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# **Health & Wellness**®

MAGAZINE

February 2023

Lee Edition - Monthly

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# HEART HEALTH:

## Advanced Methods for Lowering Cholesterol and Reducing Plaque

By Dr. Doreen DeStefano, NhD, APRN, DNP

**E**ach year 370,000 deaths occur from coronary heart disease. To date, heart disease is the leading cause of death in the United States. Being proactive about heart health is always best, which requires lowering stress levels, exercise, eating healthy, limiting alcohol, and quitting smoking. Along with these methods, many individuals face surgeries or procedures to improve their heart and vascular health like pacemakers implantations, stents, grafts, and medications. However, many people seek out chelation therapy, which uses disodium EDTA (ethylene diamine tetra-acetic acid) to bind to the calcium in the plaque buildup in the arteries. Plaque buildup, also known as atherosclerosis, can lead to high cholesterol, narrowing of the arteries, limited oxygen-rich blood flow, heart attacks, and strokes.

### Chelation for Heart Health

Chelation has been around for many years, but more recent studies are providing in-depth information that makes EDTA chelation therapy at the forefront of many physician's and patient's minds.

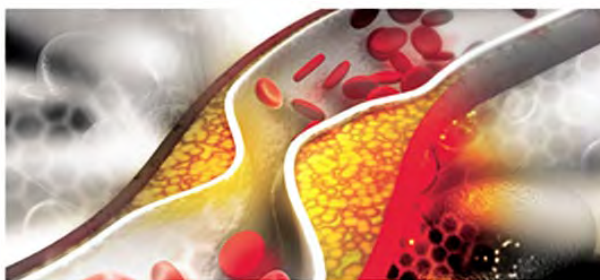
Alternative Medicine such as chelation IV therapy has been intensely criticized by mainstream medicine for many years, so much so that a significant 2002 cardiovascular trial was conducted to refute any chance that chelation treatment worked so that physicians could deter their patients from asking for the procedure.

Today, people are much more educated and open to various types of treatment for numerous diseases and disorders because they have heard from their peers or read medically-based articles and white papers about how it has helped and cured individuals that suffer from chronic and acute illnesses.

A trial called the TACT (Trial to Access Chelation Therapy) was conducted on individuals that had suffered from a heart attack(s) in the past. The trial was meant to debunk chelation therapy by proving that it does not work. However, the complete opposite conclusion took place, as many individuals showed positive outcomes years after the chelation therapy took place.

### Heavy Metals

Lead is the leading heavy metal that is known to have direct effects on the vascular system through atherosclerosis. In the United States, lead has caused a great deal of heavy metal toxification in our population, stemming from gasoline, soil, batteries, paint, plumbing pipes, and cigarette smoke, just to name a few.



This heavy metal buildup is first stored in our bones and then begins to excrete from the bones into our bloodstream, which contributes to the calcification process of the arteries. Other heavy metals contribute to heart disease and increased risks of strokes like cadmium. For years, it has been well known and studied that cadmium actually hardens the carotid artery. Cadmium was used as an anticorrosive element in steel and was also used in batteries up until a few years ago. The problem with heavy metal toxification is that once it's embedded into your tissues, it's very difficult to remove it from your body.

Chelation therapy is recognized for its ability to detoxify years of build-up of heavy metals. Chelation is used to successfully treat many different forms of heavy metal toxification including mercury, cadmium, and lead.

An amino acid, EDTA is administered into the bloodstream via an IV and its position is to bind to heavy metals and remove them from the body through the urine. DMPS and DMSA acids are also used in some instances to remove mercury. However, EDTA is the amino acid that binds to calcium in the bloodstream as well; this is why it is thought to be so successful at removing plaque from the arteries.

Along with plaque, oxidative inflammation is a primary cause of vascular disorders, and EDTA chelation therapy is thought to decrease this oxidative stress along the vessels walls.

Functional medicine is integrative medicine that focuses on a complete look at a person's lifestyle, genetics, environmental, and social factors concerning their overall health's condition.

### Chelation IV Therapy

A key component of functional medicine is IV therapy. This type of treatment option, administers high dose vitamins, minerals, amino acids and other essential nutrients to fight disease, eliminate symptoms, and alleviate associated effects.

### IV Therapy Benefits

- Asthma
- Anti-aging
- Acid Reflux
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- Chron's Disease
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- And much more

Dr. DeStefano, of Root Causes Holistic Health & Medicine in Ft Myers, FL, incorporates IV & Chelation therapy with hyperbaric chamber sessions to combat multiple chronic conditions and disease states.

### Doreen DeStefano, NhD, APRN, DNP

Dr. DeStefano came to Fort Myers in the early 1980's, leaving and coming back again several times until finally settling here in 2001. She has a lifelong background in health and wellness that began in middle school when she started running.

Dr. DeStefano is also a lifelong student. She holds a bachelor's degree in nursing, and another in exercise physiology. She has a Masters (ABT) in criminology, a Master's in public business administration and a Master's in nursing. She holds a doctorate in natural health and is a licensed Advanced Practice Registered Nurse. She holds numerous licenses and certifications from advanced practice training. She continues to attend educational seminars in integrative and functional medicine twice a year to stay abreast of the most recent, cutting edge therapies available.

Her practice is centered on naturopathic principles that include healing the whole person on various levels and avoiding pharmaceutical intervention unless absolutely necessary. She believes your health is within your control. Her goal is to help you achieve maximum health.

*Learn more about unique and effective therapies with Doreen DeStefano.*



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# Purple Tea

## For Women of Color... Every Color!



Accounting for an estimated 30 percent of new cancer cases in women each year, breast cancer has impacted more than 3.8 million women in the United States. Those who have not been diagnosed are considered at average risk, about 13 percent or 1 out of 8 women. However, family history, race, ethnicity, and genetics can increase your risk of breast cancer.

Women come in all colors, shapes, and sizes, but when it comes to breast cancer – we are united! The upcoming Purple Tea is an opportunity for all women to gather together to receive the most up-to-date information on the latest advancements in breast cancer prevention, screening, and treatment. A free community event led by renowned local breast health experts, women will learn more about their health and the disparities that affect their race and ethnicity in a supportive and inspiring environment.



The afternoon event will feature keynote speaker **Dr. Alan Brown** who has been recognized nationally for his community involvement and cancer research efforts. Currently serving as chairman of the Lee Health Regional Cancer Center

Multidisciplinary Breast Clinic, Dr. Brown is a radiation oncologist whose contributions have been highlighted in multiple publications. Additionally, he's been honored with several awards and grants, including the National Center on Minority Health & Health Disparities (NIMHD) Loan Repayment Program, which is awarded to clinicians and researchers who are making an effort to reduce health disparities and increase the participation of disadvantaged communities in clinical research activities.

Other speakers include Dr. Magali Van de Bergh, MD, a principal investigator with Florida Cancer Specialists who has led multiple clinical research studies with a focus on lymphomas, chronic leukemias, and lymphoproliferative disorders; Dr. Natalia Spinelli, a board-certified breast surgical oncologist who specializes in benign and malignant diseases of the breast and is trained in the latest surgical approaches in breast cancer care; and Debra Wilson, MSN, RN, OCN, who serves as the Vice President of Oncology Services at Lee Health.

Purple Tea attendees will also have an opportunity to hear from Honorary Chair Geraldine "Gerri" Ware, who earned a nursing degree from Florida A&M University before returning to Fort Myers, where she served as a hospital nurse, a public health nurse, and school nurse, as well as teaching Nursing at Collier County Schools for 15 years.

Knowledge is power, and cancer prevention begins with education and awareness. All women are invited to dress in their favorite purple and unite in the fight against breast cancer at the upcoming Purple Tea on February 23.

*Purple Tea is a free event on Thursday, February 23. Held at the Broadway Palm Dinner Theatre in Fort Myers, tickets can be reserved by calling 239.839.6015 or visiting [www.eventbrite.com/e/purple-tea-tickets-503552447927](http://www.eventbrite.com/e/purple-tea-tickets-503552447927).*



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# SEXUAL DYSFUNCTION IN MEN AND WOMEN

**S**exual dysfunction can take many forms — it's not limited to erectile dysfunction or lack of interest in sex, often referred to as a low libido.

Sexual dysfunction can involve pain during intercourse, an inability to maintain an erection, or difficulty experiencing an orgasm.

Though there are many causes of diminished libido and sexual dysfunction in men and women, there are also many ways to increase libido and rekindle the joy of sex once you identify the problem, including vaginal rejuvenation and enhancement.

## SEXUAL DYSFUNCTION IN WOMEN

Sexual dysfunction in women is grouped into different disorders: sexual pain, problems with desire, arousal problems, and orgasm difficulty. Changes in hormone levels, medical conditions, and other factors can contribute to low libido and other forms of sexual dysfunction in women.

Specifically, sexual dysfunction in women may be due to:

- **Vaginal dryness.** This can lead to low libido and problems with arousal and desire, as sex can be painful when the vagina isn't properly lubricated. Vaginal dryness can result from hormonal changes that occur during and after menopause or while breastfeeding, for example. Psychological issues, like anxiety about sex, can also cause vaginal dryness. Additionally, anticipation of painful intercourse due to vaginal dryness may, in turn, decrease a woman's desire for sex.
- **Low libido.** Lack of sexual desire can also be caused by lower levels of the hormone estrogen. Fatigue, depression, and anxiety can also lead to low libido, as can certain medications, including some antidepressants.
- **Difficulty achieving orgasm.** Orgasm disorders, such as delayed orgasms or inability to have one at all, can affect both men and women. Again, some antidepressant medications can also cause these problems.
- **Pain during sex.** Pain is sometimes from a known cause, such as vaginal dryness or endometriosis. But sometimes the cause of painful sex is elusive. Known as vulvodynia or vulvar vestibulitis, experts don't know what's behind this mysterious type of chronic, painful intercourse.



## SEXUAL DYSFUNCTION IN MEN

The types of sexual dysfunction men may experience include:

- **Erectile dysfunction (ED).** ED can be caused by medical conditions, such as diabetes or high blood pressure, or by anxiety about having sex. Depression, fatigue, and stress can also contribute to erectile dysfunction.
- **Ejaculation problems.** These include premature ejaculation (ejaculation that occurs too early during intercourse) and the inability to ejaculate at all. Causes include medications, like some antidepressants, anxiety about sex, a history of sexual trauma (such as a partner being unfaithful), and strict religious beliefs. Wearing tight underwear or exposure to heat for long periods of time (truck drivers and athletes, among others, are prone to this) can also cause problems.
- **Low libido.** Psychological issues like stress and depression, as well as anxiety about having sex also can lead to a decreased or no sexual desire. Decreased hormone levels (particularly if testosterone is low), physical illnesses, and medication side effects may also diminish libido in men.

## IMPROVING SEXUAL HEALTH

All couples should be able to enjoy a healthy sex life — an important part of a relationship. If you are experiencing sexual dysfunction, bring up your concerns to your doctor. You can often correct your problem easily.

Good communication can unlock closed doors in the bedroom, so start by talking to your partner about physical and emotional intimacy. And, if you suspect a medical condition, talk to your doctor about what could be going on with your body.

Sometimes, it can be difficult to speak about sensitive subjects to a sexual partner. Shame and negative social conditioning may cause individuals to ignore their needs or those of their partner. In some cases, it may be beneficial to speak to a therapist who is knowledgeable and supportive of sexual health.

A therapist can provide an individual with the tools they need to help them communicate their boundaries and expectations respectfully, and in a safe, judgment-free environment.

It's also important to speak to a doctor about specific sexual health needs. If you are not sure where to start, you can check out one of the many organizations that exist to support individuals through their sexual health journey.

