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Health & Wellness[®] MAGAZINE

March 2022

Charlotte/South Sarasota Edition - Monthly

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You Can Reduce Your Risk of Cancer

When it comes to preventing cancer, little things can make a big difference, especially when it comes to making healthy lifestyle choices.

According to the American Cancer Society, nearly 1.8 million Americans will be diagnosed with cancer this year, and more than 600,000 will die of this disease. Research shows that nearly 50% of these cancer cases and deaths are preventable. Getting healthy is definitely worth the effort and can lessen your chances of developing cancer.

SKIN CANCER AFFECTS 1 IN 5 AMERICANS - TAKE IT SERIOUSLY

Skin cancer is the most common form of cancer in the United States. The American Academy of Dermatology Association estimates that one in five Americans will develop skin cancer in their lifetime.

The good news is that skin cancer is also the most preventable cancer and, generally, is highly treatable. The two most common forms, basal cell and squamous cell, are highly treatable if detected early and treated properly. Melanoma, the third most common skin cancer, while treatable, is much more dangerous.

Skin cancer can affect anyone, regardless of skin color, and the risk increases as we age. While the average age at diagnosis is 65, melanoma is one of the most common cancers in those younger than 30, especially young women.

The majority of all skin cancers are caused by exposure to the sun's ultraviolet light rays. For maximum protection, oncologists recommend applying a broad-spectrum, water-resistant sunscreen with a sun protection factor (SPF) of 30 or higher to all skin that is not covered by clothing. Clothing items with an ultraviolet protection factor (UPF) number on the label are now widely available. A wide-brimmed hat and sunglasses with UV protection are also recommended. Children and adolescents, especially, should be protected from the sun, since severe sunburns at younger ages may increase the risk of melanoma. Exposure to artificial UV rays with the use of tanning beds or sunlamps also increases the risk of skin cancer and should be avoided.

Especially here in Florida, it is important to take precautions to enjoy the outdoors safely and reduce skin cancer risk.

SMOKING AND CANCER

In the U.S., 80% to 90% of all lung cancer deaths are related to cigarette smoking, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Even those who don't smoke are at risk, due to secondhand smoke.



Tobacco products, including cigarettes, e-cigarettes, cigars, pipes and chewing tobacco, have been linked to several other types of cancer, including colorectal, bladder, breast, throat, cervical, mouth and esophageal.

If you're not a smoker, don't start. If you smoke, it's never too late to quit. Your health will improve, and you'll reduce your risk of cancer, heart disease and other illnesses. An effective first step, even if you've tried before, is to prepare a quit plan. A wide range of tools, tips and other resources can be found on the website SmokeFree.gov.

EAT HEALTHY & KEEP MOVING TO PREVENT CANCER

There is growing evidence that what we eat plays a significant role in some types of cancer. For example, studies have found a higher incidence of prostate cancer in men whose diets are high in fats, particularly animal fats, and low in vegetables. Certain types of breast and colorectal cancer have also been linked to what we eat. A diet that is high in fruits, vegetables, beans and whole grains, and low in red meat and processed foods and sugar, is recommended to help reduce cancer risk. It's also important to limit alcohol consumption to no more than two drinks a day for men and one drink a day for women.

Physical activity can also make a big difference – aim for at least 30 minutes each day. Exercise can help to control your weight and prevent obesity, with the added benefits of increased energy, reduced stress and a healthy boost to the immune system to help fight cancer and other diseases.

THE IMPORTANCE OF CANCER SCREENINGS

Thanks to ongoing research, screening tests are now available for many types of cancer. These tests are effective at finding cancer before signs or symptoms appear. When detected early, certain cancers are much easier to treat, preventing thousands of additional cancer cases and deaths. Early diagnosis and treatment is a substantial factor in surviving cancer.

Recommendations can vary based on your age, family history and lifestyle. Talk to your health care professional about cancer screening, and please do not skip or delay your recommended screenings.

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About Florida Cancer Specialists & Research Institute, LLC: (FLCancer.com)

Recognized by the American Society of Clinical Oncology (ASCO) with a national Clinical Trials Participation Award, Florida Cancer Specialists & Research Institute (FCS) offers patients access to more clinical trials than any private oncology practice in Florida. In the past four years, the majority of new cancer drugs approved for use in the U.S. were studied in clinical trials with Florida Cancer Specialists participation.* Trained in prestigious medical schools and research institutes, our physicians are consistently ranked nationally as Top Doctors by U.S. News & World Report.

Founded in 1984, Florida Cancer Specialists has built a national reputation for excellence that is reflected in exceptional and compassionate patient care, driven by innovative clinical research, cutting-edge technologies and advanced treatments, including targeted therapies, genomic-based treatment and immunotherapy. Our highest values are embodied by our outstanding team of highly trained and dedicated physicians, clinicians and staff.



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CARDIOVASCULAR DISEASE:

Understanding Risk Factors, Prevention & Treatment

By Terence Connelly, M.D. | Interventional Cardiology

Coronary artery disease (CAD) is the number one cause of death worldwide. In the United States, approximately 659,000 people die from heart disease each year. Many people are concerned with staying healthy and optimizing risk factors. As an interventional cardiologist, my goal is to reduce these risks with lifestyle changes and preventive treatments.

For patients who have undergone heart-related events, my goal is to prevent any new events. Preventing heart attacks, stroke, aneurysms, and limb amputation is critical for longevity, mortality, and quality of life. If risk factors are ignored, the progression of vascular disease can create less optimal treatment options, outcomes, and recovery.

Your physician can provide specific tests and screenings to assess how healthy your heart is and what the next steps should be. These include blood tests, stress tests, EKGs, event monitors, vascular ultrasounds, and scans.

Understanding a patient's overall health and family history is critical for determining vascular risk.

Risk Factors Include:

Family History—This factor is unable to be controlled. However, for many individuals with coronary artery disease in their families, living a healthy lifestyle by eating a Mediterranean diet, exercising regularly, reducing stress, and getting good quality sleep is beneficial.

Hypertension—High blood pressure is a silent killer. Hypertension leads to the development of coronary artery disease, heart attacks, and strokes. Controlling blood pressure is critical but, unfortunately, often overlooked. Elevated blood pressure doesn't always show symptoms, so checking it at home or the drug store is wise. The new guidelines suggest a systolic blood pressure of 130 or less. 120/80 is considered an ideal blood pressure range.

Cholesterol—High cholesterol numbers are a precursor to atherosclerosis (plaque buildup in the arteries). Atherosclerosis leads to heart attacks, stroke, and angina (chest pain). There are differing levels of treating cholesterol based on previous events.

- **Primary Prevention:** Primary prevention is treating cholesterol before an event occurs. In this case, we try to get LDL (bad cholesterol) below 100 mg/dL, and HDL (good cholesterol) above 40 mg/dL. The total cholesterol should be under 200 mg/dL.



- **Secondary Prevention:** Secondary prevention is provided after a patient has had a vascular event. We try and get the LDL below 70 for these patients.

Controlling cholesterol with medications is imperative if diet alone is not sufficient. Medications such as statins and new injectable medications are for those who are not at goal.

Diabetes—For individuals with diabetes, we want to maintain strict control of their blood sugar. There is a strong correlation between diabetes and heart disease due to the damaged blood vessels from high glucose.

Controlling blood sugar with medications, diet, and exercise is vital, as is monitoring your blood glucose levels regularly.

Smoking—Smoking causes an array of adverse health effects, including increasing plaque buildup in our arteries, raising bad cholesterol, decreasing good cholesterol, and damaging vessel walls, to name a few. Talk to your physician about a specific smoking cessation plan for you.

If you want to limit your risk at any age, it's imperative to eat a healthy diet, maintain a healthy weight, get regular exercise, cut out bad habits, limit stress, and get high-quality sleep. However, many patients will need interventions, medications, and procedures to maintain quality of life.

Treatment and Monitoring Cardiac Conditions are Paramount

If you have developed heart disease or had a coronary event in the past, you have reduced heart function and our goal is to get your heart working at its most optimal condition. Reduced heart function can lead to congestive heart failure. The cause of which may be related to coronary artery disease or heart muscle dysfunction. This can lead to serious cardiac issues that include shortness of breath, edema (swelling in the legs), arrhythmias which can be life-threatening.

More than 325,000 people will experience sudden cardiac death each year. Causes include heart attack and/or life-threatening arrhythmias.

Multiple treatment options are available depending on the stage of the disease. We use several combined medications, such as beta-blockers, diuretics, blood thinners, and ACE/ARB inhibitors. Surgical procedures include stents, balloons, heart valve replacements, implantable defibrillators (for arrhythmias) and coronary bypass surgery. In end-stage cases, inotropic medications (change force of contractions) can be given to keep a patient's heart pumping adequately and to maintain blood pressure.

Examinations and Routine Visits Save Lives

Getting physical examinations with your primary-care provider and seeing a cardiologist if you have risk factors or any heart disorders are the best way to maintain a healthy cardiac system. If you ignore your symptoms, they will only get worse. Being proactive about your health and practicing preventive methods is the best decision you can make.



To schedule your appointment, please call
Dr. Connelly's office at 941-764-5858.

Terence Connelly, M.D.

Dr. Connelly is an interventional cardiologist with an emphasis in coronary, peripheral vascular intervention, and vein treatments. Procedures include cardiac catheterization, stent deployment, cardiac angioplasty, pacemakers, and stent placement for venous disease.

Dr. Connelly is Board Certified in Internal Medicine, Cardiovascular Disease, and Interventional Cardiology. He is a principal investigator in many national research studies. He is a graduate of Wayne State Medical school, Medical College of Wisconsin residency, and the University of Minnesota cardiology/interventional fellowship.



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PAY ATTENTION TO POTENTIAL SYMPTOMS OF COLORECTAL CANCER

By Dr. Arie Dosoretz



March is National Colorectal Cancer Awareness Month. This initiative began in 2000 and has become a rallying point for thousands of colorectal cancer patients, survivors, caregivers and advocates across the country.

