into the control of a guardian appointed by the Court can be protected by the appointment of a successor trustee. The successor trustee takes control of the trust property making it virtually impossible for you to convey property to others who do not have your best interest at heart. Most trust documents provide a mechanism for a succession of trustees which is accomplished by certification from a physician of a person's incompetence or direct resignation by the serving trustee.

In addition, any property that is not titled in the name of the trust can be controlled by the agent named in a Durable Power of Attorney. The agent is known as an Attorney-in-Fact, who generally possesses the same powers as you regarding the management of your property. Florida law updated its Durable Power of Attorney authority in 2011 providing significant powers that can be scaled to fit anyone's needs.

A Healthcare Surrogate complements a Trust and Durable Power of Attorney. A Healthcare Surrogate gives your named agent(s) the ability to make consensual health decisions for you in the event you cannot.

The combination of the three estate planning documents makes the likelihood of a successful guardianship proceeding an uphill battle. The reason for this is that your financial affairs will be managed by a successor trustee and Attorney-in-Fact along with the management of your health decisions by the appointment of the Healthcare Surrogate of your choice. However, simply possessing the combination of the estate planning documents is not foolproof.

Be aware that there is always the danger that the person acting in the role of your successor trustee and agent is not well suited for such role. Keep in mind that an Attorney-in-Fact may have the power to wipe out your property that is not titled in the name of the trust. Of course there are fiduciary responsibilities that are attached to the Attorney-in-Fact and successor trustee, but if your entire savings is lost, the fiduciary duties imposed may not be very comforting when your lost savings cannot be recovered. Thus, take notice that a Durable Power of Attorney and Trust instrument is a very powerful set of documents and should not be taken lightly.

So how do estate planning documents help? By having the combination of a Durable Power of Attorney, Trust and Healthcare Surrogate in place, the argument becomes that your property and health are being managed and protected by third parties which acts as a least restrictive alternative to the need for the appointment of a guardian to control your person and property.

One of the hardest decisions to make is deciding who is the most protective and trustworthy person to entrust your health and financial decisions to. Just remember, if no estate planning is put in place, it is possible that the next attorney you see will be the one appointed by the Court to represent you in a guardianship proceeding.

About the Author:

James W. Mallonee (*Jim Mallonee*) is a graduate with a B.A. degree from the University of South Florida and a Master of Science degree from Rollins College in Winter Park, Florida. He obtained his Juris Doctorate from the University of the Pacific, McGeorge School of Law in Sacramento, California. Prior to returning to Florida to practice law, Mr. Mallonee was employed by Intel Corporation for 22 years in such locations as New Jersey, Florida and California.

In addition to being a member of the Florida Bar since 2003, Mr. Mallonee serves on the Charlotte Community Foundation Committee for asset allocation and teaches Business Law at State College of Florida. Mr. Mallonee is also on the Board of Directors for the Military Heritage Museum located in Charlotte County, Florida.

His firm practices law in the following areas: Probate, Wills & Trusts, Guardianships, and Litigation in the areas of Real Estate, Guardianships and Estates. The firm has two locations in Venice and Port Charlotte, Florida.

James W. Mallonee, P.A.

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Computer Guided Dental Implant Surgery

By Dr. Joseph Farag

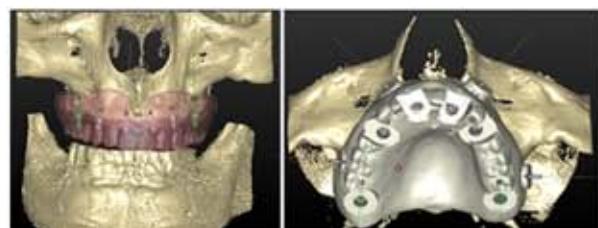
Most radiographic images used in implant surgery prior to the advent of CBCT were only two-dimensional. These images, if properly taken, only provided a rough estimation of bone height. Often times, the bone width and actual 3 dimensional shape was only visible during surgery, sometimes necessitating some creative solutions for anatomical problems, and other times an incorrect placement of the implants.

A Precise and Predictable Solution

As dental implant surgery has become more widespread, a more precise and predictable solution for surgery was needed. This need gave rise to the development of 3-D imaging technologies that could easily be used in a general dentist practice.