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# The Connection Between Sexual Health and Your Vascular System

**S**exual health is a vital aspect of overall well-being and encompasses not only physical function, but also emotional and psychological well-being. The vascular system plays a crucial role in sexual health, as it is responsible for the flow of blood to and from the sexual organs. Any issues with the vascular system can greatly impact sexual health, leading to problems such as erectile dysfunction or decreased sexual desire.

Erectile dysfunction, or ED, is a common issue that affects many men. It is defined as the inability to achieve or maintain an erection sufficient for sexual intercourse. The causes of ED can be varied, but one of the most common causes is poor blood flow to the penis. The penis needs a healthy blood flow to become erect, and if this flow is hindered, ED can occur. There are several risk factors that can contribute to poor blood flow, including diabetes, hypertension, and high cholesterol. The good news is, with proper management of these conditions, many men can improve their blood flow and regain erectile function.

Another important aspect of sexual health is sexual desire. Sexual desire is the drive or motivation to engage in sexual activity. A decrease in sexual desire can be caused by various factors, including hormonal imbalances, psychological issues, and certain medications. However, poor blood flow to the sexual organs can also play a role. When blood flow is hindered, the sexual organs may not receive enough oxygen and nutrients, leading to decreased sexual desire.

The vascular system plays a crucial role in the sexual health of women as well. Poor blood flow to the pelvic region can lead to problems such as vaginal dryness and decreased sexual sensation. This can make intercourse uncomfortable or even painful. Also, poor blood flow to the pelvic region can lead to decreased sexual desire in women.

The good news is that there are several things that can be done to improve blood flow and sexual health. Regular exercise and maintaining a healthy diet can greatly improve the vascular system's health and lead to improved sexual function.



Quitting smoking and reducing alcohol consumption can also have a positive impact. Medication and other treatments can also be used to manage conditions such as diabetes and hypertension.

If you are experiencing problems with sexual health, it is important to talk to your healthcare provider. They can help determine if any underlying conditions are contributing to the problem and can provide treatment options. Keep in mind that sexual health is an important aspect of overall well-being, and taking steps to improve it can greatly enhance your quality of life.

In conclusion, sexual health is an important aspect of overall well-being, and the vascular system plays a crucial role in it. Any issues with the vascular system can greatly impact sexual health, leading to problems such as erectile dysfunction or decreased sexual desire. Regular exercise, maintaining a healthy diet, quitting smoking and reducing alcohol consumption are some of the things that can be done to improve blood flow and sexual health. If you are experiencing problems with sexual health, it is important to talk to your healthcare provider.

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# 8 Helpful Tips for Seniors Who Want To Make New Friends

**M**aking friends is something that should be easy and intuitive, right? That's the way it used to be when we were kids. All you had to do was strike up a conversation on the playground. But as we get older, making friendships becomes harder as our days fill with family, jobs, and life in general.

One of the most exciting things about being a senior in retirement is having the time and opportunity to make new friends. If you haven't had the opportunity to do this for a while, you may be feeling a little rusty. Fear not – finding friends is easier than you think.

## Why are friendships so important?

As Abraham Lincoln once said, "The better part of one's life consists of one's friendships." Friendships fill up our souls (and our social calendars), and for older adults, they help keep you happy, healthy and sharp.

According to the National Institute on Aging, feelings of loneliness and social isolation are linked to a variety of health and mental issues, including:

- Heart disease
- High blood pressure
- A decreased immune system
- Obesity
- Depression
- Cognitive decline

Conversely, seniors with a vibrant social life report being healthier, having better mental health, being more physically active, and even living longer.

Social interaction often declines as we age since we're taken out of the daily routine of jobs, school and family. That's one of the many reasons why older adults may choose to move to a senior living community. It's a little bit like going to college, because you find yourself instantly connected to others in a similar stage of life. Senior living communities are great places to find others with common interests who are also looking for new friends to spend time with.

## 8 Ideas for Making New Friends

Whether living at a community or at home, here are some tips for seniors who want to meet new people in their golden years.

**1. Get on Facebook.** Social media is an excellent way for seniors to connect with others in their community and beyond. Approximately half of adults ages 65 and older use Facebook, making it a great platform for meeting people of all ages. You can find

special-interest Facebook groups for just about anything, from hiking enthusiasts to cooking classes to virtual (and in-person) book clubs, and so much more.

**2. Become a volunteer.** Volunteering in your senior years provides meaning and purpose and expands your social circle as you interact with other volunteers. Organizations like VolunteerMatch can help you find organizations that align with your interests and passions.

**3. Join a senior center.** Senior centers provide social activities for older adults, making them good places to make new friends while also doing something you enjoy, like taking a class, going to the gym, or attending a lecture.

**4. Attend religious services.** Spiritual wellness is one dimension of whole-body wellness, and individuals who participate in religious services report better physical and mental health than nonreligious individuals. Going to a place of worship puts you in contact with people who have shared beliefs and values. There are also often volunteer opportunities, such as teaching children or singing in the choir, where you can meet others and form intergenerational friendships.

**5. Try something new.** Ever wanted to play an instrument, try your hand at woodworking, surf the waves, or sing in a choir? Expanding your horizons with a new hobby or activity puts you in contact with like-minded individuals of all ages while doing something fun and exciting, too.

**6. Go to the gym.** Not only will you meet others, but you'll also get a great workout doing so. The app SilverSneakers can help you find gyms and other health and wellness activities in your area.

**7. Take a class.** Many universities and community colleges have classes and programs geared toward older lifelong learners, where you can find others with similar interests. Your local parks and recreation centers often have learning opportunities as well. Strike up a conversation with the person sitting next to you or form a study group to get to know others in your class.

**8. Put yourself out there.** The most important tip for making new friends is to simply be open and available. Call someone you haven't seen for a while and invite them to coffee. Reach out to someone in your gym class and ask if they would like to join you for a walk or a lecture. Say "yes" when other people invite you to do things. You may be surprised at how easy it is to form new friendships.

## Explore the social side of senior living at The Terraces at Bonita Springs

We know how important friendship is, which is why every day at our senior living community is filled with programs, events, activities, and so much more. Check out our Events calendar to find your new favorite activity (and make plans to come visit us).

Making friends after 60 isn't impossible, and it certainly doesn't have to be difficult. By following these tips, you'll find yourself filling your social calendar with meaningful, exciting and fun opportunities in no time.



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By Joe Altepeter, DPM

# OVERUSE INJURIES

**A** new year is upon us and the fitness centers are full. As we push towards our goals and resolutions this year, we need to be mindful of our potential for overuse injuries and prevention measures we can take. Largely simplified, Wolff's law suggests that bones will respond to stresses applied and increase density accordingly. In a similar manner, Davis's law applies to the muscles and other soft tissue structures, suggesting that intermittently applied stretch will result in hypertrophy. Along with improvement in overall health or fat loss, these are goals if not inevitable in achieving the goals many of us make at the beginning of a new year. If pursued appropriately this can be done without having to take a detour along the way. However, with rapid, or in some cases even gradual, increase in activities requiring repetitive motion or trauma, an overuse injury may occur, and could create a potentially significant roadblock in achieving your goals.

There are a few ways to decrease your risk of suffering an overuse injury. Start at a reasonable and realistic level by not over exerting yourself from the start. Give yourself time to recover from your workouts, especially if you are trying new exercises or ramping up mileage and reps. When you are increasing mileage or reps, try to keep increases at less than ten percent each week. Consider implementing different exercises or activities rather than sticking with the same set of exercises from day to day. Ensure your body is prepared for each workout with appropriate dynamic warm up prior to, and a sufficient cool down after. And be mindful of your shoe gear by using exercise specific gear and retiring that gear at least once or twice per year. Not only will these ideas help lower chances of suffering an overuse injury, but they can also help maintain enjoyment and motivation in the pursuit of your goals.

While everyone is at risk of suffering this type of injury, factors that may increase risk include age, previous injury, higher body mass index, and issues with training via technique or progression. When it comes to the foot and ankle, there is potential for almost all bone and soft tissue to be overused, with some injuries being far more prevalent than others.



Among the more common overuse injuries that may involve the foot and/or ankle are metatarsal stress fractures, achilles tendinosis, posterior tibial tendinosis, peroneal tendinosis, and shin splints to name a few. These various pathologies can affect the lower extremity in relatively unique ways, so it is important to be evaluated to differentiate between them and manage them appropriately.

If concerned about an overuse injury, the first thing you need to do is listen to your body. If you start experiencing swelling and tenderness that would be out of the ordinary for standard soreness, this is a sign that you need to slow down and let your body recover. If these discomforts linger, or even before they have a chance to linger, seeking medical treatment as soon as possible is imperative for a more predictable and speedy recovery. When consulting a healthcare professional, be transparent about recent changes that have been made in your routine. Depending upon the severity of an overuse injury, treatment could range, decreasing

or stopping aggravating activities, bracing, immobilization, and physical therapy could all be part of the process to get back on track as quickly as possible.

Disclaimer: This content is not intended to be a substitute for professional medical advice, diagnosis, or treatment. Always seek the advice of your physician or other qualified health care provider with any questions you may have regarding a medical condition.

## Joe Altepeter, DPM, AACFAS

Joe Altepeter, DPM, AACFAS, is a Podiatrist at Family Foot & Leg Centers in Fort Myers FL. He is a Fellow of the American College of Foot & Ankle Surgeons. Call 239-430-3668 or visit [www.NaplesPodiatrist.com](http://www.NaplesPodiatrist.com) to make an appointment. Visit [FootHealthFacts.org](http://FootHealthFacts.org) to learn more about foot and ankle conditions.



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# SpaceOAR Hydrogel for Prostate Cancer Radiation Therapy—Reduces Side Effects of Bowel, Bladder and Sexual Dysfunction

**P**rostate cancer treatment can vary depending on the severity, patient's health and prior medical history. Radiation therapy is now an extremely precise procedure utilizing strategic techniques; however, some high doses of radiation can still cause damage to the rectal wall, contributing to adverse side effects. An innovative procedure can be done before radiation therapy to create a protective space between the posterior prostate and the rectal wall. SpaceOAR utilizes a hydrogel that creates about a 10 to 13 millimeter space (1/2 inch), allowing ample room for treatment and avoiding side effects like bowel, bladder and sexual dysfunction.

Radiation therapy typically takes place over several months, and SpaceOAR hydrogel stays in position for several months before it is safely absorbed by the body and removed through the urine. In a clinical study, SpaceOAR Hydrogel was shown to help minimize the impact on urinary, sexual and bowel quality of life for prostate cancer patients undergoing radiation therapy.<sup>1</sup>

Creating more space, means fewer bowel, bladder, and sexual complications, which leads to a better quality of life. After radiotherapy was complete, control patients experienced a clinically significant (1X MID) decline in bowel, urinary and sexual quality of life 8 times more often than SpaceOAR Hydrogel patients.<sup>1</sup> More than 50,000 patients worldwide have been treated with SpaceOAR Hydrogel.<sup>1</sup>

## SpaceOAR FAQ:

### Why should I have SpaceOAR Hydrogel?

By pushing the prostate farther from the rectum, the radiation dose delivered to the rectum is reduced, which may lessen damage to the rectum. With SpaceOAR Hydrogel in place, a doctor can complement the patient's radiation treatment to better target their cancer while preserving healthy tissue to help maintain quality of life.<sup>1</sup>

### Is it safe?

SpaceOAR Hydrogel was FDA-cleared in April 2015 and is intended to temporarily position the anterior rectal wall away from the prostate during radiotherapy



for prostate cancer. In creating this space, it is the intent of SpaceOAR Hydrogel to reduce the radiation dose delivered to the anterior rectum. The SpaceOAR Hydrogel is composed of biodegradable material and maintains space for the entire course of prostate radiotherapy treatment and is completely absorbed by the patient's body over time.<sup>1</sup>

### What Is The Procedure Like And How Long Will It Stay In My Body?

SpaceOAR Hydrogel is injected as a liquid through a needle inserted between the rectum and the prostate. It can be implanted via a local anesthetic that will numb the injection area or under general anesthesia that will put a patient to sleep during the procedure. SpaceOAR Hydrogel stays in place for about three months and is naturally absorbed into the body and removed through urine in about 6 months. SpaceOAR Hydrogel can be implanted during an outpatient procedure in a hospital, surgery center, outpatient clinic or doctor's office prior to the start of radiation treatment. It is typically not a lengthy procedure – usually about 30 minutes.<sup>1</sup>

### What Are The Risks?

As with any medical treatment, there are some risks involved with the use of SpaceOAR Hydrogel. Potential complications associated with SpaceOAR Hydrogel include, but are not limited to: pain associated with SpaceOAR hydrogel injection; pain or discomfort associated with SpaceOAR Hydrogel; needle penetration of the bladder, prostate, rectal wall, rectum,

or urethra; injection of SpaceOAR Hydrogel into the bladder, prostate, rectal wall, rectum, or urethra; local inflammatory reactions; infection; injection of air, fluid or SpaceOAR Hydrogel intravascularly; urinary retention; rectal mucosal damage, ulcers, necrosis; bleeding; constipation; and rectal urgency.<sup>1</sup>



**Alejandro Miranda-Sousa, MD**  
**Mark Leo, MD**

For more information, please visit our website [www.UrologyExperts.com](http://www.UrologyExperts.com) or call Urology Experts today at (239) 226-2727 or email [info@UrologyExperts.com](mailto:info@UrologyExperts.com) to schedule your consultation!