Awareness around this illness is important due to the impact this cancer has as one of the most common malignancies in our country. The numbers are quite staggering. Colorectal cancer affects 1 in 23 men and 1 in 25 women during their lifetimes. It is the second-leading cause of cancer death in the U.S. and third-most diagnosed type of cancer in America. In 2022, the American Cancer Society estimates that doctors will diagnose 106,180 new cases of colon cancer and 44,950 new cases of rectal cancer, for a total of 151,130 colorectal cases this year.

The American Cancer Society and Colorectal Cancer Alliance point out that the demographics of colon and rectal cancer are changing. Colorectal cancer rates are increasing 2% annually for people under age 50 and 1% annually for those ages 50 to 64. This has led the United States Preventative Services Task Force to recommend those with average risk factors start screening for colorectal cancer at age 45.

Colorectal cancer can be traced to the formation of polyps, or small growths, inside the colon or rectum. Identifying and removing polyps is a key to stopping cancer from advancing and spreading.

Symptoms

Whereas other cancers can be more easily detected by a given individual, colorectal cancer can be difficult to be aware of and makes screening more important. A common symptom includes changes in bowel habits such as diarrhea, constipation, or a change in stool consistency. These symptoms of course can also be caused by common conditions such as food poisoning, food allergies, infections, and medications. Additionally, colorectal cancer can present with blood in the stool, abdominal pain, and weight loss. Individuals who notice any altered gastrointestinal symptoms should go see a doctor for further evaluation.

Screening

Medicare and private insurance typically cover the cost of preventative care, including colorectal cancer screening. There are various mechanisms to screen for this cancer including:

- **Stool test:** These lab exams can detect the presence of blood or altered DNA.
- **Flexible sigmoidoscopy:** A short, thin, flexible, lighted tube is inserted into the rectum.
- **Colonoscopy:** A longer tube is inserted inside the rectum and entire colon.
- **Computed tomography colonography:** X-ray imaging and computer reconstruction can produce images of the entire colon.

Physicians will recommend the most appropriate type of screening based on a patient's symptoms, initial exam, and medical history.

Treatment

Colorectal cancer has become an increasingly more treatable form of cancer. Increasing numbers of patients have become curable with improvements in cancer treatment and technology.

The most appropriate combination of treatment is based on a patient's stage and the specific location of a cancerous lesion. Typically, surgery, chemotherapy, and radiation are combined for the majority of rectal cancers. Surgery and chemotherapy are more commonly used for colon cancer treatment.

Radiation therapy precisely targets powerful x-rays into a tumor and the draining lymph nodes. This treatment damages the genetic material inside cancer cells and prevents from growing and spreading. Critically, radiation technology has increasingly allowed physicians to spare normal structures leading to improved short-term symptoms and long-term quality of life.

Side effects of radiation vary based on an individual patient and the specific details around their cancer. The most common side effects of radiation therapy when treating rectal cancer include mild fatigue, altered bowel habits, and increased urinary frequency.

We are proud to provide expert care at Advocate Radiation Oncology. Our board-certified radiation oncologists have trained at our country's most notable institutions and are exceptionally dedicated to patient care. We offer convenient locations across Southwest Florida and treat patients using the industry's newest high-tech cancer-fighting machines, including Varian's Halcyon, Identify and TrueBeam systems. These machines are accurate and powerful. They allow our treatment to eradicate cancer cells while minimizing damage to healthy surrounding tissue.

Colorectal cancer begins with awareness and education so that screening can lead to the earliest diagnosis possible. We should all work together to continue to make impactful strides around this common illness. We are proud to stand alongside our colorectal cancer patients and their loved ones.



About the Author

Dr. Arie Dosoretz is a board-certified radiation oncologist and founding partner at Advocate Radiation Oncology. For more information, please visit AdvocateRO.com.

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WILL MY HEEL PAIN EVER GO AWAY?

The dreaded **Heel Spur Syndrome** or **Heel Pain** is a term that many are unfortunately familiar with. It sidelines elite and novice athletes, alike. Many want to know if their heel pain will ever go away and when they will be able to return to their prior activity level without the recurrence of this offending heel pain?

First, let's start with a basic understanding of plantar heel pain also known as plantar fasciitis (PF). Contrary to what a majority of people believe, it is not the bone spur that causes the pain. Rather, it is caused by damage to the plantar fascia. The plantar fascia is a thick-band in the bottom of your foot that provides arch support and shock absorption. Pain associated with PF is typically isolated to the plantar heel (where the plantar fascia inserts on the heel bone) and can occur in the arch region as the plantar fascia travels from the heel to the ball of your foot. Pain can be severe with your first step in the morning or after being seated for an extended period of time. The pain may improve with movement only to return again. If the pain has been present for a short time, it is mainly inflammatory and a strain of the fascia (acute phase). If the pain has been present longer than six months, it is no longer inflammatory but related to degenerative changes. Chronic scar formation is seen with micro-tears of the fascia in this latter stage.

As an active person or athlete there are many factors that you can control to prevent PF. For instance, your training program plays an integral role. You want a program that gradually increases your activity level. This includes both the length and intensity of your program. For example, if you are a long distance runner your weekly mileage

should gradually increase. Sudden increases greatly increase your risk of developing PF. In addition, one should consider the environment he or she is training in. Athletes should avoid or limit training on hard surfaces like asphalt or uneven terrain. Hills or other steep inclines should also be gradually incorporated rather than sudden changes in one's routine. When training, an individual's exercises should be strategically planned. Activities that are very demanding or have a higher risk of injury (if performed incorrectly) should be performed early in your workout. For example, box jumps have a high risk of Achilles injury and/or plantar fascia injury if done improperly. They are a great example of an exercise that should be performed early in your workout. Footwear is another important factor. A person's footwear should be the appropriate size and be specific for that sport or activity-taking place. Worn down shoes or insoles must never be used during any activity or sport related activity. My recommendation for athletes, especially long distance runners, is to alternate shoes and/or insoles, as well as, changing your footwear or insoles every 6 months (this can vary depending on your activity level, sport, and how often a user alternates their insoles).

Incorporating recovery into one's training program is a preventative measure to aid in the prevention of PF. This include various myofascial release techniques like foam-rolling, hyper-volt, and massage. Stretching is another key component. A tight Achilles tendon directly contributes to developing heel pain. Routinely performing Achilles stretching exercises can significantly reduce the chances of developing heel pain and prevent recurrence. Finally, consideration of one's foot type is essential. For example, someone with flat feet should use some type of orthotics for arch support.

Awareness of potential causes of heel pain and the ability to manage the risks can greatly reduce the likely hood of developing PF and prevent recurrence. If you or someone you know develops heel pain, I highly recommend seeking professional treatment as soon as possible. A professional medical provider will be able to determine the exact cause of the heel pain. Once the etiology of the heel pain is determined, an appropriate treatment plan will be initiated specific to the patient's lifestyle, foot type, and designed around any sport related activity the patient is engaging in. The sooner professional treatment is given; the sooner the patient can return to their prior activity level.

Isin Mustafa DPM, MSHS, AACFAS

For more information, you may contact Dr. Isin Mustafa at Family Foot & Leg Center at (239) 430 - 3668 (FOOT). Family Foot & Leg Center has 8 locations throughout Collier, Lee, & Charlotte Counties to quickly resolve all your foot and ankle problems.

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TAKING CARE OF YOUR EYES IN THE WORKPLACE

By Scott Prickett, O.D.

Each day, roughly 2,000 workers will sustain job-related eye injuries that require medical attention. These injuries vary from simple eye strain from staring at a computer for too long, to trauma that may lead to permanent damage, vision loss and even blindness.

Workplace Eye Wellness Month in March highlights actions you can take to protect your eyes and avoid injury.

QUICK FACTS

- Each year, nearly 25,000 Americans visit the emergency room due to a workplace eye injury.
- 90% of eye injuries could have been avoided by wearing eye protection.
- Approximately 40 percent of eye injuries in the workplace happen in three industries: construction, manufacturing and mining.
- Flying or falling objects, tools, chemicals and particles and sparks are just some of eye injuries that could happen on the job.
- Workplace eye injuries cause \$300 million in treatment, worker's comp and loss of productivity each year.

EYE PROTECTION

There are many hazards that can be found in the workplace - falling objects, flying debris, chemicals, intense light, and heat. Wearing eye protection is the first step in safeguarding yourself from these hazards. It is essential to make sure the eye protection is appropriate for the type of hazards you are protecting against. Eyewear must be American National Standards Institute ANSI-approved and OSHA compliant. You must use special-purpose safety glasses, goggles, face shield or helmet if you are near hazardous radiation welding, chemicals, lasers or fiber optics.

About Quigley Eye Specialists

Dr. Prickett is a Board-Certified Optometrist with Quigley Eye Specialists, a world-class eye care practice specializing in cataracts, laser cataract surgery, glaucoma, iLASIK, dry eye, eyelid surgery, retinal issues, corneal conditions, facial plastic surgery and routine eye care. Dr. Prickett specializes in full-scope optometry including preoperative and post-operative surgical care, primary care, ocular disease treatment and management. Quigley Eye Specialists has served the region for more than 30 years with locations throughout Florida including Sarasota, Venice, Nort Port, Port Charlotte, Punta Gorda, Cape Coral, Fort Myers, Lehigh Acres, Bonita Springs, Naples and Coral Gables.



DIGITAL EYE STRAIN

Working from home is the new norm, and while an office environment may seem safe, digital eye strain is a real workplace problem. Staring at your computer screen, phone, tablet or e-reader for an extended amount of time means you blink less often, which is necessary to keep the surface of the eye moisturized. Your eyes work harder resulting in eye strain, headaches, blurriness, burning, itching and dry eyes as just some of the symptoms you could experience. But computer and phone screens aren't the only culprits. Reading, writing or other near work over an extended amount of time can create the same effects. While the American Ophthalmological Institute has determined these will not cause permanent eye damage, they are still uncomfortable and can inhibit your ability to work. The good news is there are ways to create a home work space that helps avoid these problems. The American Academy of Ophthalmology has these suggestions:

- Sit an arm's length - about 18 to 25 inches - away from your computer screen.
- Follow the 20-20-20 rule. Every 20 minutes, look 20 feet away for 20 seconds. Set a timer on your phone or watch as a reminder. If you are in the middle of a video call, you can achieve this by shutting your eyes for 20 seconds.