Radiation Exposure is Mild

Cone beam computed tomography (CBCT), also referred to as 3-D x-ray, has many distinct advantages over traditional two-dimensional imaging. The amount of radiation exposure compared to traditional CT scan is mild. In some cases, it can be as little as 1/100 of the exposure used in CT.



Implants Placed with High Degree of Precision and Accuracy

Another advantage of three-dimensional imaging is the detailed assessment of the bone scan using specific software. This software, used in conjunction with the 3-D images obtained by CBCT scans, provides a clinician with an indispensable tool for planning implant surgeries. With the use of these specifically designed surgical guides, implants can be placed with a very high degree of precision and accuracy. There is little discrepancy between the planned surgery on the computer and the final implant placement.

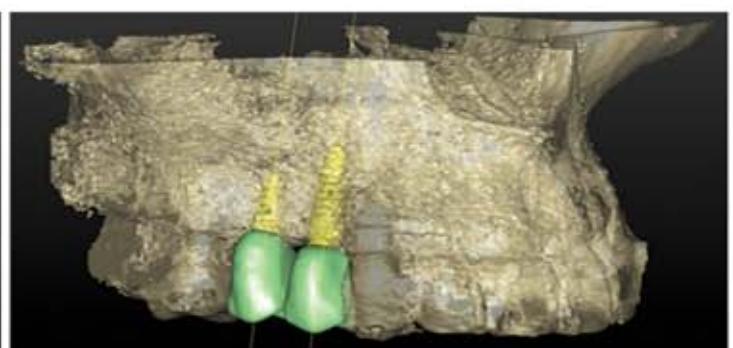
Less Discomfort and Shorter Treatment Time

These procedures can also be accomplished in a more conservative manner which provides the patient with less discomfort and a shorter treatment time.

Cross-section view of a patient who does not have adequate bone for an implant. By using the 3-dimensional images and planning software we can determine that this patient will require a sinus graft prior to implant placement.



To learn more about dental implant surgery or to schedule an appointment, call Dr. Joseph Farag at Port Charlotte Dentalcare, 941-764-9555.



3D imaging is necessary for the exact identification of vital anatomical structures that should be avoided during implant surgery such as nerves, blood vessels and sinus cavities. More and more clinicians are using 3D imaging and guided surgical techniques in order to provide patients with safer and more predictable results.

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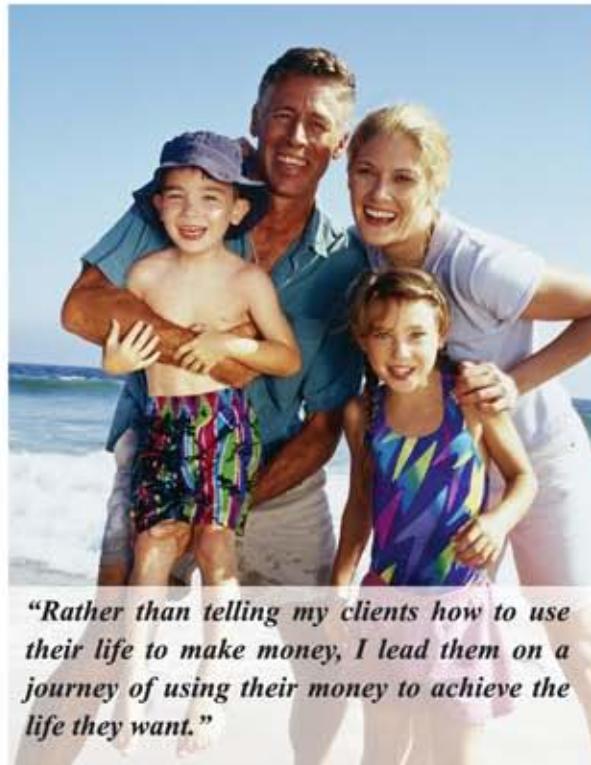
Do You Need FINANCIAL LIFE PLANNING?

By Sandy Keir, CFP®, Suncoast Advisory Group

I met a lovely woman at a charity function last week and we started talking about our families, where we came from and how we ended up on Florida's Suncoast. She told me that she owns her own company and that she's very excited about the good year it's having. I congratulated her on her success and asked her about some of the challenges she's facing. She admitted that she's having a hard time hiring talented people, not sure how to take her company to the next level and is feeling guilty because she's not spending as much time with her husband and friends.