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<https://www.spaceoar.com>



# WHAT'S ON YOUR SKIN?

Perhaps You're Due for a Skin Check—Not All Physicians Have the Same Expertise

By Joseph Onorato, MD, FAAD

**L**iving in Florida year-round or even for just a few months out of the year, is beautiful and we're blessed to have so many sunny days, but with all of the sunshine, there is the looming possibility of skin damage and cancer. Most people know that it is critical to wear sunscreen, avoid overexposure, and get skin treatments and checkups, but not all take this advice.

No judgment—We've all had days where we've inadvertently gotten a little burnt, not to mention our younger years when we would bask in the sun for hours. The earlier the diagnosis of skin cancer or other conditions, the better.

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.

Along with the unfortunate diagnosis of melanoma, there are many other concerns and cancers that can be detected in your dermatologist's office with a thorough, proper, skin cancer screening. On a regular basis, you should have a screening at least once a year. And, because some forms of skin cancer grow very rapidly, if you are experiencing any new forms of lesions, bumps, moles that are of concern, you should schedule a dermatology appointment immediately.

**SWFL Dermatology Plastic Surgery & Laser Center**  
Whether you want to focus on antiaging and esthetic procedures or medical dermatology for the health of your skin, or a combination of both, SWFL Dermatology Plastic Surgery & Laser Center has the most comprehensive options. Not only are there numerous services, but you can trust that you are in the best hands with the most experienced practitioners.

SWFL Dermatology Plastic Surgery & Laser Center is a privately owned, all-inclusive dermatology practice specializing in adult and pediatric general dermatology and Mohs surgery for skin cancer. The team provides care to patients of all ages experiencing embarrassing, unwanted, and potentially life-threatening skin conditions.



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The staff at SWFL Dermatology Plastic Surgery & Laser Center is dedicated to providing the most personalized care by treating their patients like family. Each provider is committed to taking the time to understand the concerns and goals of the patient in order to provide the best-individualized care for that patient.

The expert and dedicated team offers specialized and individualized treatment options for skin conditions such as acne, alopecia, contact dermatitis, eczema, rosacea, shingles, sunburn, and urticaria.

SWFL Dermatology is an extension of All Island Dermatology Plastic Surgery, MedSpa and Laser Center which has serviced patients in the greater Garden City and Glen Cove communities in Long Island, New York since 1995.

The office is conveniently located at 13800 Tamiami Trail N, Naples, Florida, and serves the greater Collier and Lee County areas.

### What's on YOUR Skin?

Contact SWFL Dermatology Plastic Surgery & Laser Center. Accepting most Florida & New York Insurance Plans including Florida Blue and GHI.

To improve the appearance and health of your skin, schedule a consultation today at SWFL Dermatology Plastic Surgery & Laser Center online or by phone at **239-500-SKIN**.



### Founder & Owner

**Joseph Onorato, MD, FAAD**

Dr. Onorato has over 25 years of experience practicing dermatology and is board certified. He serves as SWFL Dermatology's medical director, encouraging his team to provide the best skin care services in the area. He focuses on general dermatology and dermatological surgery including laser treatments, chemical peels, and injectable fillers.

  
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# LASIK - All You Ever Wanted to Know

LASIK is a quick and painless procedure that can give you long-lasting vision without glasses or contact lenses. That's why, since its introduction more than 25 years ago, millions of Americans have turned to LASIK for correcting nearsightedness, farsightedness and astigmatism and giving them visual freedom.

The LASIK team at Quigley Eye Specialists consists of a dedicated LASIK staff as well as LASIK surgeons Jeffrey Robin, MD, Duane Wiggins, MD and Emmanuel Kai-Lewis, MD. Drs. Robin, Wiggins and Kai-Lewis are all Board-certified ophthalmologists who have undergone fellowship training in LASIK and other types of refractive surgery and have decades of LASIK surgical experience and combined conducted tens of thousands of successful LASIK procedures. Beyond experienced and skilled surgeons, Quigley Eye Specialists has state-of-the-art diagnostic and laser technologies to help achieve the best possible LASIK results.

"LASIK is one of the most studied – and most successful – elective surgical procedures in all of medicine. At Quigley Eye Specialists, we realize that the keys to getting consistently great results with LASIK include proper patient selection, highly experienced staff and surgeons, and the most advanced laser technologies. My colleagues and I believe that at Quigley we have the best available, FDA-approved, diagnostic and laser technologies, including the Zeiss Visumax and Wavelight Allegretto lasers, and we are capable of producing great LASIK results with a quick, painless and bladeless procedure. And, we are committed to providing not only great vision results but also a concierge type of customer experience for our LASIK patients," explains Dr. Robin.

## LASIK FAQs:

### What does "LASIK" stand for?

LASIK is an abbreviation for "laser in-situ keratomileusis"; which translates to using a laser to reshape the cornea. The cornea is the clear window on the front of the eye and is a very powerful focusing element for the eye. By changing the curvature of the cornea, the laser can – in an extremely precise and computer-controlled method – change the focusing power and improve vision without glasses or contact lenses.



### What is nearsightedness, farsightedness, and astigmatism?

The eye is like a camera and has lenses (including the cornea) which work to focus incoming light rays on the visually sensitive retina which lines the inside of the back of the eye. For many people, incoming light rays aren't focused precisely on the retina; this is called a "refractive error". The most common refractive error is nearsightedness (also called "myopia"); in this condition vision is blurred at distance while up-close vision is usually good; nearsighted patients usually start wearing glasses or contact lenses at a young age. In farsightedness (also called "hyperopia"), patients frequently can have excellent distance vision but begin to develop reading difficulty at a younger than normal age; people with high degrees of farsightedness may have both blurry near and distance vision even at a young age. The causes of nearsightedness and farsightedness usually have to do with abnormalities in the length of the eye. In astigmatism, the cornea is not symmetric, meaning that one axis has a different curvature than the other axis; astigmatism commonly accompanies nearsightedness and farsightedness. Advanced LASIK lasers are usually capable of accurately correcting all of these refractive errors.

### How does the LASIK procedure work?

Modern LASIK is completely bladeless and utilizes 2 lasers. The first laser creates an ultra-thin section on the front of the cornea (called the "flap"). The second laser – which provides the actual reshaping and vision correction – is applied under the flap. Both laser applications involve usually less than 30 seconds.

### Will I feel discomfort?

Numbing drops – like those used in routine eye exams – provide excellent anesthesia during LASIK. The vast majority of patients experience no discomfort.

### How long does the procedure take?

In most cases, both eyes can be treated in less than 20 minutes.

### How soon do the eyes recover?

At the close of the procedure, you can expect vision to be improved although foggy. Usually within 24-36 hours, patients note vision similar to when they were wearing their glasses or contacts.

### What about patient safety?

Thorough and careful preoperative evaluation is one of the keys to LASIK success. At Quigley Eye Specialists, we realize that not everyone is a good candidate for LASIK; in some cases, other types of refractive surgery may be offered and – uncommonly – we may advise that it is in the patient's best interest not to have refractive surgery. In addition to performing a complete eye health evaluation and utilizing state-of-the-art diagnostic technology, at Quigley Eye Specialists your surgeon will be actively involved in your preoperative evaluation and recommendation process.

### Who is a good candidate for LASIK?

The best candidates for LASIK are between the ages of 18 and 50 and have refractive errors (nearsightedness, farsightedness, astigmatism) that are in the low-to-moderate ranges. Patients also need to have good general health and no active eye diseases as well as having stable eyeglass/contact lens prescriptions. Specific candidacy determination, of course, will require thorough eye health evaluation with appropriate diagnostic testing and evaluation by your surgeon.

### Who should not have LASIK?

People who might not be good candidates for LASIK include those who: are outside of the 18-50 age range, have changing prescriptions, have certain medical health issues, have active eye diseases or disorders. In some cases, patients' lifestyles, activities or job needs may also be factors. At Quigley Eye Specialists, we recognize that not everyone is a good candidate for LASIK and that a thorough preoperative evaluation is the key to determining good candidacy. For some patients, we may recommend refractive procedures other than LASIK and for others we may recommend no refractive surgery at all.



**Has LASIK technology become more advanced over the years?**

Yes. Over nearly 3 decades, LASIK technology has advanced to enable to procedure now to be completely bladeless ("all laser") and to have superlative accuracy and predictability. At Quigley Eye Specialists, our LASIK lasers (Zeiss Visumax and Wavelight Allegretto) enable our LASIK patients to have extremely comfortable procedures with accurate vision results.

**Are there other options than LASIK?**

Yes. Dr. Robin, Dr. Wiggins and Dr. Kai utilize other procedures to correct refractive errors and will make procedure recommendations based on their preoperative evaluation in discussion with the patients. Alternative procedures to LASIK include PRK, SMILE and ICL.

**Are patients satisfied with results?**

Yes. Scores of published studies, including those sponsored by the FDA and Dept of Defense, have demonstrated extremely high patient satisfaction results following LASIK (even more than 95%). It is not uncommon with modern LASIK for patients to achieve vision as good as or even better than they had with their best pair of glasses or contact lenses. Most Americans know family members, friends and/or co-workers who have had excellent LASIK results. We frequently hear from people that having LASIK was "the best thing I ever did!".

**What is the next step?**

If you are considering LASIK, the first step is a complete eye health evaluation. After the evaluation, the specialists at Quigley Eye will discuss your vision goals and develop a customized treatment plan designed specifically for you.



Quigley Eye Specialists, founded in 1988, consists of more than 100 medical professionals, including surgeons, optometrists, retina specialists and technicians. Offices are conveniently located throughout Southwest Florida in Sarasota, Venice, North Port, Port Charlotte, Punta Gorda, Cape Coral, Fort Myers, Lehigh Acres, Bonita Springs, Naples and Coral Gables.