- Remember to blink. On average, a person blinks about 15 times per minute. That is cut in half when staring at a computer or phone screen.
- If your computer screen is brighter than your surroundings, your eyes will be working harder to see. Adjusting the room lighting and the contrast on your computer to a comfortable level helps alleviate this problem.
- Your computer screen should be positioned so that your eyes are directed slightly downward instead of straight ahead or up.
- When your eyes start to feel dry, use artificial tears to refresh them.
- Consider a humidifier which adds moisture to the air while minimizing dry eye.
- Progressive lens computer glasses are specifically designed for focusing on computer screens.
- Glass screens on phones offer exceptional picture quality but can also produce a strong glare, aggravating your eyes. To help you can adjust the low light filter setting or use a matte finish to help reduce the glare and help with eye strain.
- The American Academy of Ophthalmology does not recommend blue light-blocking glasses as there is no scientific evidence that blue light coming from a computer screen causes digital eye strain or damage to the eyes.

Taking care to protect your eyes at work is essential to maintaining eye health. If problems persist even after you have followed these suggestions, visit Quigley Eye Specialists for further help in diagnosing your eye condition.

* Information from the American Academy of Ophthalmology®



(855) 734-2020

www.QuigleyEye.com

For more information, call (855) 734-2020 or visit www.QuigleyEye.com.

Treating Venous Ulcers at Joyce Vein & Aesthetic Institute

Venous dysfunction in the legs can lead to painful chronic skin ulcers that will not heal. To resolve this kind of problem correctly, there's only one solution: consult someone with extensive expertise in the field like Douglas H. Joyce, DO, founder of Joyce Vein & Aesthetic Institute in Punta Gorda.

"There are two systems of veins in the leg," explains Dr. Joyce. "The main system, in the middle of the muscles, is called the deep system. The other system is made up of all the veins you see under your skin, and are called the superficial veins. These two systems are connected by perforator veins. If you picture a ladder, with the superficial system being the left rail and the deep system being the right rail, the perforator veins are the rungs on the ladder going across between the two sides. The superficial side of the ladder is under low pressure, and the deep system side is under high pressure. Each perforator vein has a one-way valve. When you relax, the perforator valves open, and blood passively drains from the superficial into the deep system. When you walk, the deep system is compressed, generating the high pressure that returns blood back to the heart against gravity. All the valves in the perforators snap shut, so that the high pressure blood does not move out to the skin veins. "When perforator veins malfunction, each leg movement causes blood to flow backward at high pressure into the superficial system. This increases the pressure in the superficial system dramatically causing damage to the delicate superficial veins and skin. We call this problem chronic venous insufficiency and it is the cause of venous ulcers. Severe intractable ulcers can make life nearly unbearable. Patients suffer with painful, draining wounds which will not heal despite skin grafts and compression. The answer is to remove the reasons for the increased skin vein pressure by treating the dysfunctional perforator veins themselves."

Dr. Joyce has developed a non-invasive laser treatment called single needle ablation to accomplish this. Done in the office setting this procedure is performed through a small needle stick and takes



less than fifteen minutes. "Combined with our other venous laser treatments, we can reverse serious venous disease and heal "untreatable" ulcers that have been present on some cases for over a decade," states Dr. Joyce.

"It's tremendously rewarding to help these patients," adds Dr. Joyce. "Relatively few physicians treat this level of venous disease. We are pleased to be able to provide this care through The Ulcer Center at JVAI, not only to residents of Florida, but also to others who travel from around the country and even overseas to benefit from these procedures.

For more information and to schedule an appointment, call Dr. Joyce at 941-575-0123 or visit www.jvai.com

PATIENT TESTIMONIAL

I saw my leg had a little ulcer. It is not going away unless you fix it internally. Dr. Joyce understands this disease. He is always interested in you the patient. I was eager to come here because I wanted it done and I wanted it done right.

Michael C.



Dr. Douglas H. Joyce, DO, FACOS, FACPh
Cardiovascular & Thoracic Surgery

SPECIALITY

Triple Board Certified Phlebology (Venous Disease) Cardio-Thoracic & Vascular Surgery, and General Surgery

DEGREES

Bachelor and Masters of Science The University of Michigan, Ann Arbor

Doctorate Michigan State University, College of Osteopathic Medicine, East Lansing

Diplomate American College of Phlebology
American College of Osteopathic Surgeons International College of Surgeons

TRAINING

Internship and Surgical Residency Lansing General Hospital, MI

Surgical Fellowship Cardiovascular Thoracic Surgery, Cleveland Clinic Foundation, OH Special Fellow, Department of Cardiopulmonary Perfusion, Cleveland Clinic Foundation, OH Special Fellow, Congenital and Adult Cardiovascular-Thoracic Surgery, Deborah Heart and Lung Center, Browns Mills, NJ

Former Assistant Clinical Professor of Surgery Department of Osteopathic Medicine, Michigan State University College of Osteopathic Medicine UMDNJ-Robert Wood Johnson Medical School, New Brunswick, NJ



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Eating With Purpose for Longevity

By Scott Miller



First Things First: Eat a Balanced Diet

We have all heard this most of our lives. Simply put, the better that you eat, the longer you are likely to live.

A lean, healthy diet will help lower the risk of chronic disease while providing plenty of health-protective nutrients.

The Centenarian Study: Lean Is Key

The New England Centenarian Study at the Boston University School of Medicine observed the lifestyle factors of Centenarians to determine the "secrets" of a long and healthy life. The study has shown that almost all people who reach the age of 100 are lean, particularly men. Obesity may be considered an actual risk factor for early death, so maintaining a healthy weight is one of the most important dietary goals.

Lessons From Okinawa

Okinawa, a group of 161 Japanese islands, boasts the world's longest-living people. They enjoy the lowest rates of heart disease, stroke, and cancer (the three leading killers in the United States). The average Okinawan woman lives to the age of 86 and the average man to 78, compared with 79 and 72, respectively, in the United States. They typically die of natural causes rather than disease. Okinawans eat an average of seven servings of vegetables and fruits daily, along with seven servings of grains, two servings of soy products, omega-3 fatty acid-rich fish several times per week, very few dairy products, and little meat.

Nuts for a Long Life

Researchers tracked 34,000 adults in California beginning in the 1980s (Fraser & Shavlik, 2001). After 12 years, they linked the subjects' consumption of nuts five to six times per week to a longer-than-average life expectancy. Frequent nut consumers lived 1.5 to 2.5 years longer than nut avoiders. This could be due to the protective fatty acids, excellent mineral content, and wealth of phytonutrients.

Mediterranean Diet: Worth a Try?

Last year, the Archives of Internal Medicine observed the lifestyle habits of 380,000 Europeans to determine which people died when, how, and why. This study found that the closer the person's diet conformed to the traditional Mediterranean eating plan, the lower the risk of death. In fact, mimicking the traditional diets of Greece and southern Italy cuts the risk of death from all causes by 20%.

Seeing Green

Age-related macular degeneration is prevalent in seniors aged 65 and up. This progressive disease compromises sharp vision, making it difficult to see details and recognize faces. Studies have shown that a combination of beta-carotene, vitamin C, vitamin E, and zinc can reduce the risk of developing advanced age-related macular degeneration by about 25%. These nutrients are abundant in healthy diets with plenty of fruits, vegetables, whole grains, beans, and nuts.

Spice It Up

Many recent studies have focused on herbs' and spices' health-protecting properties. Sage, oregano, turmeric, cloves, and cinnamon have all been shown to lower fasting blood sugar levels in people with diabetes. Better blood sugar control means prolonged health and a lower risk of damage from diabetes-related maladies.

Dried Fruit: Nature's Candy

Dried fruits such as figs and dates are chock-full of fiber and potassium, which help regulate blood pressure. They pack in many times more antioxidants than other fruits. A 2004 Harvard study showed that eating three or more servings of high-antioxidant fruit per day lowered the risk of age-related maculopathy by 36%.

Keeping the Brain Sharp With Açai Berries

The açai berry is the highest antioxidant fruit in the world. Age-related diseases of the brain such as Alzheimer's or Parkinson's disease have no cure, but research suggests that diets rich in antioxidants and anti-inflammatory polyphenolic compounds may lower the risk of developing age-related neurodegenerative diseases. Such compounds, notably anthocyanins, are abundant in berries and may have the ability to lower oxidative stress and inflammation, thereby promoting brain health.

Ginger for Healthy Joints

Older adults at risk of or suffering from arthritis may want to try ginger to extend pain-free years. Ginger is known to exhibit anti-inflammatory effects that work directly on the joints to help relieve arthritis.

Go Fish?

Researchers at Harvard weighed the risks and benefits of consuming fish. They concluded that the disease risk-reduction benefits of consuming one to two servings of fish per week outweighed the potential harm from mercury exposure, possibly helping to extend healthy years. A myriad of studies have focused on the beneficial effects of the omega-3 fatty acids found in fish. These fats help reduce inflammation and protect the integrity of cell membranes.

Green Tea Covers the Bases

Green tea drinkers reap the benefits of the prevention of cancer, heart disease, skin conditions, atherosclerosis, stress, viruses, arthritis, and type 2 diabetes. These bioactive chemicals protect the body from oxidative damage while maintaining the integrity of the cells' DNA. No wonder so many healthy older adults worldwide drink green tea.

The Big Picture

We all want long, healthy, disease-free lives, and we all know that healthy eating, stress management, exercise, and other positive lifestyle habits help us move closer to this goal.

Call (941) 661-6196 Or Visit SarasotaSeniorConsulting.com For A FREE Consultation!