Then she turned to me and asked me what I did for a living. I told her that I've spent the last 25 years helping professional women just like her determine what's important to them and then managing their financial resources to support their vision. She still wasn't sure what I actually did, so she asked me to give her an example of how I could help her.

I told her that I'm a financial planner who integrates life planning and financial planning and, if we worked together, I would need to have a good understanding of the dreams, hopes and aspirations she has for her business and her life before we could talk about her investments. Then I'll put together a business plan for her company, identify the best way to finance growth, and a plan to ensure the company's survival if something happens to her. I'll determine how much she needs to save for retirement, decide how to invest the money so she and her husband can afford to retire when they're ready and identify ways she can leave a legacy to her favorite charities.



"Rather than telling my clients how to use their life to make money, I lead them on a journey of using their money to achieve the life they want."

She decided that she needs to work with me to achieve her goals. We made plans to sit down over coffee next week to get started. She admitted that she's been waking up at night worrying about these things and she's already feeling relieved to know that she has a partner to work with. And the better we get to know each other, the more she'll realize that her happiness and satisfaction in life is my first priority—not her money.

If you're interested in learning how Sandy can help you plan for the future, call her at 941/201-1231 or email her at sandy@suncoastadvisorygroup.com.

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Sandra "Sandy" Keir, CFP®, CRPC, CLTC

Sandy's "aha" moment came at an early age. She had a wonderful childhood in Duluth, Minnesota. Her father was a good provider. Her mother was a devoted wife and mother. But when it came to the household finances, her father was the decision-maker. Sandy made the connection that the breadwinner was the boss. Money was power. "I decided that I always wanted to be in control of my own destiny," she says.

A lifelong wealth advisor, Sandy's passion is to help other women pursue the financial independence she has gained. "As women, many of us are going to be on our own at some time in our lives," Sandy says, "so we either need to gain an understanding of money and finances or we need to partner up with a financial advisor who can guide us. Many of the decisions we make, such as when to start taking Social Security, are irrevocable. However, only about 30 percent of women currently seek advice before making those decisions."

During her 25 years in the wealth management industry, Sandy has worked for such companies as Merrill Lynch, Lincoln Financial Group and Transamerica Capital. She lived in Sarasota for 15 years before moving to Pennsylvania in 2009, to become the Regional Sales Manager of Western Pennsylvania for Kades-Margolis Corp. She returned to Sarasota in 2014 to join Suncoast Advisory Group.

In addition to being a Certified Financial Planner, of which only 23 percent are women, she holds the Chartered Retirement Planning Counselor (CRPC) and Certified in Long-Term Care (CLTC) designations. She earned her bachelor's degree in Political Science from the University of Minnesota in Minneapolis.

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Sandy has dedicated her career to helping professional women plan for the future. Sandy will:

- 1** Take the time necessary to learn about your values, goals and vision
- 2** Put together a plan that takes you from today through retirement
- 3** Invests your money to achieve the life you want

Sandra "Sandy" Keir

CFP®, CRPC, CLTC

Financial Life Planner

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" How am I going to live today in order to create the tomorrow I'm committed to? **"** -ANTHONY ROBBINS

Taking a Spin Around the Dance Floor Increases Mental Health

If you've ever watched ABC's hit TV show "Dancing with the Stars," then you know that dancing is hard work. Dance has long been known to be an excellent way to stay physically fit. But could there be mental and cognitive benefits to dancing as well?

Recent studies have proven that symptoms of depression, stress, fatigue, and headaches can be alleviated with regular dancing.

A major study published in the New England Journal of Medicine reported that dance can be a powerful way to improve brain health. The research, focused on the effect of dancing on the brain, has measured factors such as memory, sense of well being, increased serotonin and reduced stress levels.

The study showed that while exercise is good for your overall health, only one exercise had a significant impact when it came to improving overall cognitive skills. That exercise – you guessed it – is frequent dancing.

Let Your Brain Tango!

Scientists found that dancing combines many beneficial facets as we age including recreational benefits and creative thinking. Dancing enhances health through stress reduction, increased serotonin level, and a love of life.