**For more information, call (239) 466-2020 or visit [www.QuigleyEye.com](http://www.QuigleyEye.com).**



**Call now for a COMPLIMENTARY LASIK consultation at 239-466-2020.**

**Dr. Jeffrey B. Robin**

Board certified Ophthalmologist and fellowship-trained Advanced Refractive Surgery Specialist with more than 30 years of LASIK and refractive surgery experience. Dr. Robin has devoted his professional career to refractive corneal surgery including LASIK, PRK, SMILE and related procedures. He completed medical school at Jefferson Medical College at Thomas Jefferson University and his ophthalmology residency at Georgetown University Medical Center where he served as Chief Resident. In addition, he completed two fellowships, first in corneal and refractive surgery at The University of Southern California and the second in corneal virology and immunology at Louisiana State University. Dr. Robin has extensive experience in the research, teaching and clinical practice of LASIK and has performed tens of thousands of LASIK and other refractive surgery procedures (including many family members). Additionally, Dr. Robin was one of the first eye doctors in the world to have laser vision correction for his own nearsightedness (1992!). His extensive qualifications place him among the top refractive surgeons in the United States.

**Dr. Emmanuel Kai-Lewis**

Board certified and fellowship trained cornea and refractive surgeon with more than a decade of experience, Dr. Kai is an ophthalmologist at Quigley Eye Specialists, one of the nation's leading multispecialty ophthalmology practices. He earned his medical degree at Howard University, completed a residency at West Virginia University Eye Institute and a Cornea Fellowship at the University of Minnesota Eye Clinic, becoming an expert in cornea/external disease and refractive surgery.

**Dr. Duane Wiggins**

Board certified ophthalmologist and fellowship trained LASIK surgeon, Dr. Wiggins has more than 20 years of experience in LASIK and refractive surgery. Dr. Wiggins earned his medical degree from the University of Texas Medical Branch in Galveston. After completing his residency at the Scott and White Hospital and Clinic in Temple, Texas, Dr. Wiggins became fellowship trained in laser refractive surgery at the International Eyecare Laser Center in Houston. He is also the proud recipient of the TLC Laser Vision Milestone Award.





# The Importance of Heart Health

By Murilo Lima, M.D.

**H**eat health is a critical aspect of overall wellness that should not be overlooked. Unfortunately, many people are not aware of the steps they can take to maintain a healthy heart. This article will provide information on how to raise awareness about heart health and promote healthy habits that can prevent heart disease.

The first step in raising awareness about heart health is to educate people about the risk factors for heart disease. Some of the most common risk factors include high blood pressure, high cholesterol, obesity, smoking, and a sedentary lifestyle. These risk factors can be controlled through lifestyle changes such as eating a healthy diet, getting regular exercise, and quitting smoking.

Another important aspect of heart health awareness is promoting regular check-ups with a health-care provider. These check-ups can include screenings for high blood pressure, cholesterol, and other indicators of heart disease. They can also include discussions about family history and other factors that may increase the risk of heart disease.

In addition to regular check-ups, it is also important to educate people about the warning signs of a heart attack. These can include chest pain, shortness of breath, and numbness or weakness in the arms or legs. It is important for people to know that these symptoms can be different for women than for men, and that they should seek medical attention immediately if they experience any of these symptoms.

Physical activity is also an important aspect of heart health. Regular exercise can help lower the risk of heart disease by improving blood circulation, decreasing blood pressure, and reducing the risk of obesity. Exercise can also help to reduce stress and improve overall mental well-being.

Eating a healthy diet is also crucial for maintaining a healthy heart. This means eating a diet that is low in saturated and trans fats, and high in fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and lean proteins. It is also important to limit the intake of sodium and added sugars.



Finally, it is important to raise awareness about the importance of quitting smoking. Smoking is a major risk factor for heart disease and can increase the risk of heart attack and stroke. Quitting smoking can reduce the risk of heart disease, and is one of the most important things a person can do for their heart health.

Heart health awareness is crucial for preventing heart disease and promoting overall wellness. By educating people about the risk factors for heart disease, promoting regular check-ups with health-care providers, and encouraging healthy habits such as regular exercise, eating a healthy diet, and quitting smoking, we can raise awareness about heart health and help people take steps to protect their hearts.

If you are experiencing a sexual health problem, it's essential to talk with your primary care doctor about treating any symptoms you experience — and just as important to prevent or manage symptoms by taking good care of yourself. It is also important to have a doctor who takes the time to listen to your comments and discusses your overall

health. At Lima MD Direct Primary Care & MedSpa, we offer a revolutionary concept to put patients and doctors in charge of their health...NOT insurance companies. Direct Primary Care is the single best alternative to regular "fee per care" medicine. It is a medical practice that does not deal with insurance companies, and focuses on providing convenient, affordable and the highest quality medical care directly to patients without any third parties being involved.

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# When the Market Is Volatile, Why Is it Important to Have a Financial Plan?

By Amy Rohde, CFP®, CFTA, Senior Relationship Manager

**M**arkets will always be unpredictable. Market downturns are painful but are a naturally occurring component of equity-market investing. A well-designed financial plan considers market volatility and can help you brave the ever-changing ebbs and flows of the market. If you do not have a plan yet and are just focusing on investing advice, you are missing out on the sense of security that a quality financial plan can provide.

Here are five recommendations for dealing with uncertain financial times such as these.

## Have a Dynamic Plan

A good financial plan is dynamic. It is a living, breathing plan. It changes when there are major events during your life just as much as when there are market changes. Make sure your plan is updated as your goals shift.

## Keep Your Emotions in Check

Something else that could potentially derail your best-laid plans: emotions. Emotions can distract from goals by driving you to deviate from your plan. Instead of letting market gyrations dictate your actions, always look to your plan for guidance. A good plan that is carefully laid out in partnership with your advisor should walk you through various simulations so you make rational decisions.

## Re-evaluate Goals

During times of uncertainty, you can benefit from reevaluating your short- and long-term goals, while sticking with your financial plan. Having digital access to your financial plan that allows you to decrease (or increase) goals with the ability to see the real-time impact is extremely valuable and allows you to participate in designing your financial plan.

## Test the Plan With a Range of Market Situations

We can't predict the future of the market returns. But, you can test your plan across a wide range of market situations and returns.

## Stress Testing a Financial Plan

It's also important to be prepared for the uncertainties in the real world and see how a financial plan may succeed even when things go bad for a while.



Stress testing is a powerful way to illustrate how variability can affect your financial plan. Stress testing a plan shows several different possible outcomes, which helps reinforce the underlying uncertainties in projecting future results. If your financial plan has the ability to illustrate bad timing (a downturn in the market performance at a bad time such as two years before retirement) or bear market tests (how the plan would be affected by a severe bear market in bonds or stocks), these can be helpful in illustrating the impact on the plan results.

## Key Takeaways

During times of volatility or amid a bear market, it is important to remember to stay focused on the big picture and on achieving your financial goals. This will allow you to endure the inevitable bad times with confidence. Keep your plan on track, especially in times of market volatility.

**Amy Rohde** is a Senior Vice President and the Key Private Bank Senior Relationship Manager in Fort Myers and Naples. She is a CERTIFIED FINANCIAL PLANNER™ and Certified Trust and Fiduciary Advisor (CTFA) professional. She can be reached at (239) 659-8812 or [amy\\_rohde@keybank.com](mailto:amy_rohde@keybank.com).

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# 32 REASONS A DENTAL HYGIENIST HELPS YOUR SMILE

By Dr. Susan Anderson, Program Director, Dental Hygiene Program at Hodges University

**A**s an adult, we have 32 teeth that together make up our smiles, and help us enjoy life. February is Dental Hygiene Month, and your dental hygienist is a key in helping you keep your smile through your life.

The American Dental Association recommends getting your teeth cleaned regularly, and the frequency can be determined when you visit the dentist's office. Generally speaking, most people should have their teeth cleaned every six months. Most health insurance plans cover that, and it's a benefit you should use. Getting your teeth cleaned helps prevent problems like tooth decay, cavities, gum tissue erosion, and gum disease, for starters. These problems can lead to early tooth loss.

Of course, regularly brushing and flossing your teeth goes a long way in maintaining a healthy mouth, but even that isn't enough to prevent problems. A dental hygienist is professionally educated and trained to look for any problems.

**Having your teeth professionally cleaned offers many benefits, including:**

- The prevention gum disease
- The prevention of tooth decay
- The removal of tooth stains like coffee
- The removal of plaque, which contributes to bad breath
- The early detection of oral health issues, like oral cancer

**The need for consistent dental care is a challenge. For example in Lee County alone:**

- 54.4% of residents believe there is moderate to major problem with oral health
- 24.1% of children have not been to a dentist/ received dental care in a year
- 38.5% of adults have not been to a dentist/ received dental care in a year
- Major reasons: access, cost and education about oral health

*\*2020 Community Health Needs Assessment Report, Lee County*



To help make dental care more accessible and affordable, the Hodges University Dental Hygiene Clinic opened January 30. Patients will receive oral health screenings, preventative dental cleanings and, if needed, digital x-rays. Dental cleaning prices start at \$30 for children up to age 16, and \$40 for adults. X-Rays range from \$15 to \$40. Future services will include periodontal scaling/root planning, fluoride treatments, and tooth sealants.



Starting in February, the Hodges University Dental Hygiene Clinic will be open on Mondays from 1:30-5:30 p.m.; and Wednesdays and Thursdays from 8:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Appointments can be made by calling (239) 938-7787. For questions or more information, you can email the clinic: [hudental@hodges.edu](mailto:hudental@hodges.edu)

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# HEALING **BACK PAIN** WITH PLATELET RICH PLASMA (PRP)

By Dr. Sebastian Klisiewicz, D.O.



## What is Back Pain?

Back pain is the most common pain condition in our society. In fact, nearly 80% of adults have experienced back pain at some point in their lives. In some cases, back pain begins abruptly after a significant injury. Other times, back pain is more insidious, coming and going over the years. Back pain sufferers generally have weakness and dysfunction of the supporting muscles, ligaments and tendons. This weakness and laxity causes degeneration of the spinal discs and compression of the nerves. The result of these conditions is limited function and a significant decrease in quality of life.

## Symptoms and Diagnosis

The symptoms of back pain can range from an uncomfortable ache to severe pain that is disabling. The pain can stay in the spine or it may radiate down the legs and feet (aka sciatica). This is often accompanied by weakness or numbness. Successful treatment of back pain requires a good history that identifies all the contributing factors and a thorough physical exam to locate the pain generators. Often, imaging studies such as MRI and X-rays, and nerve studies (EMGs) can be used to help make the diagnosis.

## Standard Back Pain Treatments

Most people with back pain start treatment with their primary care doctor. They are generally given steroids, pain pills and muscle relaxers. Sometimes these treatments help temporarily but may have side effects like weight gain, increased blood sugar, and thinning of bones. Physical therapy is another first line treatment that often is helpful to increase core stability and improve biomechanics. Unfortunately for many, physical therapy alone may not be enough to provide long term relief.

When these first line therapies fail, doctors often recommend steroid injections. Again, these treatments can be effective at reducing back pain temporarily, but often do not provide long term relief. Over time, repeated steroid injections lose their effectiveness and can cause unwanted consequences including degeneration of the surrounding structures and muscle atrophy. This can lead to more spinal instability and degeneration.

## A New Approach for Back Pain

Luckily for back pain sufferers, there is a safe and natural solution to heal the spine and provide long term pain relief. Platelet Rich Plasma (aka PRP) injections are becoming the new standard of care in treating a wide variety of musculoskeletal conditions including back pain.

PRP is created by taking a patient's own blood and spinning it in a centrifuge to concentrate platelets. Platelets are the first responders to any injury; they mobilize the immune system and initiate the healing process. When concentrated platelets are injected they become activated, stick together like glue, and release an array of natural growth factors. These growth factors signal the body's own stem cells and other specialized healing cells to come to the area of injury and start the process of healing. Some of the growth factors have other effects including decreasing pain, improving blood flow and stimulating nerve regeneration. The glue-like substance of platelets can stick around in the injected area for 1-2 weeks providing a sustained release of these growth factors meaning the healing continues for weeks after the injections.