The Benefits of Quitting Tobacco Use

Quitting tobacco is the single most important thing you can do to improve your health.¹

Despite what you may think, it is never too late to quit smoking! In fact, you can experience several benefits of quitting smoking within minutes of cessation and can enjoy the benefits of quitting for years to come. As soon as a person quits, his or her body begins to heal:



- *20 minutes after quitting:* heart rate and blood pressure drop
- *12 hours after quitting:* the carbon monoxide level in blood drops to normal
- *2 weeks to 3 months after quitting:* blood circulation improves and lung function increases
- *1 to 9 months after quitting:* coughing and shortness of breath decrease. Structures in the lungs begin to heal and clean the lungs, reducing that person's risk of infection. This is critical in fighting illnesses that threaten lung health, such as bronchitis
- *1 year after quitting:* the risk of coronary heart diseases is half that of someone who smokes. Risk of heart attack decreases significantly
- *5 years after quitting:* risk of mouth, throat, esophagus, and bladder cancer is cut in half. Cervical cancer risk is now that of a nonsmoker. Risk of stroke falls to that of a non-smoker after 2-5 years
- *10 years after quitting:* risk of dying from lung cancer is half that of a smoker
- *15 years after quitting:* risk of coronary heart disease is the same as a nonsmoker

Along with these great benefits, quitting tobacco use also reduces the risk of diabetes and improves the health of blood vessels, the heart, and the lungs.²

Kicking the tobacco habit offers some other rewards that you'll notice right away and some that will show up over time. Here are just a few other benefits you may notice:

- Food tastes better
- Your sense of smell returns to normal
- Your breath, hair, and clothes smell better
- Your teeth and fingernails stop yellowing
- Ordinary activities (i.e., climbing stairs or light housework) leave you less out of breath
- You can be in smoke-free buildings without having to go outside to smoke.

References:

1 Tools to Quit: Area Health Education Center (AHEC) Cessation Program Participant Toolkit. Area Health Education Centers. 2018.

2 <https://www.cancer.org/healthy/stay-away-from-tobacco/benefits-of-quitting-smoking-over-time.html#>

Quitting also helps stop the damaging effects of tobacco on how you look, including premature wrinkling of your skin, gum disease, and tooth loss.²

Help quitting tobacco is free! Gulfcoast South Area Health Education Center (GSAHEC), as part of the Group Quit option of Tobacco Free Florida's Quit Your Way program—offers free group quit sessions to help someone quit all forms of tobacco. These group sessions held virtually and in-person, provide information about the benefits of quitting, managing stress and triggers, and will assist you with developing your own customized quit plan. Free nicotine replacement therapy in the form of patches, gum, or lozenges (if medically appropriate and while supplies last) is provided with the session. Attendees will also receive a participant workbook, quit kit materials, and follow up support from a trained tobacco treatment specialist. Contact us today at 866-534-7909 or visit www.tobaccofreeflorida.com/groupquitcalendar to schedule a class or learn more about the program!

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Treating Skin Cancer on the Face Requires Aggressive Removal, along with a Delicate, Aesthetic Eye

Skin cancer is a growing concern. Every hour a person dies of melanoma, and this year alone, over 76,000 new cases of melanoma will be diagnosed. On average skin cancer screenings take about 10 minutes, which could potentially save your life.

Skin cancers often occur on the face, around the eyes, ears, lips and on the nose. When dealing with removing cancerous tissue on the face, patients will require Mohs surgery. While removing the margins of the cancer fully is critical, making the incisions and closures as aesthetically pleasing is also a primary goal.

Mohs micrographic surgery is a safe and effective treatment for skin cancer. During Mohs surgery, cancerous tissue is removed in small sections. While the patient waits, a pathologist examines each tissue specimen for malignant cells. If malignant cells are found, more tissue is removed until the cancer is eradicated. This comprehensive microscopic examination helps to target only cancerous tissue, significantly reducing damage to healthy surrounding tissue. Developed by Frederic E. Mohs, M.D., in the 1930s, Mohs surgery excises not only the visible tumor, but any "roots" extending beneath the surface of the skin. Five-year cure rates of up to 99 percent for first-time cancers and 95 percent for recurring cancers have been documented.

Mohs surgery is primarily used to treat basal and squamous cell carcinomas, the two most common types of skin cancer, although it can be used for melanoma and other types of cancer. Mohs surgery is often recommended for recurring cancers, as well as those in difficult-to-treat areas, such as the nose, eyelids, lips, hairline, hands, feet and genitals, in which preserving as much tissue as possible is extremely important.

The Mohs Surgery Procedure

Mohs surgery is performed as an outpatient procedure in a physician's office. It may be performed by a team of highly trained specialists, each member of which specializes in a different part of the surgery, or by one experienced surgeon capable of performing the entire procedure. During Mohs surgery, the treatment area is numbed with a local anesthetic.



Small layers of skin are removed, and each layer is examined microscopically to see if it contains malignant cells. Excision continues until the cancer is completely removed. Most Mohs procedures can be performed in three or fewer stages and take approximately 4 hours.

At **Luminary Dermatology**, we have three fellowship trained Mohs surgeons, Dr. Cary Dunn, Dr. Shauntell Solomon, and Dr. Harib Ezaldein, and have recently added a highly respected board-certified plastic surgeon, Dr. Michael Van Vliet, who is doing Mohs closures to close the loop on the full spectrum of services for our patients. Patients no longer need to be referred out to a plastic surgeon for closure of their excisions.

Recovery from Mohs Surgery

After Mohs surgery, patients experience mild discomfort, bleeding, bruising, and swelling. Pain medication is prescribed if needed, although most patients require only over-the-counter medication.

Mohs surgery leaves scars, although they are often smaller than those from other excision procedures. Reconstructive procedures, including skin flaps and skin grafts, can reduce the prominence of, or even eliminate, scars; they can be performed at the same time as the Mohs surgery or at a later date. If possible, surgical techniques, including placing stitches in the skin's natural creases or out-of-sight areas, are used to make scarring less visible.

Luminary Medical Group

Luminary Medical Group began as Luminary Dermatology in Sarasota, FL, where the sun is hot, beaches are bustling, and someone always forgets to wear their sunscreen. The multi-specialty group was founded by board-certified dermatologist and fellowship-trained Mohs micrographic surgeon Dr. Cary L. Dunn. We now provide patient-centered medical care to Sarasota, Bradenton, Venice, and many other Southwest Florida communities as well as Edmond, Oklahoma.

Our mission is to provide compassionate care to the people of our community and beyond, with excellence in service, quality, and accessibility.

To schedule your appointment please call 941-926-6553 or visit luminarydermatology.com.



Cary L. Dunn, M.D.



Shauntell Solomon, D.O.



Harib Ezaldein, M.D.



Michael Van Vliet, M.D.





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INFLAMMATION: A COMMON PATHWAY FOR DEADLY DISEASE

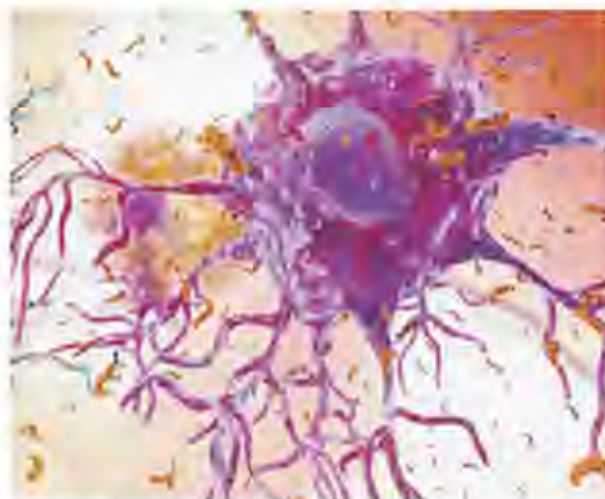
By Nasser Razack, MD, JD

We've all heard of inflammation but what exactly is it? Inflammation is the response of our immune system to injury or infection. When it's short-lived and targeted for specific purposes such as recovering from a cold, it's a wonderful thing. However, long-term chronic inflammation can be deadly. That's because long-term, chronic inflammation results in horrible diseases such as cancer, heart attack, stroke, Alzheimer's disease, etc. Worst of all, chronic inflammation is not painful. Thus, the victims of chronic inflammation develop these deadly disease processes silently without any signs or symptoms.

For example, heart disease which includes stroke is associated with multiple risk factors, some of which include high blood pressure, high cholesterol levels, smoking, and being overweight. We previously thought these risk factors led to the narrowing of blood vessels that supply oxygen to the heart and brain and that progressive constriction of these vessels resulted in heart attacks and stroke. However, more than half of all heart attacks occur in people with normal cholesterol levels. In addition to that, autopsy specimens from deceased heart attack victims demonstrate their vessels were not narrow enough to result in death. We now know that inflammation causes even minor plaques in vessels to erupt like miniature volcanoes, leading to the complete blockage of these blood vessels.

The problem is that inflammation in one part of the body results in inflammation everywhere. For example, inflammation that causes the narrowing of blood vessels doesn't just occur in one organ such as the heart but rather throughout the entire body. When inflammation of blood vessels occurs in the heart, we call this a heart attack. When it occurs in the brain, we call this a stroke and when it occurs in the legs, we call this peripheral vascular disease. When it occurs in very small arteries of the brain, it can result in vascular dementia.

Whether it's a heart attack, stroke, peripheral vascular disease or vascular dementia, it's really the same disease process, namely inflammation. In addition to affecting blood vessels, inflammation also wreaks havoc on the brain. Dementia such as Alzheimer's disease is also caused by brain inflammation. But in this case, inflammation not only affects the blood vessels of the brain but also the spaces between brain cells and the brain cells



themselves. In fact, the parts of the brain more affected by Alzheimer's disease have higher levels of inflammation. This is important because inflammation results in brain cell death. Brain cell death causes brain volume loss which eventually leads to loss of brain function.

Periodontitis, an inflammatory disease of the teeth and gums, is another example of how we can better understand inflammation. This inflammatory disease of the mouth also increases the risk of other inflammatory diseases such as heart attacks, stroke and Alzheimer's disease. Twin studies demonstrate younger patients with severe periodontitis resulted in a fivefold increased risk of developing Alzheimer's disease. How can inflammation of the mouth be related to heart attack, stroke and Alzheimer's disease? Well, inflammation exerts its effects on the body through cells called inflammatory cells. Once these cells are activated, they act like little tiny soldiers programmed to destroy anything that crosses their path. These inflammatory cells are localized in the mouth in periodontitis. However, activated inflammatory cells can travel throughout the entire body via the blood vessels. They can reach the brain and cause stroke or Alzheimer's disease. They can also travel to the heart and cause a heart attack.