It turns out dancing incorporates several simultaneous brain functions including rational thinking skills, pattern recognition, spatial awareness, and the release of endorphins, which promote an emotional sense of well being.

How does dancing actually improve brain health? The cerebral cortex and hippocampus of our brains are very elastic which means they "rewire" themselves after each use. Dancing stimulates these areas, thereby contributing to the reconfiguration of nerve signals.

Other studies have shown that areas of the brain most affected by aging can be engaged, rewired

and utilized before they are lost. We know that many areas of brain tissue exhibit plasticity, which means these areas are not set in stone. The stimulation resulting from dancing can engage these areas in a positive way.

If you try new activities, like dancing, researchers say you are opening up new pathways in the brain that improve mental capabilities. In keeping many neural pathways active and simultaneously generating new pathways, you are able to maintain your brain's health and fitness.

No matter what brain activity you engage in – simple art projects with kids or grandkids or studying ancient philosophers like Plato, your brain will benefit.

Put dancing on the docket too, and not only is your brain benefiting, but your body will thank you for the fun physical activity!



The more you work out your brain, the better you'll be able to process and remember information. Novelty stimulation, like learning a new type of dance, is essential to exercising the brain.

For improved long-term brain health, challenge the brain and stimulate those pathways for long-term better brain health.

When you memorize new dance steps, you stimulate seemingly unconnected neural pathways – important for good health as you age.

We are creatures of habit – and there is nothing wrong with doing what we are good at doing. If you're a passionate chess player, don't stop, but try something new, too.

So dust off those dancing shoes and get going!

For more information about lessons, classes, workshops and dance parties call 239-908-9492 today! What are you waiting for?

Enchanted Ballroom Bonita Springs is a proud member of the Bonita Springs Community. We are located in the beautiful Promenade at Bonita Bay, in the heart of Bonita Springs, Florida. Enchanted Ballroom Bonita Springs is tailored to fit everyone from beginners to advanced dancers. People come for all kinds of reasons – preparing for a special event, rehabilitating an injury and getting in shape, looking for a fun exercise, or seeking new friendships. We teach American Smooth and Rhythm as well as International Standard and Latin dancing, social dance, line dance, and Argentine Tango.

Has the dancing bug bitten you? Would you like to learn how to dance like the contestants on "Dancing With the Stars" and be able to use those skills when you attend social events? If so, look no further than Enchanted Ballroom Bonita Springs. Stop in any time, by yourself or with friends to give dancing a try or to spruce up your moves!

Enchanted
BALLROOM

26821 S Bay Drive, Unit 110
Bonita Springs, FL 34134
(at the Promenade)

2496 Palm Ridge Rd,
Sanibel, FL 33957

www.TheEnchantedBallroom.com

The Gift Of Joyful Thought

By Alex Anderson, Senior Associate Pastor at Bayside Community Church

My Uncle Mutt always smiled. His real first name was Eugene, but everyone called him Mutt. Late at night, sitting around a pot of Maxwell House coffee, my Dad and Uncle Mutt would tell jokes and "side splitting" hunting and fishing stories until around 2:00 am. Glued to every word and facial expression these two giant storytellers would dish out, I would fight as long as a ten year old could, at the kitchen table to stay awake.

These men loved coffee and each other. For gifts, they would buy for each other the most ridiculous coffee cups they could find. Then when together, they would fill these goofy cups with boiling black coffee.

I remember one Friday night around 10:00 pm as my dad was pouring himself yet another cup he said, "Well Mutt, it looks like we have ran out of coffee." I jumped to my feet to make a pot so they could keep the stories rolling. When the coffee was finished I poured some for Uncle Mutt and as he looked into the cup with a hairy wrinkled unibrow, he paused, then looked back at me and said, "Is this suppose to be coffee?" I said, "Yes sir" proudly and he said, "It can't be." I was deflated and asked, "Why not Uncle Mutt?" He said, "Cause I can see the bottom of the cup." And he smiled his famous Cheshire Cat grin.

Back at the stove, and very determined, I dumped about ¼ lb. of Maxwell House Coffee grounds in the same pot while they turned back and continued laughing and chuckling. When the pot boiled I flooded my uncle's cup again, held my breath and waited. He peered into the cup then poured a little of the scalding aromatic brew into a saucer. He gave it a fan with his hand then he raised the saucer to his lips and slowly sucked the coffee from the edge. Only after downing a couple of saucers did he then turn to me, cocked his head slightly, winked and said, "Now that my boy, is a cup of coffee." I grinned from ear to ear. I loved my Uncle Mutt.