For back pain, PRP is injected into the spinal ligaments, joints and muscles under ultrasound guidance to stimulate the healing response. This leads to a strengthening of the supporting structures, regeneration of the joints and improved spinal stability which again is usually the underlying cause leading to back pain.

Numerous clinical trials have shown that PRP injections into and around the spinal joints can provide long term relief and stimulate muscle growth. Several studies have also demonstrated that injecting the growth factors from PRP into the epidural space can decrease pain and help with neurological symptoms better than steroid epidurals. All this without the negative side effects of steroids.

## Healing The Back at Integrative Rehab Medicine

At IRM, all regenerative spinal procedures are done by Dr. Sebastian, a board-certified physician with advanced training in Regenerative medicine. All of our procedures are done under ultrasound guidance ensuring that these platelets and growth factors are delivered exactly where they are needed most.

Our spinal PRP treatments are just one aspect of our Integrative Advantage™ which is the most comprehensive treatment strategy for back pain in Southwest Florida. We combine multiple modalities to provide the best results including Platelet Rich Plasma, personalized physical therapy, an anti-inflammatory diet, and acupuncture. We also use the most state of the art Energy Modalities such as low-level laser therapy and PEMF to further decrease symptoms and support the healing process.

If you are tired of back pain stopping you from living the life you want to live, be sure to schedule your consultation today to discuss how PRP can help you on your healing journey.



## DR. SEBASTIAN KLISIEWICZ, D.O. Board Certified in Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation

*Dr. Sebastian is a leading physiatrist in Estero, Fort Myers and Bonita Springs (Southwest Florida). He is the founder*

*and medical director of Integrative Rehab Medicine in Estero, FL. He combines his extensive knowledge in Regenerative Medicine, Osteopathic musculoskeletal medicine, Physical Rehabilitation and Functional & Natural medicine to create personalized and integrated treatment plans for each patient.*

*Dr. Sebastian completed his medical studies at the Chicago College of Osteopathic Medicine (CCOM) followed by a residency in Physical Medicine & Rehabilitation (PM&R) at the Medical College of Wisconsin in Milwaukee. After residency, he worked as an Assistant Professor for Loyola University Medical Center in Chicago. In 2014, he moved his family to Southwest Florida to work at Lee Health's Spine Center. In August 2019, Dr. Sebastian opened his private clinic, Integrative Rehab Medicine. Dr. Sebastian has extensive training in prolotherapy, PRP injections and Bone Marrow Stem Cells. During his time in Florida, he further advanced his knowledge in Integrative Medicine through course work with the Institute for Functional Medicine. Since, he has educated doctors and the public on the Integrative approach at numerous medical conferences and community events.*



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# COVID-19 And Its Potential Effect to Hormones

By Dr. Melissa (Mel) Irvine, DNP - Clinical Sexologist  
Specializes in Sexual Medicine and Beauty

**A**fter two years of COVID-19 exposure, many of us feel as though we know what happens with this infection. It attacks the respiratory system, causes a nasty-sounding cough, and can leave people unbelievably fatigued.

However, as research surrounding COVID-19 grows, scientists are finding that this virus may be affecting the body in more ways than we initially suspected, including an impact on our hormone levels.

COVID-19 is not the only infection to show a connection with hormones. For example, hormone dysfunction that results in menstruation abnormalities, early menopause, and miscarriage has also been documented with Hepatitis B and C and HIV infections.

It is suspected that this hormonal dysfunction occurs because the viruses cause multisystem disruption, although it may also result from organ-specific effects.

## COVID-19's Effect on the Endocrine System

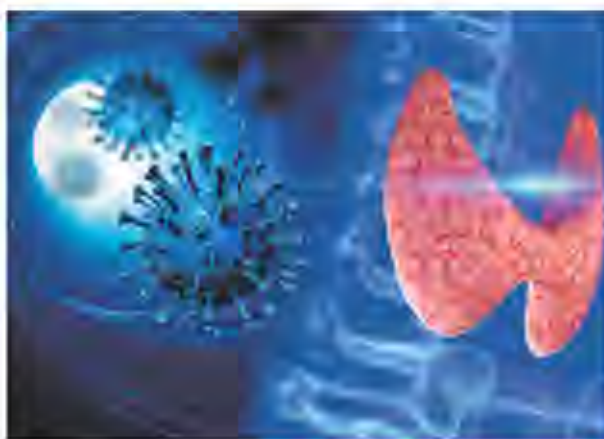
The endocrine system consists of the glands that produce hormones responsible for tissue growth, metabolism, and reproduction, among many other roles. When the body needs a hormone for a specific function, the gland signals for the release of it.

However, COVID-19 may affect the endocrine system, disrupting hormone production. It can accomplish this by using angiotensin-converting enzyme 2 (ACE2) to infiltrate host cells. While COVID-19 most often penetrates cells in the lungs, it also shows the potential to enter any cell with ACE2 expression, which includes some endocrine glands.

There are five primary endocrine glands that may be susceptible to damage from COVID-19. Let's discuss each gland and what its dysfunction means for your body.

### Pancreas

The pancreas is the gland responsible for producing insulin, which helps the cells of the body take in and use blood sugar for energy. When insulin is not produced or does not work correctly, blood sugar levels can rise.



Any major illness can be associated with stress-related high blood sugar. Still, studies have reported that patients with SARS, a close variant of coronavirus, who had never received glucocorticoids showed significantly higher blood sugar levels than those with non-SARS pneumonia.

Additionally, studies have found that two out of five COVID-19 patients exhibit new-onset diabetes at admission into the hospital, and it is suspected that it occurs because of damage caused to the pancreatic  $\beta$ -cells.

Studies have also found that COVID-19 may worsen insulin resistance in those who already have type 2 diabetes. This is because SARS-CoV-2 increases the serum levels of fetuin-A, which is a glycoprotein that has been linked with impaired insulin sensitivity.

### Adrenal Gland

One of the primary strategies utilized by SARS-CoV-2, like other viruses such as influenza, to evade the immune system is knocking down the host's cortisol stress response. It is suspected that this occurs through molecular mimicry. With this, the proteins of SARS-CoV-2 are very similar to those of the adrenocorticotrophic hormone (ACTH), which means the antibodies produced by the body against SARS-CoV-2 may inadvertently attack ACTH instead, blocking the stress-induced cortisol rise.

### Hypothalamus - Pituitary

One neurological manifestation that can occur in those with COVID-19 is hyposmia, or a loss of smell. This is likely to occur because the cells responsible for your sense of smell express ACE2, and SARS-CoV-2

can invade these cells. Since hyposmia in COVID-19 is not associated with nasal obstruction, it becomes more like that it has a neurogenic origin.

### Thyroid

The cells of the thyroid also express ACE2, which may be why hypothyroidism can result from COVID-19 infection, and why a COVID-19 infection can exacerbate an existing autoimmune thyroid disease.

On top of this, low thyroid hormones are associated with poorer COVID-19 outcomes, such as higher disease severity, ICU admission, hospitalization, and mortality.

### Gonads

The testes show a high level of ACE2 expression, and a study on 81 men with COVID-19 showed lower testosterone levels and significantly higher luteinizing hormone levels.

Acute COVID-19 infection can also affect the female sex hormones, with observations of menstruation abnormalities when infected. This may be because ACE2 receptor proteins are expressed in the ovaries, which supports the idea that COVID-19 temporarily disrupts ovarian hormone production.

## The Effect of Hormones on COVID-19

Not only can COVID-19 infection affect the hormones produced in the body, but hormones can also affect the infection. Namely, sex hormones play a role.

Epidemiological evidence has shown a clear gender disparity regarding COVID-19 severity and fatality. While many factors can contribute to this, one is the differences in sex hormones, although it is an area still requiring more research.

While the risk of becoming infected by COVID-19 is the same for both genders, males are twice as likely as females to have a critical or fatal disease. However, these gender differences are not present in prepubescent individuals, which leads scientists to consider the effect of sex hormones on COVID-19 progression.

Differences exist between genders for those with long COVID as well, which is a condition that appears following acute COVID-19 infection. In particular, women appear to be at a greater risk of long COVID, with female gender and age under 50 as risk factors for long COVID.

Based on the differences in gender and age for long-COVID risk, it is suspected that sex hormone differences between males and females can play a role in the appearance of long COVID.



### COVID-19 And Hormones: A Double-Sided Relationship

COVID-19 remains a rampant infection spreading from person to person, but our knowledge of it has risen significantly since its first introduction more than two years ago.

One observation is the way in which acute COVID-19 infection can affect the cells in many endocrine glands, including the pancreas, adrenal gland, hypothalamus/pituitary, thyroid, and gonads. This then has the potential to disrupt the hormones produced by these glands and cause a variety of symptoms.

However, this relationship goes both ways, and the hormones in the body can also affect COVID-19 severity. The differences primarily lie around gender and the difference in sex hormones. Men are twice as likely to experience a more severe acute infection, but women are more likely to suffer from long-COVID.

As more information is gained about COVID-19, we will learn more about the relationship between COVID-19 and hormones and how one affects the other.

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## Yes or No:

- Do you often have an uncomfortable or uncontrollable urge to urinate?
- Do you have frequent urination during the day?
- When you get the urge to go, do you make it to the bathroom on time?
- Do you wake up to urinate more than once per night?
- Does urine leak when you cough, sneeze, laugh, jump, exercise, or lift heavy objects?
- To help your symptoms, have you tried wearing pads or briefs, drinking less, doing Kegel exercises, rearranging your daily routine?

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**#1 It's important that you don't just see someone claiming to be a pelvic floor specialist.**

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The Florida Bladder Institute, based in Naples Florida, is one of the country's first urogynecology practices. Typically, a woman would have to see a gynecologist for one problem, a urologist for another and a gastroenterologist for another. Dr. Joseph Gault explains, "A Urogynecologist has the skill and experience to assess the entire pelvic region including the uterus, bladder, vagina and rectum as well as the muscles, ligaments, connective tissue and nerves that support those systems." He added, "This means a thorough evaluation is done of your urinary, lower gastrointestinal and reproductive systems as a whole to ensure you receive the best possible treatment and outcome in the most efficient and cost-effective manner."



**#2 It's not cookie-cutter. Your treatment should depend on the type and severity of your disorder.**

"Urinary incontinence" is a general term and symptoms can range from mild leaking to uncontrollable wetting. It can happen to anyone, but it becomes more common with age. There are many types of urinary incontinence, and sometimes a woman may have more than one of the following types:

- Stress
- OAB
- Urgency
- Mixed incontinence (i.e., stress and urgency can occur together)

Your treatment should be custom-tailored to the specific cause of your incontinence, your medical and surgical history, your overall health, age, and goals.

**#3 It's not always incontinence.**

Sometimes there are other conditions that may feel like an incontinence problem or cause unusual pain. The Florida Bladder Institute is well-prepared to evaluate and treat related problems of the urinary system that may be causing your discomfort.

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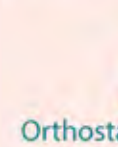
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The neoGEN-Series® system is a state-of-the-art, technically-innovative medical device for producing electric cell signaling energy waves (EST and ESI). The system is used to successfully treat circulatory issues, all types of acute and chronic pain, long-term (intractable) pain and drug-resistant pain. The neoGEN-Series® also offers specific-parameter signaling for efficacious neuro-muscular reeducation, muscle strengthening and relaxation of muscle spasm activity.

### WHAT IT TREATS

The SANEXAS Electric Cell Signaling Treatment treats (but is not limited to) the following:

- Neuropathy/radiculopathy pain
- Improve nerve health and regeneration
- Neuromuscular reeducation and training
- Creates relief of chronic intractable pain (osteoarthritis)
- Muscle spasms relaxation
- Increased local blood circulation
- Prevents the retardation of disuse atrophy
- Acute/chronic pain conditions
- Post-traumatic pain syndromes
- Aids in treatment in post-surgical pain conditions
- Improved tissue/organ function

### HOW MANY TREATMENTS

The average person will start noticing changes after 10-18 treatments. Some may notice changes earlier than later depending on the person and area receiving treatment, but it is necessary to receive a series (multiple) treatments for the SANEXAS treatment to be effective.