I'm sure all of this sounds quite depressing. But the good news is that if we fight inflammation in one part of the body, we fight inflammation everywhere! That's because inflammation is the same central disease process no matter where it's occurring. And the even better news is that we now have real hope in fighting inflammation.

There are incredible health-healing substances in nature called polyphenols. No doubt you've likely heard of some of these marvelous nutrients which are both strong anti-inflammatory agents and antioxidants. Among them is curcumin, which has a unique property that blocks the central regulator of inflammatory reactions within humans called nuclear transcription factor kappa beta. I know that's a mouthful but all you need to know is that it pretty much blocks inflammation in its tracks. Curcumin has also been demonstrated to reduce the formation of beta-amyloid plaque in the brain which is associated with Alzheimer's disease. In addition to curcumin, many other polyphenols have been proven to reduce the incidence of both stroke and heart disease. These polyphenols can also delay the onset of Alzheimer's disease and thus reduce its incidence.

Dr. Nasser Razack, MD, JD, is a Neurointerventional Surgeon who specializes in the endovascular treatment of stroke. He sees the devastating effects of stroke on a daily basis. That's precisely why he formulated Neurcumin® to reduce the effects of inflammation and prevent inflammatory related diseases like stroke, heart attacks and Alzheimer's disease. Neurcumin® is an all-natural nutrient which in addition to curcumin, contains many other polyphenols and other natural agents uniquely formulated to fight inflammation.

Neurcumin®

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You may also call **727-289-7139** or email us at info@neurcumin.com for more information.

Available on Amazon!



About Nasser Razack, MD, JD

Dr. Razack currently practices in Naples, Florida. He dedicates a significant portion of his practice to educating in the diagnosis, treatment and prevention of stroke. He completed his medical training at the University of Virginia in Charlottesville, Virginia. In addition to his medical practice, he currently serves as President of Raztec Health, LLC.

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Lifestyle choices correlate with the health of numerous body systems, including the brain, the microbiome, as well as the immune system's capacity to ward off infectious disease. Most people understand that getting quality sleep, reducing anxiety, exercising, socializing, and eating a nutrient-dense diet are all critical for overall health and wellness.

In addition to healthy lifestyle factors, adding supplements is essential for many people, whether to boost immunity, improve cognition, detoxify, combat an illness, or lose weight.

These days, consumers are savvy and well-educated; they know what they want but choosing supplements wisely can be confusing. Which brands should they trust? It's critical to choose products that are tested and pure without unnecessary additives. Professional Supplement Center can take the guesswork out of the equation and make it easier for clients to find what they need.

It's imperative to seek out the highest-quality brands and to have the opportunity to discuss options with a nutrition specialist.

Professional Supplement Center has been in business since 2002. Founders Debbie Truitt and Sheri Davis established the company based on their mission to provide the highest-quality supplements in the area. Over the past 20 years, they have continued their commitment to provide top professional brands such as Pure Encapsulations, Designs for Health, Douglas Laboratories, Thorne

Research, Neuroscience, Ortho Molecular, Vital Nutrients, Xymogen, Standard Process and Apex Energetics, to name a few.

Longevity and Comprehensive Health

For those interested in immune health, supplements such as vitamins A, C, D, magnesium, quercetin, and zinc are vital. Longevity is of interest to many, yet while a long life sounds great, most would agree that living longer in the healthiest state is the true goal. Along with healthy lifestyle factors, key supplements that promote longevity are NAD, NAC, glutathione, and resveratrol.

Stress and Anxiety

Stress and anxiousness can influence all aspects of life, including emotions, behaviors, sleep, and even the ability to think! Excessive or prolonged exposure to stress can cause long-term damage to the body. There are a variety of vitamins and supplements to support a healthy stress response as well as improve sleep. Herbal adaptogens such as ashwagandha, ginseng, holy basil, and rhodiola are widely recognized to promote balance and long-term wellness. Additionally, a deficiency in B vitamins or minerals may either contribute to or result from stress, and thereby affect the quality of sleep.

What Sets Professional Supplement Center Apart?

From pre and probiotics for a healthy microbiome to multivitamin/mineral options for overall wellness, Professional Supplement Center has you covered.

The experienced, professional staff are always proactive and attentive to answering questions and offering clients curated solutions. Licensed health-care practitioners are available to guide consumers in making educated choices.

Professional Supplement Center specializes in educating its customers and provides an extensive selection of high-quality natural health products to the community. Over 1,800 stocked products are available at the Sarasota store. There are 20,000 additional items available on the website that can be shipped directly to customers or brought in for local pick up.

For more information, please stop by today, call or visit their website at Professionalsupplementcenter.com.

The in-store hours of operation are Monday through Friday, 9 a.m. to 6 p.m., and Saturday, 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. They are located at 5525 Palmer Crossing Circle, Sarasota, FL 34233 (Between Gecko's Grill and Pub and Cafe Barbosa)



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Signs & Symptoms of Hormone Imbalance

What Are the Signs and Symptoms of Low Testosterone and Hormonal Imbalance in Men?

A low level of testosterone in a man means more than just a low sex drive or erectile dysfunction (ED). Hormones are important for regulating most major bodily processes, so a hormone imbalance can affect a wide range of bodily functions.

Symptoms consistent with low testosterone and other cases of hormonal imbalance include:

- Low sex drive
- Erectile Dysfunction (ED)
- Chronic fatigue
- Loss of muscle mass
- Increased body fat
- Mood changes
- Lower mental capacity
- Depression
- Irritability
- Brain Fog
- Decreased bone mass

Additionally, studies have shown there are some conditions that are consistent with low levels of testosterone including:

- Diabetes
- Cardiovascular Disease
- Depression
- Stress
- Anxiety
- High Cholesterol

What Are the Signs and Symptoms of Hormonal Imbalance in Women?

Hormonal imbalances occur when there is too much or too little of a hormone in the bloodstream. Because of their essential role in the body, even the smallest hormone imbalance can cause side effects throughout the body. You may have low estradiol if you are experiencing symptoms of menopause. An increase in UTIs, depression or painful intercourse may also indicate a hormone imbalance in women.

There are a variety of symptoms of hormone imbalance in women including:

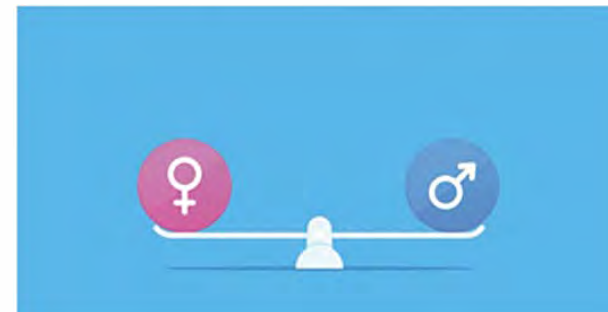
- Fatigue
- Night Sweats
- Hot flashes
- Decreased sex drive
- Insomnia
- Irritability
- Anxiety
- Depression
- Cold hands and feet
- Weight gain

BioTE® Medical was developed to alleviate the myriad of issues that can arise from hormone imbalance. BioTE® Medical only provides bioidentical hormone replacement pellet therapy to those suffering from a hormonal imbalance. Every pellet we make is customized for each individual patient's needs, and we use hormones similar to those found in the human body, which avoid the unwanted side effects of synthetic hormones. These pellets are subcutaneously inserted in a quick, painless insertion, then they dissolve into the body, keeping hormone levels consistent throughout the day and avoiding the rollercoaster effects from other forms of hormone therapy.

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Identify with the Symptoms of Hormonal Imbalance, What Do I Do Next?

- A RAVE Medical Provider will test your current hormone levels.
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- Immediately after your consultation, or a day in the future, your pellet insertion will be completed.



Why BioTE?

1 Million + Insertions

BioTE Medical has performed over one million pellet insertions, making us one of the leaders in bioidentical hormone replacement therapy, or BHRT.

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Health Insurance – 2022 Enrollment Periods and Exceptions

Don't wait: Medicare Advantage Open Enrollment ends March 31

By UllaUndine Merritt (Dee) National Producer Number (NPN) 8853366

Did you know that if you're unhappy with your Medicare Advantage Plan (Medicare Part C), you have options? Each year, there's a Medicare Advantage Open Enrollment Period from January 1 – March 31. During this time, if you're in a Medicare Advantage Plan and want to change your health plan, you can do one of these:

- Switch to a different Medicare Advantage Plan with or without drug coverage
- Go back to Original Medicare and, if needed, also join a Medicare Prescription Drug Plan

If you switch Medicare Advantage Plans or go back to Original Medicare with or without a Medicare drug plan, your new coverage will start the first day of the month after your new plan gets your request for coverage. Keep in mind, if you go back to Original Medicare now, you may not be able to buy a Medicare Supplement Insurance (Medigap) policy.

Your new plan will be effective the 1st of the following month.

Special Enrollment Periods:

If any of the following occurs:

- You lose your current Coverage (nonpayment is excluded)
- You have a chance to get other coverage
- Your plan changes its contract with Medicare
- You become eligible for Medicare and Medicaid
- You qualify for extra help with Medicare Prescription Drugs
- You dropped a Medigap Policy for the 1st time within the last 12 months
- Special Needs Plans - New or no longer qualify
- MOVING out of the AREA or Moving to a NEW Area.



Dates and deadlines for 2022 health insurance – Health Insurance Marketplace.

Important: 2022 Open Enrollment ENDED January 15

* You qualify for a Special Enrollment Period if you've had certain life events, including losing health coverage, moving, getting married, having a baby, or adopting a child. Depending on your Special Enrollment Period type, you may have 60 days before or 60 days following the event to enroll in a plan.

Individual/Family – There are other options available if you do not have pre-existing conditions. These plans can be a lot less expensive especially if you do not qualify for government subsidy. There are national carriers that offer very good plans with comprehensive coverage.

International Travel - Most of our US plans do not have us covered when leaving the United States, including Cruises. You should always take a comprehensive Medical Travel Insurance Policy. They are a lot less than you think and can make a world of a difference.