That memory is over 43 years old. I remember it like it was yesterday. I have many wonderful memories and many depressing ones. But I have



chosen to become the curator of this amazing library of my yester-years. I have learned to find the good and the cheerful. I have turned villains into heroes and monsters into saints.

Why would I do such a thing? Wouldn't it make a lot of sense to be "real?" Well actually, I am being real. I have chosen to galvanize my mind to the thoughts that create true and admirable movies in my heart. Using my memories, I am the producer, the director and the screenwriter. Granted it's been as tough as nails at times and I've wanted to send the heroes and saints back to the evil place I found them in my past. It also took a lot of hunting and pecking around my memories, but I found enough to create my version of *It's A Wonderful Life*.

After I realized that I had the power, not the villains and monsters, to create my own blockbuster movies in my heart, I could choose to make a Jimmy Stewart, Oscar-Winner or a trashy "C" movie that's a waste of time, with no life-giving value.

Fix your thoughts on what is true, and honorable, and right, and pure, and lovely, and admirable.
~Philippians 4:8 NLT

It's also to my advantage to nose around my memories and find something, even if it is small, to "fix my thoughts on." I've known some pretty mean rascals, and yet every one of them had something admirable that I could pull off the shelf of my heart and put into my basket to create my Oscar winner. See 'I become' like the movies I watch over and over in my heart. Over time they shape my actions and I become either bitter or better.

Guard your heart above all else, for it determines the course of your life. ~Proverbs 4:23 NLT

The movies I play in my mind affect how I feel. If I want to be depressed and unmotivated then I play the C movies of pain and shame. If I want to feel motivated and full of joy, I play my version of Jimmy Stewart's, *It's A Wonderful life*.

A cheerful heart is good medicine, but a broken spirit saps a person's strength ~Proverbs 17:22 New Living Translation

This holiday season give yourself "*The Gift of Joyful Thought*." If you do, you'll feel awesome and will have a Merry Christmas.

To your spiritual health, Alex E. Anderson
Author, *Dangerous Prayers*

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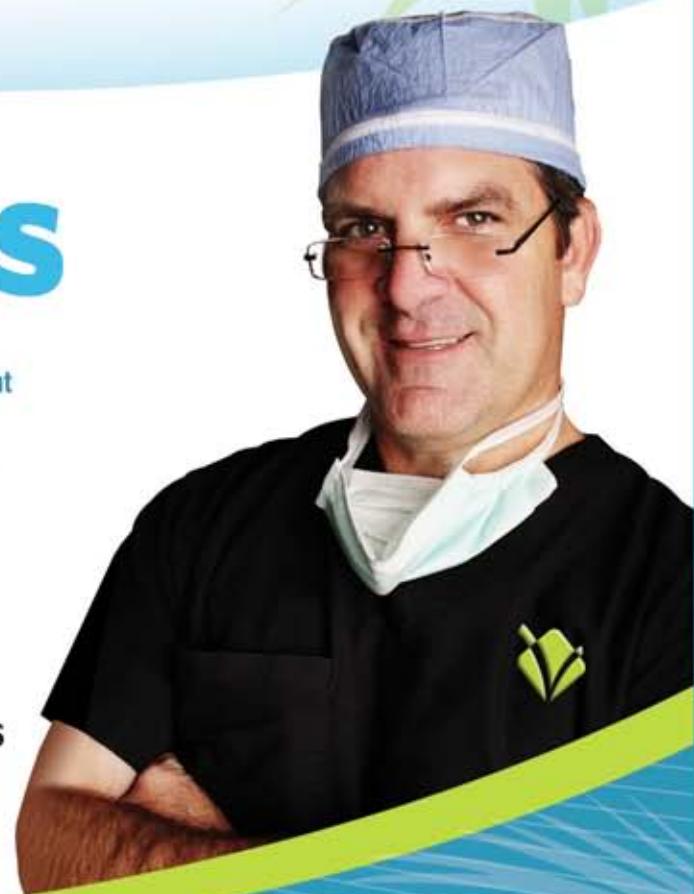
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