## NEUROPATHY CAUSES

- Overweight
- Smoking
- Diabetes
- Post Chemotherapy
- Malnutrition
- Herniated Discs



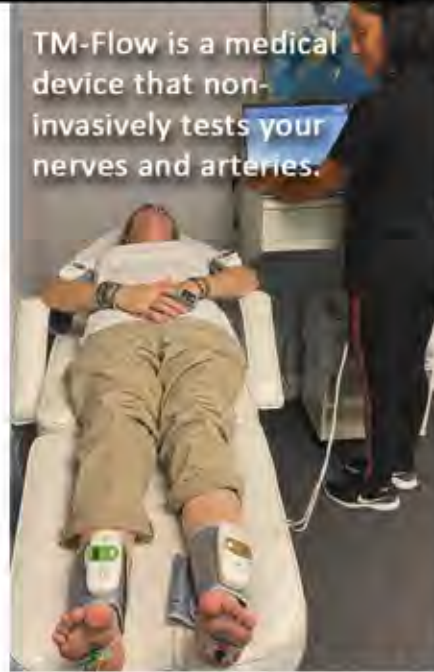
# WHAT IS THE TM-FLOW SYSTEM?

Artery and autonomic nerve dysfunction or damage can occur due to complications from smoking, being overweight, having chronic metabolic diseases - such as diabetes, hypertension, hepatitis, thyroid dysfunction and/or aging.

## TM-FLOW REPORT OVERVIEW ASSESSMENT

Patient Name: (Actual Patient)  
Gender: Male Height: 5' 8"  
DOB: 2/9/1952 Weight: 194 lbs  
Age: 70 BMI: 29.4  
Physician Name: Mairelis De La Cruz  
Clinic or Hospital: Hancock Healthcare  
Address: 1510 Hancock Bridge Pkwy  
Referral:

TM-Flow is a medical device that non-invasively tests your nerves and arteries.



### VASCULAR ASSESSMENT

BLOOD PRESSURE  
MILD HYPERTENSION

ARTERIAL STIFFNESS  
NORMAL RANGE

ESTIMATED CASP  
NORMAL RANG

ENDOTHELIAL FUNCTION  
SEVERE IMPAIRMENT

ANKLE BRACHIAL INDEX  
BORDERLINE

CASP = Central Aortic Systolic Pressure



### LIFESTYLE ASSESSMENT

ESTIMATED BODY COMPOSITION  
OVER WEIGHT

VITAL SIGNS  
BORDERLINE

EXERCISE CAPACITY  
BORDERLINE

### AUTONOMIC ASSESSMENT

CARDIAC AUTONOMIC  
VASOVAGAL S.

### MICROCIRCULATORY RESPONSE

NORMAL RANGE

SWEAT RESPONSE  
NORMAL RANGE

### ASSESSMENT COLOR CODE

NORMAL RANGE INITIAL STEP 1/ACCEPTABLE INITIAL STEP 2/BORDERLINE DEFINED SEVERE

### CLINICAL CONTEXT

Tingling in the toes  
Numbness  
Hypothyroidism  
Anti Lipidemic Agent  
Thyroid Treatment

### CMR SCORE

**54 %**

SCORE 0% - 100% \*

### CMR COLOR CODE

SCORE  $\geq 80\%$  | Low Risk Profile  
SCORE  $\geq 60\%$  and  $< 80\%$  | Borderline Risk Profile  
SCORE  $< 60\%$  and  $\geq 40\%$  | Moderate Risk Profile  
SCORE  $< 40\%$  | High Risk Profile

Physician's Signature

*Mairelis De La Cruz Hernandez*

CMR = Cardiometabolic Risk

## SPECIFIC TEST FOR NEUROPATHY SYMPTOMS

Population that should be tested with TM-Flow



Autonomic neuropathy and vascular dysfunction risk group in the USA

**50+**

Population over 50 years old with cardiovascular risk factors

(Hypertensive, Overweight, Smoker, Diabetic)

**70+**

Everyone older than 70

OVER 45 MILLION PEOPLE

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# ADHD AFFECTS ALL AGES

By Dr. Leonard A. Lado, MD, ABPN

**W**hen you hear Attention Deficit and Hyperactivity Disorder, you most likely think of young boys squirming at a school desk begging for recess. However, the young are not the only ones who experience the chaos of ADHD. In adults, ADHD may look like unemployment, financial problems, alcohol or substance abuse, unstable relationships, frequent physical accidents or car accidents, poor self-confidence, and self-image, or poor physical or mental health.

In adults, attention deficit disorder often looks quite different than it does in children—and its symptoms are unique for everyone. Attention deficit can be a misleading label. Adults with ADHD can focus on tasks they find stimulating or engaging but have difficulty staying focused on and attending to mundane tasks. You may become easily distracted by irrelevant sights and sounds, bounce from one activity to another or become bored quickly. Symptoms in this category are sometimes overlooked because they are less outwardly disruptive than the ADHD symptoms of hyperactivity and impulsivity—but they can be every bit as troublesome:

- Becoming easily distracted by low-priority activities or external events that others tend to ignore.
- Having so many simultaneous thoughts that it's difficult to follow just one.
- Difficulty paying attention or focusing, such as when reading or listening to others.
- Frequently daydreaming or "zoning out" without realizing it, even in the middle of a conversation.
- Struggling to complete tasks, even ones that seem simple.
- A tendency to overlook details, leading to errors or incomplete work, missing deadlines for bills, or appointment times.
- Poor listening skills; for example, having a hard time remembering conversations and following directions.
- Getting quickly bored and seeking out new stimulating experiences.

## Treatment

Standard treatments for ADHD in adults typically involve medication, education, skills training, and psychological counseling. A combination of these is often the most effective treatment. These treatments can help manage many symptoms of ADHD, but they don't cure it. It may take some time to determine what works best for you.



## Medications

Talk with your doctor about the benefits and risks of any medications.

- Stimulants, such as products that include methylphenidate or amphetamine, are typically the most commonly prescribed medications for ADHD, but other medications may be prescribed. Stimulants appear to boost and balance levels of brain chemicals called neurotransmitters.
- Other medications used to treat ADHD include the non-stimulant atomoxetine and certain antidepressants such as bupropion. Atomoxetine and antidepressants work slower than stimulants do, but these may be good options if you can't take stimulants because of health problems or if stimulants cause severe side effects.

The right medication and the right dose vary among individuals, so it may take time to find out what's right for you. Tell your doctor about any side effects.

## Psychological counseling

Counseling for adult ADHD generally includes psychological counseling (psychotherapy), education about the disorder, and learning skills to help you be successful.

## Psychotherapy may help you:

- Improve your time management and organizational skills
- Learn how to reduce your impulsive behavior
- Develop better problem-solving skills
- Cope with past academic, work, or social failures
- Improve your self-esteem
- Learn ways to improve relationships with your family, co-workers, and friends
- Develop strategies for controlling your temper

## Common types of psychotherapy for ADHD include:

- **Cognitive behavioral therapy.** This structured type of counseling teaches specific skills to manage your behavior and change negative thinking patterns into positive ones. It can help you deal with life challenges, such as school, work, or relationship problems, and help address other mental health conditions, such as depression or substance misuse.
- **Marital counseling and family therapy.** This type of therapy can help loved ones cope with the stress of living with someone who has ADHD and learn what they can do to help. Such counseling can improve communication and problem-solving skills.

## Working on relationships

If you're like many adults with ADHD, you may be unpredictable and forget appointments, miss deadlines, and make impulsive or irrational decisions. These behaviors can strain the patience of the most forgiving co-worker, friend, or partner. Therapy that focuses on these issues and ways to better monitor your behavior can be very helpful. So can classes improve communication and develop conflict resolution and problem-solving skills? Couples therapy and classes in which family members learn more about ADHD may significantly improve your relationships.

Dr. Leonard A. Lado, MD, is the Founder and Medical Director of Lado Healing Institute. Dr. Lado is a board-certified Psychiatrist in Bonita Springs, Florida, and South Florida. He serves the population of Marco Island, Fort Myers, Naples, and Southwest Florida. Dr. Lado's specialty is the treatment of non-Methadone Detox, Oxycontin and Pain Killer Addiction, Cocaine Addiction, Alcohol Dependence, and Crystal Meth Addiction using state-of-the-art outpatient Suboxone and medication treatments.



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# EVERYTHING YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT MEDICAL MARIJUANA, HEADACHES, & MIGRAINES

**H**eadaches and migraines are some of the most prevalent threats to public health in the United States.

From an increased risk of heart disease to constant pain, headaches and migraines are serious neurological issues. However, studies point toward medical marijuana as a turning point in the fight against headaches and migraines.

Below, we'll discuss how medical marijuana can be used against migraines and headaches.

## Why Headaches and Migraines are a Public Health Issue

According to self-reported data, nearly 1 in 6 Americans experience chronic headaches and migraines.

Furthermore, women are more at risk for migraines compared to men.

Headaches are extremely burdensome, but migraines are a significant health problem. Overall, migraines may lead to:

- Nausea
- Vomiting
- Insomnia
- Depression
- Irritability

Aside from these immediate risks, chronic headaches and migraines may lead to serious health concerns, such as:

- Heart disease
- Heart attack
- Stroke

Ultimately, recurring headaches and migraines require professional care. From a public health standpoint, migraines lead to an outsized risk, increasing pressure on medical resources.

Specifically, migraines indirectly cost the United States an estimated \$19 billion annually. From hospital bills to work-related absenteeism, migraines diminish the United State's workforce at an extreme rate.

## How Medical Marijuana Assists Individuals With Headaches and Migraines

As it stands, current medical treatments poorly manage headaches and migraines.

Additionally, traditional migraine and headache prescriptions are flushed with adverse side effects. Traditional migraine and headache medicine produces their own problems, from dizziness to an upset stomach.

Luckily, medical marijuana for migraines and headaches has been extensively researched. Below, we'll discuss how medical marijuana assists individuals experiencing chronic headaches and migraines.

## Decreased Glutamate Levels

When it comes to persistent headaches and migraines, glutamate levels play a significant role.

Specifically, increased glutamate levels trigger migraines or instances of aura. According to various studies, glutamate levels decrease when individuals consume medical marijuana.

By removing a common trigger, individuals who suffer from repetitive headaches and migraines may benefit from consuming medical marijuana, such as flowers, edibles, and concentrates.

## Reduced Neurogenic Inflammation

Medical marijuana is a classic substance to decrease inflammation.

As migraines strike, receptors within the brain surge unopposed. Thus, neurogenic inflammation produces the electric pain sensation that individuals experience while undergoing a migraine.

Medical marijuana stimulates a response and opposes these receptor-based cascades. Ultimately, neurogenic inflammation is reduced, making migraines far less painful.

## Serotonin Production

Medical marijuana is known to mimic the 5-HT1A receptors to produce serotonin.

In this case, serotonin reduces neurological pain while reducing stress. Overall, serotonin modulates pain, making bouts with migraine a much less painful experience.

## Pain Reduction

One of the most important receptors in the body in regard to pain management is TRPV1.

The TRPV1 receptor is activated by cannabinoids, such as CBD, within medical marijuana. By harnessing medical marijuana rich in CBD, MMJ patients may significantly reduce the pain experienced during the onset of a migraine.

Additionally, TRPV1 receptors may inhibit various receptors associated with headache and migraine-induced pain. Thus, TRPV1 receptors play a crucial role in inhibiting the mechanism for headaches and migraines to occur.