Pet Insurance – Our fur babies need insurance coverage too. The younger you start the less it costs. As vet bills escalate, most of us would do anything for our 4-legged loved ones. Why not cover them as well? There are a wide range of deductibles, copays, etc. In most cases coverage starts for less than \$1.00 a day. Pre-existing medical conditions in most cases are NOT covered. So, the earlier the better.

You should really work with a local broker to explore all your options. Don't invite strangers into your house or give them your personal information over the phone. With social media, i.e.: Facebook, WebEx solicitation, if you do not know them, please be careful. There are so many scams out there. Meet with or call a local agent, build a relationship and, if in the future you have a question, you can go back and see them.

Also remember when moving you may have a special enrollment period to apply or change your health insurance coverage. Also check your wills and trusts, and make sure they follow Florida's laws and guidelines. Establish yourself with a local Insurance Broker, Attorney and CPA. Ask a professional; most of the time your first consultation is at no charge.

To learn more about your options, call to schedule an appointment:

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HEALTHY AGING: WHAT DOES IT REALLY REQUIRE?

Regenerative Medicine May Play a Larger Role in Healing Than Most People Realize

By Physicians Rehabilitation

We hear so much about Blue Zone centenarians' lifestyles and thoughts on how they age so well without major disease or illness, but when it comes to healthy aging, it's not just about what we eat, exercise, and socialization, although these are definitely critical. However, it is important to mention that the medical treatment you receive is highly subjective to your outcomes, overall health and wellness.

What do we mean by that? Many doctors over prescribe medications to mask your symptoms but these usually fail to get to the root cause of your disorder. If you are injured or suffer from chronic pain, many surgeons will tell you surgical intervention is necessary, but is it? Often these treatment plans leave people sicker, with multiple other symptoms and surgery many times, doesn't relieve the problem long term.

Regenerative medicine is different because it helps the body heal from within on multiple levels. It is never a bandage approach, and it aims to treat the root cause of your condition.

If you want to age well, you might want to reconsider your thoughts on standard treatment. In the case of musculoskeletal conditions, it's always best to start with conservative approaches. Surgery is permanent; there is no going back once you have a knee or shoulder replacement. While those might be necessary in severe cases, they can be treated with regenerative therapies that offer significant optimal restoration.

Regenerative Medicine

The purpose of Regenerative medicine is it to utilize the body's own ability to regenerate cells and tissues that have been damaged back to full functionality. When used in orthopedics, the goal is to regenerate soft tissues, cartilage, muscles, and tendons. Regenerative Medicine should be the first recommendation, and in many cases, it is the only treatment necessary when dealing with muscle strains, tears. When it comes to joint dysfunction or tears such as with sports injuries, physical therapy is also extremely beneficial as an add on treatment.



AT PHYSICIANS REHABILITATION THE TWO PRIMARY REGENERATIVE MEDICAL THERAPEUTICS FOR MOST SPORTS INJURIES ARE VISCOSUPPLEMENTATION AND PLATELET RICH PLASMA (PRP) THERAPIES

Viscosupplementation

Viscosupplementation is an injectable substance that mimics the synovial fluid found naturally in the joint. Synovial fluid is a high concentration of Hyaluronic Acid (HA) and is used to help protect the joint, act as a cushion and protector against damage and most importantly acts as a lubricant to enable smooth function of the joint. As you age, your body supplements with less Hyaluronic Acid (synovial fluid) and an increasingly less viscous Hyaluronic Acid replaces your thick and very well lubricating HA. This lack of fluid creates dried out joints which leads to cartilage, tissue, muscle, and bone breakdown – leading to Osteoarthritis and making it easier to have tissue and muscle damage within and around the joint.



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The procedure can be done in our office and only takes a few minutes. After locally numbing the area of concern, the procedure is monitored under a fluoroscopic image, which is a live X-ray. This allows us to see the inside of your joint while it is in motion and during the injection process. Using the fluoroscope, the practitioner will have the ability to see exactly where the Hyaluronic Acid is being placed to make sure it is in the joint space – because if it is not, it will do NO GOOD! You'll receive approximately five injections at one week apart. The results of the cartilage enhancement will last for around six months or longer. Physicians Rehabilitation has become the expert on providing great results when this process is paired with physical therapy. Many of our patients report feeling pain relief immediately, while others cumulatively see results within a few short weeks.

PRP (Platelet-Rich Plasma)

Fortunately for our patients today, advances in science have allowed us to find new and targeted approaches to treating degeneration and injuries. Platelet-rich plasma or PRP is an "autologous blood therapy" that uses a patient's own blood components to stimulate a healing response in damaged tissues. PRP provides an alternative to surgery by promoting safe and natural healing by spiking your body's natural ability to heal by using your own growth factors and proteins in your blood!

Research studies and clinical practice have shown PRP therapy to be very effective at relieving pain and returning patients to their normal lives. Both ultrasound and MRI images have shown definitive tissue repair after PRP therapy, confirming the healing process. The need for surgery can also be greatly reduced by treating injured tissues before the damage progresses and the condition is irreversible.

Physicians Rehabilitation

Physicians Rehabilitation is a patient-focused practice that provides comprehensive care to eliminate your pain non-surgically. We evaluate each patient and implement an individual care plan specifically designed to alleviate your pain and dysfunction. Trained and licensed providers, with years of clinical experience, work together to provide this plan of care that addresses the specific concerns and problems of each patient.

Chronic Pain: How CBD Can Help

When you're dealing with chronic pain, it's difficult to focus on anything other than your discomfort. The agonizing and sometimes debilitating pain can cause us to lose out on the important things, like spending time with our families, being productive at work, and even the simplest daily activities can require monumental strength to muster through them. In the U.S. over 100 million people reportedly suffer from some form of chronic pain. Living with pain on a daily basis can become intolerable and for this reason, many people suffer with addiction.

Pain Management Addiction

The most common treatment for chronic pain is to mask it with narcotic prescription pain medications. Narcotics like Opioids are highly addictive, and our state is currently leading the country in abusing the drug and overdose episodes.

The CDC reports that nearly half of all opioid-related deaths are due to the narcotic being prescribed for pain related circumstances such as lower back pain, nerve and joint disorders, arthritis, and spinal injury. And opioid related deaths are an epidemic.

The bigger issue that many pain doctors won't tell you is that after long-term use, narcotics fail to work. This is known as treatment resistance. So, where do you go from there? Narcotic use for pain is a bottomless pit of delusion and dependence.

CBD for Chronic Pain

CBD Oil can significantly help countless individuals with chronic pain. Our brain and nerve cells have cannabinoid receptors, so our bodies naturally react

to CBD. The structure of cannabidiols interacts directly with our cells. Our natural endocannabinoid system works synergistically with CBD creating a multitude of beneficial reactions in the body. The endocannabinoid cells have tiny receptors that take in chemicals and produce responses. This natural system in our bodies regulates things like pain-reception, mood, sleeping, immunity, pleasure, memory and much more.

Hemp Joi has numerous types of CBD to choose from including popular flavored CBD tinctures.

1000 mg Broad Spectrum Tincture Flavor Me CBD

This tincture provides 33 mg of CBD and several other cannabinoids per milliliter. Purchase it by itself or select a flavor packet to enhance your experience. This tincture has no THC.

CBD derived from Hemp Oil is becoming a trusted source by many individuals for its multiple benefits.

The Quality of Hemp Products is Critical

Strict analysis and product quality through highly regarded labs such as Kaycha. This process and certification make certain that your hemp products are clean, free of mycotoxins, heavy metals and other harmful substances.

Hemp Joi offers multiple varieties of products from gummies to tinctures and salves. Hemp Joi is also a carrier of the highly sought out Delta 8 products.

What is Delta 8?

Delta 8 is derived from THC and is less potent and is thought to have less psychoactive components than Delta 9. According to the National Cancer Institute, Delta 8 is described in the following way:

Delta-8-Tetrahydrocannabinol

An analogue of tetrahydrocannabinol (THC) with antiemetic, anxiolytic, appetite-stimulating, analgesic, and neuroprotective properties. Delta-8-tetrahydrocannabinol (delta-8-THC) binds to the cannabinoid G-protein coupled receptor CB1, located in the central nervous system; CB1 receptor activation inhibits adenylyl cyclase, increases mitogen-activated protein kinase activities, modulates several potassium channel conductance's and inhibits N- and P/Q-type Ca²⁺ channels. This agent exhibits a lower psychotropic potency than delta-9-tetrahydrocannabinol (delta-9-THC), the primary form of THC found in cannabis.

About Hemp Joi

It all started back in 2019, we set out to change the way the world deals with chronic aches and pains. Having a background in functional medicine and a passion for entrepreneurship, we set out to bring quality products to the greater SW Florida area and beyond.

We were inspired by family members, in the massage therapy industry, that kept getting requests from clients to use CBD oils because of their natural healing properties.

We felt this was a great and underserved need, so we began our search for the most natural most authentic CBD oils and lotions.

Please visit us at hempjoi.com, stop by, or call us to find out more at (239) 676-0915.



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Defeat Gum Disease

There is a silent oral disease affecting more than 80% of adults. Chances are you either have had or are currently battling periodontal (gum) disease. Unfortunately, in many cases, the disease goes undetected until painful symptoms begin occurring. At which time the disease and any adverse conditions have already set in. Because there are no early signs of periodontal disease, it often goes untreated until the physical symptoms surface and by then the concern is treatment not prevention. It is extremely important for everyone to have regular dental check ups at the recommended six month interval. Without these check ups and proper oral care, periodontal disease can silently cause not only oral health problems but can also contribute to other major health concerns.

Periodontal disease, also known as gum disease, is the chronic infection of the soft tissue around the teeth caused by plaque producing bacteria. The gums hold the teeth in place. As the gums become infected, they loosen their hold on the teeth and pockets are formed. These pockets collect debris and cause more infection and bone loss to the tooth. Gum disease is infectious and contagious. It can spread from tooth to tooth in the mouth and from one person's mouth to another through saliva.