## The Best Medical Marijuana Products for Headaches and Migraines

If you're ready to reduce migraine and headache pain, it may be a good time to apply for a medical marijuana card.

Once a medical marijuana doctor has approved you, you're clear to purchase a wide range of MMJ products. However, some products may work better than others when combating a migraine's sudden and aggressive effects.

## Medical Marijuana Vape Cartridges

When you need instant and potent effects, it's hard to beat vape cartridges loaded with high-quality medical marijuana concentrate.

Vape cartridges can reach deliver high percentages of THC — making them incredibly potent. A single puff from a vape cart can produce much-needed effects in the event of a sudden instance of headache or migraine.

Furthermore, vape carts are portable and easy to use when it matters most.

## Medical Marijuana Tinctures

If you prefer not to smoke or vape — MMJ tinctures may be your best option.

Tinctures are consumed sublingually and are incredibly easy to use. However, tinctures may take upwards of 45-minutes to take effect.

Smoking or vaping medical marijuana may be the ideal method if you require rapid effects. Ultimately, consumers must experience various medical marijuana products to find out which works best when experiencing a headache or migraine.

## When Should You Consume Medical Marijuana During a Migraine or Headache?

If you're experiencing a migraine or headache — you should act quickly.

Migraines typically intensify over time when left untreated, making them incredibly painful. Headaches may turn into migraines, so it's crucial to take the necessary steps to stop the pain in its tracks.

Overall, studies show a significant reduction in migraine and headache intensity when marijuana is consumed shortly after the onset. When caught soon enough, the migraine intensity may diminish considerably.

With this in mind, it's best to use a fast-acting medical marijuana product, such as flowers or vape cartridges or a THC nasal rescue spray.



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By Neetu Malhotra, MD

# Stress Management

**H**ave you ever felt overwhelmed? Are you feeling stressed out? The holidays can sometimes be quite stressful, whether it be making the house ready, making sure you have gotten all the presents for your loved ones/friends, but you might want to take some time for yourself too. In fact, the holidays are known to bring out all sorts of ailments and health problems, more than any time of year. The stress of the holidays is real and not something to be ignored and brushed under the rug. Stress Management is truly something we all have to deal with at one point or another. Not all stress is bad, but when you start to feel overwhelmed and feel a loss of control, that's when stress can wreak havoc in your life.

The first part in managing your stress is to identify the stressor, for example-whether it be certain negative people, going through a divorce, being told of a new diagnosis or fear of losing your job. Whatever that stressor is, it's important to identify it, talk it over with a close friend/relative or perhaps write it in a stress journal. It is crucial to not keep the feelings/emotions bottled up because that in itself is truly, I believe the heart of many health problems. Stress has been linked to heart disease, depression/mental illnesses, inflammatory conditions (ie arthritis, autoimmune illnesses, etc) and even some forms of cancer.

The second part of stress management is coming up with a plan or solution to dealing with the problem that is creating the stress/turmoil in your life. This is where taking a step back for a moment can often help. Sometimes, taking a deep breath and talking out loud is all that may be needed. I also believe it is extremely important to have outlets or hobbies in your life. Some people find getting up early and meditating is a way to relax and recharge your mind. Others may find playing an instrument, listening to a Ted talk, gardening or reading a book keeps them relaxed and content. The point is, you have to find some activity that makes you happy and feel relaxed. This in itself, helps you think of the solution as a third party and coming up with a new perspective on the problem/situation creating the stress in your life.



*I think it is important to have general lifestyle principles and routines embedded in your life such as the 5 steps below:*

1. It is important to stay positive and surround yourself with people that will bring positivity in your life as well.
2. Exercising regularly and maintaining a healthy diet also helps with keeping the stress levels manageable.
3. Staying well hydrated and avoiding excessive consumption of caffeinated and alcoholic beverages also help you manage your stress.
4. Learn also how to say "no" to unnecessary requests. You need to know your limits and stick to them. It is important to know the difference between the "shoulds" and the "musts" and when needed to say "no" to taking on too much, whether

it be in your personal or professional life. Taking on too much is indeed a recipe for disaster and the root of stress for most people.

5. Lastly, getting enough sleep is also vital to stress management. Most of us are not getting the recommended 7 to 8 hours of sleep every night.

In the end, it is always important to ask oneself, "Is this going to make a difference in the grand scheme of things?" "Is it really worth getting upset over?"

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# Preventing Cardiovascular Disease with a Holistic Approach

**C**ardiovascular disease (CVD) is a leading cause of death and disability worldwide. It is a term used to describe a range of conditions that affect the heart and blood vessels, such as coronary heart disease, stroke, and hypertension. These conditions are often preventable, and a holistic approach to health can be an effective way to reduce the risk of developing CVD.

A holistic approach to health focuses on the whole person, rather than just treating individual symptoms or conditions. It takes into account physical, mental, and emotional well-being, as well as the person's social and spiritual environment.

One important aspect of a holistic approach to preventing CVD is regular physical activity. Exercise can help to lower blood pressure and cholesterol levels, improve circulation, and reduce the risk of obesity and diabetes. Aim for at least 150 minutes of moderate-intensity aerobic activity or 75 minutes of vigorous-intensity aerobic activity per week, as well as muscle-strengthening activities at least two days per week.

A healthy diet is also crucial for preventing CVD. Eating a diet high in fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and lean protein, and low in saturated and trans fats, salt, and added sugars, can help to



lower cholesterol and blood pressure, reduce inflammation, and improve overall health. Consider incorporating the Mediterranean diet, which is rich in fruits, vegetables, nuts, whole grains, fish, and olive oil, and has been shown to reduce the risk of CVD.

Another important aspect of a holistic approach to preventing CVD is managing stress. Chronic stress can increase the risk of hypertension, heart attack, and stroke, and can also contribute to unhealthy behaviors such as smoking, overeating, and lack of physical activity. Consider incorporating stress management techniques such as yoga, meditation, deep breathing exercises, and regular exercise into your daily routine.

Smoking and excessive alcohol consumption are also major risk factors for CVD, and should be avoided or limited. If you smoke, quitting is one of the most important steps you can take to reduce your risk of CVD. If you drink alcohol, do so in moderation – no more than one drink per day for women and two drinks per day for men.

It is important to have regular check-ups with your healthcare provider to monitor your blood pressure, cholesterol, and blood sugar levels, and to screen for other risk factors such as obesity, diabetes, and smoking. Your healthcare provider can also help you to develop a personalized plan to reduce your risk of CVD.

A holistic approach to health can be an effective way to prevent cardiovascular disease. Incorporating regular physical activity, healthy eating, stress management, avoiding smoking and excessive alcohol consumption, and regular check-ups with your healthcare provider into your daily routine can help to lower your risk of CVD and improve your overall health.

## ***The Greatest Wealth is Health***

*The key to staying healthy includes good preventive care.*

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# LOVING WELL THROUGH ESTATE PLANNING

By Kelly L. Fayer, P.A.

**D**uring the month of February, we are surrounded by hearts and chocolates and messages of love on all sides. We have a day set aside to tell those we hold dear just how much we love them. The store shelves are filled with plush hearts, red candies, jewelry, and cards so that we can show our loved ones just how much they mean to us. But that is just one day. Why not show them a more lasting kind of love?

One way to show love and care to your family and loved ones is through estate planning. It seems like many people devote more time to planning a vacation or selecting a spot to eat dinner than they do to estate planning. It may not be as fun to think about as booking romantic Valentine's getaway or checking out restaurant reviews, but without estate planning, you can't choose who gets everything that you worked so hard for.

Estate planning isn't only for the rich. Without a plan in place, settling your affairs after you go could have a long-lasting—and costly—impact on your loved one. It involves determining how an individual's assets will be preserved, managed, and distributed after death. It also takes into account the management of an individual's properties and financial obligations in the event that they become incapacitated.

## WHY IS AN ESTATE PLAN NECESSARY?

### Protects Beneficiaries

Once upon a time, estate planning was considered unnecessary for the masses. If you did not have great wealth to leave behind, there was no need to worry about what would happen to your assets after you died. However, that is not the case today. All families need a plan, or they could face the consequences of going through probate.

The main component of estate planning is designating beneficiaries for your assets, whether it's a bank account, summer house or a restored Camaro. Without an estate plan, you cannot decide who gets your assets, and your loved ones will have to go through a probate process that can take years, rack up fees and get ugly. The cost of going to court and the time it takes to get the matter settled is added stress on your grieving loved ones. Lawyers' fees, time missed out from work, and all that will go into the final outcome can eat up the inheritance that you left for your family.



### Eliminates Family Quarrels

We've all heard the horror stories. Someone with money dies and the war between family members begins. One sibling may think they deserve more than another, or one sibling may think they should be in charge of the finances even though they're notorious for racking up debt. Such squabbling can get ugly and end up in court, with family members pitted against one another.

Stopping fights before they start is yet another reason why an estate plan is necessary. This will enable you to choose who controls your finances and assets if you become mentally incapacitated or after you die and will go a long way toward quelling any family strife and ensuring that your assets are handled in the way that you intended.

### Protects Children

If you die without a surviving spouse to take care of your children and other dependents, who will get custody of them?

Without an estate plan, the probate court will appoint a legal guardian/conservator for them — typically, a family member, such as a grandparent, as the guardian. Alternatively, a third party, such as a family friend, can petition the court to be appointed as the guardian. If a minor child has no surviving family members and a third party doesn't step forward, the child could become a ward of the state and enter the foster care system.

To ensure that your children are cared for in a manner of which you approve, you'll want to name their guardians in the event that both parents die before the children turn 18.

These are just 3 reasons among many others that show how estate planning is loving your family well. This Valentine's Day make a date with an attorney to leave your family in the best possible shape after you're gone.

## COMPREHENSIVE ESTATE PLANNING GUIDANCE IN LEE COUNTY

Are you concerned about what will happen when you pass away or are no longer able to reliably communicate? Proactively building an estate plan can ease uncertainty, and The Law Office of Kelly L. Fayer, P.A. is here to help. Our Fort Myers estate planning lawyer has 25+ years of experience and can provide the attentive, personal support you need to protect the things most important to you. We are passionate about helping people in our community and are confident we can offer the skilled guidance you need to achieve your objectives, no matter your needs.

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**KELLY L. FAYER, P.A.**  
ATTORNEY AT LAW





# Am I a Candidate for Dental Implants?

Ricardo S. Bocanegra, D.D.S.

**G**enerally speaking, if you have lost teeth you are a candidate for dental implants. It is important that you are in good health, however, as there are some conditions and diseases that can affect whether dental implants are right for you. For example, uncontrolled diabetes, cancer, radiation to the jaws, smoking, alcoholism, or uncontrolled periodontal (gum) disease may affect whether dental implants will fuse to your bone. It is important to let your dental surgeon know all about your medical status (past and present) together with all medications you are taking, whether prescribed, alternative (herbal) or over-the-counter.

Where and how implants are placed requires a detailed assessment of your overall stomato-gnathic system ("stoma" – mouth; "gnathic" – jaws), within which the teeth function. This will necessitate compiling records that include study models of your mouth and bite, and specialized radiographs (x-rays), which may include 3D scans known as computerized tomograms (CT scans). Planning with the help of computer imaging ensures that dental implants can be placed in exactly the right position in the bone.

## How and why is bone lost when teeth are lost?

Bone needs stimulation to maintain its form and density. In the case of alveolar (sac-like) bone that surrounds and supports teeth, the necessary stimulation comes from the teeth themselves.

When a tooth is lost, the lack of stimulation causes loss of alveolar bone. There is a 25% decrease in width of bone during the first year after tooth loss and an overall decrease in height over the next few years.

The more teeth lost, the more function lost. This leads to some particularly serious aesthetic and functional problems, particularly in people who have lost all of their teeth. And it doesn't stop there. After alveolar bone is lost, the bone beneath it, basal bone – the jawbone proper – also begins to resorb (melt away).