As with other diseases, prevention is key to good oral health. It is important for everyone to practice diligent, thorough, and proper oral care by scheduling check ups every six months. At which time, your dentist will be able to detect and treat any signs of periodontal disease before symptoms begin to show and the damage is done. As mentioned earlier, most people do not know they have periodontal disease until they begin suffering from any combination of the following signs:

- Chronic bad breath
- Red or swollen gums
- Bleeding gums especially after tooth brushing
- Tender or sore gums
- Loose or shifting teeth
- Receding gums
- Sensitive teeth



If you have been diagnosed with periodontal disease, there are various treatment plans your dentist may recommend depending on the severity of your case. The most important action is meticulous at home daily oral care. Teeth must be brushed twice or more times each day for at least two minutes and flossed at least once per day. Other treatments include oral rinses, periodontal cleanings, and sometimes surgery.

Traditional periodontal surgery involves cutting and suturing of the gums and recovery time can be long and painful. With the advancement of modern laser technology, there is an alternative. Joseph H. Farag, DMD offers a better alternative for patients battling periodontal disease. Dr. Farag offers patients laser-assisted new attachment procedure (LANAP™) which is a no-cut, no-sew procedure to treat mild to advanced periodontal disease. The advancements in laser surgery techniques, have made treating periodontal faster and less painful. LANAP™ is much less invasive than traditional surgery, allowing patients to return to work the next day if desired.

Even with the benefits of LANAP™ it is obviously best to practice good oral care. The most important preventative measure to avoid the insidious gum disease is to take excellent care of your teeth. Proper cleaning at least twice a day is imperative. The goal is to keep the bacteria that cause the plaque at very low levels.

If your gums are painful, red, or swollen don't ignore the signs; make an appointment today that may save your teeth and gums. Treating periodontal disease sooner is always better than later.

Benefits of LANAP™

EASY – LANAP™ is about as EASY as erasing a blackboard – unlike older techniques, there is no cutting and no suturing of the gums.

MINIMAL DISCOMFORT – Both during and post procedure, the patient experiences very minimal discomfort with LANAP™ than with prior standard surgery techniques.

SHORTER PROCEDURE TIME – It takes less time to complete LANAP™ than traditional surgery. Typically it takes is two 2-hour visits to the office and two follow up visits. Traditional surgery requires four sessions of about one hour each, with subsequent visits for suture removal and additional check-ups.

LESS GUM LOSS – LANAP™ minimizes the loss of gum tissue, traditional surgery often involves removing a significant amount of gum tissue. This tissue loss can lead to sensitive teeth since your roots are exposed. Also, if the treatment needs to be performed again in the future, you have not removed the bone and gums during the first LANAP™ treatment. Typically with LANAP™, any gum tissue shrinkage is actually due to reduced swelling of the area that was previously diseased and inflamed.

SHORT RECOVERY – Many patients fully recover from LANAP™ within 24 hours. In most cases, patients feel just fine post surgery and daily activities are not interrupted. On the other hand, recovery after traditional surgery can take up to 4 weeks during which patients can experience considerable pain and swelling.

SAFE – LANAP™ with the PerioLase is SAFE for patients with health concerns such as diabetes, heart disease, high blood pressure or those taking medications such as Coumadin or Cyclosporine.

Dr. Joseph Farag - Port Charlotte Dentalcare

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www.Drfarag.com

Kidney Disease May Increase the Risk of Hearing Loss

By Dr. Noël Crosby, Au.D.

Hearing loss effects individual of all ages for multiple reasons; however, there is evidence that those with kidney disease or kidney failure, have a high risk of developing hearing loss.

An article published by the Kidney Foundation suggests the following:

Hearing Loss is Common in Patients with Moderate Chronic Kidney Disease

Older adults with moderate chronic kidney disease (CKD) have a higher prevalence of hearing loss than those of the same age without CKD, according to a new report published today in the American Journal of Kidney Diseases, the official journal of the National Kidney Foundation.

An Australian research team assessed over 2,900 individuals aged 50 and older, including 513 with moderate chronic kidney disease (defined as a glomerular filtration rate or a measure of kidney function that is below 60). Of those with CKD, over 54% reported some level of hearing loss compared to only 28% of the rest of the group. Nearly 30% of the CKD participants showed severe hearing loss compared with only 10% of the non-CKD participants.

"Hearing loss is commonly linked to syndromal kidney disease. However, this study suggests a strong tie to CKD in general," said study author Professor David Harris, Associate Dean of Sydney Medical School-Westmead at the University of Sydney. "The link can be explained by structural and functional similarities between tissues in the inner ear and in the kidney. Additionally, toxins that accumulate in kidney

failure can damage nerves, including those in the inner ear. Another reason for this connection is that kidney disease and hearing loss share common risk factors, including diabetes, high blood pressure and advanced age."

No matter the cause of your hearing loss, treating is critical.

Signs that you have hearing loss, or your hearing aids may not be providing enough benefit

- Have difficulty hearing conversations, especially with background noise?
- Often ask people to repeat themselves.
- Often misunderstand what people say?
- Have trouble hearing on the telephone?
- Turn up the volume on the TV louder than others in the room prefer?
- Feel people often mumble when they talk?
- Struggle to hear sounds of nature such as birds chirping or rain falling?
- Find yourself agreeing, smiling, or nodding during conversations when you're not sure what's been said?
- Regularly withdraw from conversations because it's too difficult to hear.
- Read lips to understand what people are saying?

Why you should see an Audiologist

If you are experiencing hearing loss, it's important to seek a qualified audiologist, because they are trained to get you the best outcome and resolution for your specific issue. If you've noticed that it's difficult to hear conversations in a noisy atmosphere, or you feel the need to adjust your television volume much higher than before, it's vital for you to have your hearing checked.

Perhaps you or your loved one keeps asking for people to repeat themselves, or you can't quite pick up where sounds are coming from; if this is the case, don't wait until your hearing loss gets any worse, schedule your appointment as soon as you possibly can.

ADVANCED HEARING SOLUTIONS

Using the latest and most sophisticated technology, we determine if you have hearing loss—and, if you do, we determine the degree and type of hearing loss. If your hearing loss requires medical or surgical intervention, we can refer you to a physician (otologist or neurologist) for appropriate treatment. If your type of hearing loss can best be treated with the use of hearing aids and/or other assistive listening devices (which is true in the great majority of cases), we can select any of a wide range of hearing devices and custom fit them to your ear, programmed to augment your hearing at those frequency levels where your hearing loss is greatest.

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BEFORE YOU SIGN READ CAREFULLY

By James W. Mallonee

There is an old saying "there is no free lunch." Recently, I have been bombarded with cards requesting my presence at a lunch or dinner to learn about retirement products called equity indexed annuities and indexed universal life insurance contracts. The name of the products is a mystery and not well understood by most lawyers and in some cases the sales personnel touting them. Its this failure to fully understand the product that causes buyers to be seduced into buying a product only to learn that they made a mistake.

The major selling point of these products are the guarantee's that are expressed during the presentations. The biggest selling point is the guarantee of protected losses in the event the equity market goes negative as was seen during the COVID-19 market crash. The term equity used in the title of the product is an indicator that as the stock and bond market goes, your annuity either gains or loses value. Its this value that increases your payouts or can also reduce it depending on what the equity market is doing. In essence, you are handing over money to a company who is investing it with a guaranteed payout either immediately or in the future. The size of the payout is based on the market rising or falling. The idea being that the risk is on the investment company to keep the money coming in to pay you.

The guarantees on the loss side may be stated to say that they act as a stop loss where your investment can never go negative. For example, you handed over \$10,000.00 and that amount is guaranteed never to be less regardless of what happens in the market. In essence the investment company is absorbing the losses should there be any in exchange for any profits above a certain percent they get to keep. Thus, if the market increases over eight percent, the company gets to keep that 8+ percent. Seems fair on the surface where the risk is shared in exchange for absorbing losses. While the stop loss is guaranteed, the cap on the high side may not be.

Some of the problems that are beginning to appear from the free lunch presentations are the documents expressing the terms of the indexed annuity. A close



look at the terms may show that the guaranteed stop loss is guaranteed for only one year as well as the gains on the cap. You need to search for those paragraphs in the terms of the contract called cap rate minimums. Unfortunately, many people rely on the verbal explanations of the selling personnel who may not fully understand all of the terms of the contract or intentionally avoid them.

You may also discover that the surrender value of the products is extended out multiple years to prevent you from abandoning the investment. Some of the surrender values consist of percentages from your initial or present investment over a ten-year period.

Trying to get a law firm to go to battle and protect your interest in being over-sold is difficult because the defense will focus on you having had the opportunity to fully read the materials and the cost to pursue such a claim by a legal team may far exceed the return for damages. Of course, there is also the embarrassment of having your admission to failing to read and understand the product you purchased.

The alternatives are to compare exchange traded index mutual funds versus the product you are being sold. What would have been the difference in value between an exchange index fund and the annuity you purchased is usually the means a law firm will use in protecting your interest. The comparison is used to show what you would have gained in a cap free product versus the equity indexed contract you purchased. If the difference is significant, then the potential for damages is much higher making your case more opportunistic to a law firm.

Another stumbling block is where are you allowed to seek relief. Some contracts limit your relief to arbitration as opposed to a court proceeding. Lately, what is being seen are equity indexed annuities must be filed in court to obtain relief. The issue is what state are the court proceedings allowed to be brought in.

The message you should be receiving from this article is to be careful. If you do not understand the sales pitch, get the literature and read the terms carefully. If you still do not fully understand the ups and downs, seek out a professional who understands the terms and can advise you on the consequences should you sign up. Then do your own math against a mutual fund indexed in the same category as the product being sold to you. Compare the market increases and decreases over time for both products and make an informed conclusion on what you are buying. Remember, there are no free lunches.

This article is intended for informational use only and is not for purposes of providing legal advice or association of a lawyer - client relationship



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.

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9 Ways to Prepare for a Virtual Showing

Tomorrow's market will likely be a mix of in-person and virtual showings. Here's how you can make the best of your virtual showing.

1: Declutter. Clutter is a major distraction when buyers are viewing a home. You want them to focus on all the great features of the house, not look at the stack of mail cluttering the kitchen counter.

2: Depersonalize. Remove items like framed family photos and memorabilia. It's hard for a buyer to picture living in the home if they see photos of you everywhere.

3: Remove all signs of your pet. In the same way that you should depersonalize, tuck away your pet's toys, bowl and bed. Not everyone is a pet person.

4: Turn on lights and open doors. To minimize the surfaces your Realtor® is touching, turn on all the lights and open all doors before your Realtor walks through to livestream or film your home.

5: Open blinds. Natural light is an essential when filming a home. Open the blinds and let as much light in as possible so the camera picks up all the beautiful details of each room.



6: Plan the route around the house. If you're showing the home without a Realtor present, be sure to work with your agent to plan a clear route around the home that shows off each room and is clear of trip hazards.

7: Think about your prospective buyer. If your Realtor is doing the showing, be sure to tell them some personal stories or unique details about the home so they can relay it in the livestream or video.

8: Tackle outdoor spaces. Prune any overgrown landscaping, cut back tree branches and mow the lawn.

9: Clean up the front entrance.

The walkway to your property and the front entrance are your home's first impression. Power wash outside, touch up paint in the entryway and clear out any dirt and grime that has collected around the edges.

BOMBAERT / GETTYIMAGES.COM
Source: Florida Realtors®

Contact Denise Henry Today.

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A PAINFUL BLADDER CONDITION

What You Need to Know About Interstitial Cystitis

Interstitial Cystitis (IC/BPS) is a bladder condition that often gets misdiagnosed as a urinary tract infection (UTI) in the early stages. Interstitial Cystitis lingers and unlike a UTI, there is no infection present; however, it is a very painful disorder that causes pressure, discomfort, frequency, and an urgency to urinate. IC/BPS inflames and irritates the bladder and can cause scarring and stiffness. This disorder can affect both men and women. With interstitial cystitis, these pelvic nerves miscommunicate with the brain, and patients may feel the need to urinate more often and with smaller volumes of urine than normal.

It is estimated that approximately 12 million people have IC/BPS. It disrupts daily living activities and sleep, and it is a relentless disorder that is often gets underdiagnosed.

The following is information provided by the Urology Foundation:

Causes of Interstitial Cystitis

Experts do not know exactly what causes IC/BPS, but there are many theories, such as:

- A defect in the bladder tissue, which may allow irritating substances in the urine to penetrate the bladder.
- A specific type of inflammatory cell, called a mast cell. This cell releases histamine and other chemicals that lead to IC/BPS symptoms.
- Something in the urine that damages the bladder.
- Changes in the nerves that carry bladder sensations, so pain is caused by events that are not normally painful (such as bladder filling).
- The body's immune system attacks the bladder. This is similar to other autoimmune conditions.

No specific behaviors (such as smoking) are known to increase your risk of IC. Having a family member with IC/BPS may increase your risk of getting IC/BPS. Patients with IC/BPS may have a substance in the urine that inhibits the growth of cells in the bladder tissue. So, some people may be more likely to get IC/BPS after an injury to the bladder, such as an infection.

There are ways to alleviate the pain, but the treatment options are done through phases to best treat the patient's individual symptoms and thresholds.



These phases of treatment include:

Lifestyle Changes

- Pelvic Floor Physical Therapy
- Diet and Exercise
- Stress Reduction

Medications

- Oral and intravesical drugs can be administered. Intravesical drugs are administered directly into the bladder via a catheter.

Neuromodulation, Ulcer Cauterization, and Injections

- Neuromodulation delivers safe and harmless electrical currents to the damaged areas and nerves.
- Ulcer Cauterization-If there is an ulcer present, a urologist can cauterize it to remove and alleviate the issue.
- Injections can include steroid injections to alleviate pain, pressure and urgency or Botox injections to paralyze the muscles temporarily, which helps with urgency.

Cyclosporine

- Cyclosporine is an immunosuppressant and is reserved for only advanced cases that are not responding to other treatment.

Surgery

- Most patients do not require surgery. If necessary, a urologist will perform surgery to try and repair or strengthen the functions of the bladder.

Source:
<https://www.urologyhealth.org/urology-a-z/i/interstitial-cystitis>

If you have pain, pressure, urgency, or frequent urination, don't put off seeing a urologist, as these conditions only progress with time. Getting a proper diagnosis and early treatment is critical.

The Center for Urogynecology and Female Pelvic Health in Venice, Florida, provides comprehensive and personalized care in a relaxed, spa-like office. Under the care of John Devine, MD, a fellowship-trained urogynecologist, the practice specializes in women's pelvic health and urogynecology, providing care for women of all ages, from adolescents to adults.

Taking a patient-centric approach to care, Dr. Devine schedules ample time for patient appointments. He also makes himself directly available to his patients to answer any clinical questions.

The Center for Urogynecology and Female Pelvic Health provides comprehensive evaluations of female pelvic health concerns. Services include gynecology care to manage general health and wellness, as well as the evaluation and treatment of conditions and symptoms arising from menopause.

The practice also specializes in urogynecology, which is an OB/GYN subspecialty that focuses on the diagnosis and treatment of female urinary incontinence and pelvic floor disorders, like pelvic organ prolapse.

The Center for Urogynecology and Female Pelvic Health also provides care to women struggling with interstitial cystitis or fecal incontinence. Additionally, Dr. Devine offers consultations and surgical treatment for women experiencing complications from mesh.

For patient-centric care from an experienced physician with friendly and accommodating staff, call The Center for Urogynecology and Female Pelvic Health, or request an appointment today. Please call 941-457-7700.

Center for Urogynecology and
Female Pelvic Health
John B Devine, MD
941.457.7700
www.johndevinemd.com

Maintaining Healthy Friendships

By Pastor Timothy Neptune

The first step is to realize that you really do NEED friends.

Solomon, the wisest man that ever lived said, *"As iron sharpens iron, so one person sharpens another."* Prov. 27:17

That means that we make each other better. It seems pretty important to God that we have good friendships. The Bible is full of examples of this.

Think about the amazing friendship of Jonathan and David. Jonathan warned David that his life was in danger at the hands of Jonathan's own father, King Saul.

This warning allowed David to take action and avoid harm, and ultimately this act of true friendship allowed David to take the throne.

Friends look out for each other. They should have each other's back. Your friends are the ones who will be there for you when everything in your life is falling apart.

The second step is to be friendly and willing to meet new people. The Bible says, *"A man who has friends must himself be friendly..."* Prov. 18:24

Put a smile on your face, stick out your hand and meet new people. Opportunities abound for making new friends if you are willing to actively pursue new relationships. Get involved in a local church, join a social organization, volunteer at the local schools or another non-profit organization. These are all great ways to meet new people and do good in the community at the same time.

The third step to building relationships is to make yourself vulnerable even at the risk being rejected. The reality is that not everyone is going to like you. And, you are not going to like everyone.

Look for people with similar interests or a common background. If you don't connect with someone, just move on. You will certainly find several good friends if you keep working towards making friends.

You will find the fourth step most helpful if you make it a natural part of your life: put other's needs ahead of your own. The Bible says it like this:

³*Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves,*
⁴*not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others.* Phil. 2:3-4

Have you ever met people who want you to listen to all of the details about their life but then they never bother to ask about yours? Be interested in other people. In humility, don't try to "one up" their stories. Just listen, smile, and ask genuine questions. Get to know them.

If you want to make friends, get interested in other people. Discover their story. Dale Carnegie writes, "You can make more friends in two months by becoming interested in other people than you can in two years by trying to get other people interested in you."



You might find it helpful to evaluate how you talk with other people. Are you genuinely interested in others or does every conversation revolve around you? Do you make yourself the hero of every story? Do find it necessary to talk about your successes and achievements? Are you trying to impress people or relate to people?

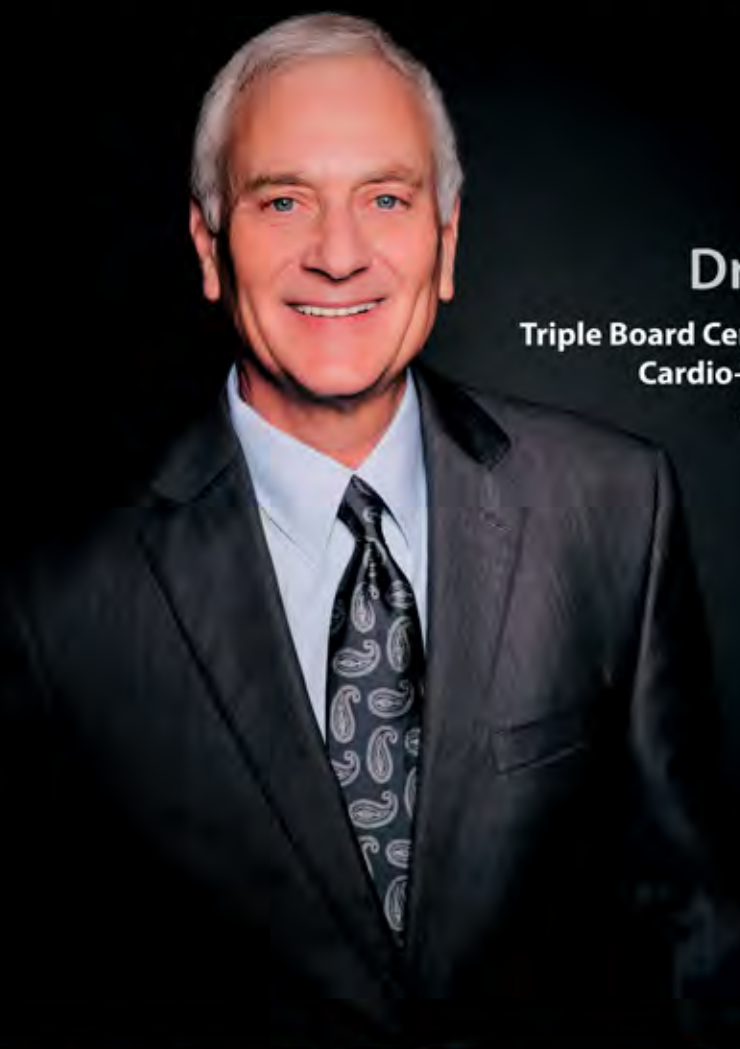
If you really want to make friends, get interested in other people. Learn about them. Listen to their stories and ask questions. If you listen and genuinely care about others, you'll have more friends than you can handle in a short time.

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