## How can bone be preserved or re-grown to support dental implants?

Grafting bone into the extraction sockets at the time of tooth loss or removal can help preserve bone volume needed for implant placement. Surgical techniques are also available to regenerate (re-grow) bone that has been lost, to provide the necessary bone substance for anchoring implants. In fact, a primary reason to consider dental implants to replace missing teeth is the maintenance of jawbone.

Bone needs stimulation to stay healthy. Because dental implants fuse to the bone, they stabilize it and prevent further bone loss. Resorption is a normal and inevitable process in which bone is lost when it is no longer supporting or connected to teeth. Only dental implants can stop this process and preserve the bone.



## How are dental implants placed and who places them?

It takes a dental team to assess and plan dental implant placement and restoration – the fabrication of the crowns, bridgework or dentures that attach atop the implants and are visible in your mouth. The dental team consists of a dental surgical specialist – a periodontist, oral surgeon, or a general dentist with advanced training in implant surgery; a restorative dentist, who plans and places the tooth restorations; and a dental laboratory technician who fabricates them.

Placing dental implants requires a surgical procedure in which precision channels are created in the jawbone, often using a surgical guide. The implants are then fitted into the sites so that they are in intimate contact with the bone. They generally require two to six months to fuse to the bone before they can have tooth restorations attached to them to complete the process.

Doctor Ricardo Bocanegra is a Fellow of the International Academy of Oral Implantologists and has been servicing the dental needs of his patients since 1992. For a consultation you may contact him at 239-482-8806.



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# American Heart Month: ASCVD via LEQVIO Injectables

## Atherosclerotic Cardiovascular Disease (ASCVD)

ASCVD also called "atherosclerosis," occurs when fatty deposits build up in the arteries. Arteries carry blood and oxygen from the heart to the rest of the body, and all organs in the body need this flow of oxygenated blood to work.

If one of these fatty deposits, also known as a plaque, builds up inside an artery, it's harder for the blood to get through. A plaque can block the segment of the artery where it develops. Or a piece of the plaque can break off, travel through the bloodstream, and block a different blood vessel. Plaques can occur in any artery. But they're most dangerous when they affect vessels that supply blood to the heart, brain, aorta, arms, and legs.

## Atherosclerosis contributes to Heart Disease and Stroke

Both the heart and brain depend on oxygen to function normally. When plaques in the arteries that supply the heart or brain limit blood flow, they can lead to a lack of oxygen for these organs. A heart attack or stroke can occur when the lack of oxygen is severe enough.

## Heart disease

Arteries that bring blood to the heart are called "coronary arteries." If one of the coronary arteries is too narrow, the heart doesn't get enough oxygen. This can lead to chest pain (angina), shortness of breath, dizziness, or nausea. But the symptoms can vary. Some people don't have symptoms at all, or they don't realize their heart is in trouble. A heart attack occurs when the lack of oxygen is severe enough to damage heart muscle.

## Stroke

Plaques can also occur in the carotid arteries of the neck. These arteries bring blood to the brain. The smaller blood vessels within the brain can also become narrow or blocked. The symptoms of this narrowing or blockage can include trouble speaking, sudden confusion, problems with vision or balance, or weakness in a part of the body.

These all can be signs that a part of the brain isn't getting enough oxygen. When these symptoms are temporary, it's called a transient ischemic attack (TIA). If the lack of oxygen is severe enough to damage brain cells, it's called a stroke.



## Treatment for Atherosclerosis

Prevention and treatment of cardiovascular disease both start with a healthy lifestyle. Dietary habits that help to prevent heart attacks and strokes include eating fewer unhealthy fats — like red meat and processed foods — and eating more whole grains, fruits and vegetables, and healthy fats (like fish, nuts, and olive oil). Regular movement and exercise are also significant. The American Heart Association recommends 150 minutes of exercise each week. Quitting smoking! Most people with ASCVD will also take medications to slow down artery damage.

Medications can help prevent and treat cardiovascular disease as well. There are many factors that can lead to a high chance of having a heart attack or stroke. Statin medications can treat lipids by slowing down plaque formation and stabilizing existing ones as well as taking an aspirin daily can help. Most recently the FDA has approved an add-on therapy in the form of an injectable to lower cholesterol to help high-risk adults. A healthcare provider should discuss the risks and benefits of medications with you.

## Leqvio

LEQVIO is an option for patients with ASCVD. It is an injectable prescription medicine used along with diet and other lipid-lowering medicines (statins) in adults who need additional lowering of "bad" cholesterol (LDL-C) and have known cardiovascular disease and/or heterozygous familial hypercholesterolemia (HeFH), an inherited condition that causes high levels of LDL-C. It is not known if LEQVIO can decrease problems related to high cholesterol, such as heart attacks or stroke.

With LEQVIO, people in clinical studies given LEQVIO lowered their bad cholesterol (LDL-C) more and kept it low by 50% during a 6-month period. Your body works to remove bad cholesterol naturally, and LEQVIO helps your body remove more plaque for those with high cholesterol.

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# PICKLEBALL INJURIES ON THE RISE

## How to Avoid Them

By Orthopedic Specialists of SW Florida

**P**ickleball is now the fastest-growing sport in the United States with more than 5 million players across the country. It has been billed as a more accessible and a less intense tennis alternative, but experts say the popular pastime is still leading to a rash of injuries amongst the senior set. "Obsessed" retirees are playing several hours per day, leading to overuse injuries. This older demographic is also more likely to have weak bones, putting them at a greater risk for fractures.

A hybrid between badminton and tennis, pickleball originated in 1965 with three friends on Bainbridge Island in Washington state. But during the pandemic, its popularity soared, especially among athletic elders. Last month, the Sports & Fitness Industry Association reported that the trendy pastime has seen a massive 39.3% jump in the last two years, making it the fastest growing sport in the US. Competitive leagues have sprung up nationally.<sup>1</sup>

Shoulder problems are more common in pickleball than in any other sport. The most common pickleball injury is a problem with the rotator cuff tendon in the shoulder, which can cause shoulder pain, especially with movement and use. The problems can range from tendonitis and bursitis to a tear of the rotator cuff tendon, and bigger tears can create weakness and inability to use your arm.

Although some rotator cuff tears occur as a consequence of an accident or injury, for many people rotator cuff damage appears over time. Most adults who use their shoulders are at risk for damaging or tearing their rotator cuff tendon. Reaching overhead

while playing a racket sport like pickleball requires a lot of force being generated by the rotator cuff tendon that can worsen or exacerbate rotator cuff injuries.

Although rotator cuff tears are not preventable, the shoulder performs better when it is flexible and strong, so make sure to stretch and do light to moderate strengthening to maintain the health of the shoulder.

Surgery is the only solution to treat a torn rotator cuff. Some opt out of the surgery and choose to live with it, but it can be painful and limit movement. If you are an active person, maintaining that same level of activity with a torn rotator cuff is difficult. Small tears may not bother some as much, but as the tear enlarges, it becomes harder to successfully operate. Small tears might not cause many symptoms, but they are persistent and the tear can become massive.

**While a torn rotator cuff tendon is the most common, pickleball and racket sports can cause additional injuries, including:**

- Meniscus tears
- Tendon ruptures
- Aggravation of arthritic knees

To prevent additional injuries, warm up and ice down after pickleball. A warmup should generate a light sweat, such as a brisk walk, jog or cycling. Stretch your shoulders, lower back, leg muscles and joints to try to get them as flexible as possible. If you feel achiness or soreness on any body part, put a bag of ice on it for 20 minutes to help it recover completely before playing again. You can also take over-the-counter pain relief medications. If the pain persists for more than a few days, see a trained professional.

Consider the following safety tips when playing pickleball:

- Be aware of your playing area and any obstacles that might cause a hazard.
- Avoid backpedaling on the pickleball court to avoid backward falls.
- Stretch and warm up before you play.
- Wear proper court shoes and eye protection. Use appropriate equipment.
- Listen to your body and give it time to rest.
- Communicate with your partner to avoid confusion.
- Improve your balance and learn to fall without injury.
- Do not play on a wet court.
- Work with a professional to improve your fundamentals.
- Have an emergency plan in case of injury on the court.

Thankfully, most pickleball injuries are overuse injuries and can be treated with non-surgical measures such as ice, anti-inflammatory medicines, and rest. If an injury is more serious, it should be treated quickly. Prompt treatment can minimize long-term damage. Visiting an orthopedic specialist who has experience in treating sports injuries will result in accurate diagnosis and proper treatment of your condition.

Orthopedic Specialists of SW Florida strives to provide exceptional quality of care to patients with musculoskeletal needs. Our staff of fellowship-trained physicians remains at the forefront of orthopedic medicine, and serves as an educational resource for the Southwest Florida community.

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# How to Increase Employee Retention and Well-Being

By Cynthia Perthuis, CDP, CADDCT, CSA

**Organizations can improve their bottom-line by actively supporting workers who double as caregivers for older adults.**

**D**id you know that if one of your valued employees were to leave, it would cost your business up to two times their annual salary to hire and train a replacement? And this doesn't even begin to address the impact that high turnover has on remaining staff and customers.

It's no wonder that Employee Retention is a critical goal for corporate executives, not-for-profit leaders, and human resource professionals. Very likely, this is one of those vexing issues that keeps you up at night.

As we begin the new fiscal year, there is a wealth of literature in the HR field on how to retain top employees, complete with lists, strategies, and plans. But what is consistent across every recommendation is the need to do three things:

1. To offer well designed benefit plans
2. To prioritize employees' work/life balance
3. To support workers' well-being

While corporations and not-for-profits generally offer an array of valuable employee assistance programs, one critical benefit area that is often overlooked is *senior care* support services.

According to AARP, one in six US employees spends 20 hours per week, on average, assisting an older relative. Much of this time occurs during business hours. Yet companies routinely fail to recognize this issue and, as a result, suffer an enormous toll on their finances and on their employees' performance.

The costs are astounding! Across the country, working caregivers cost employers an estimated eight percent more than non-caregivers. That equates to a stunning \$13.4 billion per year. And that is a direct hit to the bottom line.

This is where Senior Care Authority can help. Through benefit plans managed by companies and organizations, we offer a program called *EASE*—Employee Assistance Solutions for Eldercare.



For employers, *EASE* has the potential to lower absenteeism and improve productivity. By supporting employees during their critical caregiving moments, it can improve worker satisfaction and reduce turnover.

For employees, the *EASE* program helps people focus on their work tasks, knowing that the needs of their family members are being guided by a professional. Employees will experience reductions in stress, anxiety, and tension. All of which leads to increased productivity on the job.

"*EASE* is a timely solution designed so organizations can support their employees who are juggling the demands of work while acting as a caregiver for an older loved one," said Bruce Nathanson, Advisor at Senior Care Authority. "Our high touch services are personalized to address each client's situation and needs."

*EASE* custom-tailored programs help employee caregivers sort through and understand the range of care options, traverse a complex healthcare system, and help them make decisions that are right for the older adult in their care. Services include:

- **Family Coaching:** As a third-party advisor outside the emotional landscape of the family, we can help family members express points of view, discuss issues, and reach consensus. We do this in a constructive and respectful manner recognizing that everyone needs to be heard and have their opinions valued.

- **Senior Self-Driving Assessments:** We offer a nationally recognized program to help older drivers and their concerned families work through the complicated issues of diminishing driving skills due to aging. Our self-assessment process promotes buy in and maintains a higher quality of relationships.

- **Eldercare Consulting:** We help clients navigate a complex healthcare system and the challenging transitions that so often occur. We support long distance caregiving, and we arrange referrals to specialists—including attorneys, financial planners, and homecare and daycare services. Our guidance includes development of customized and manageable care plans with clear steps and goals that serve as a roadmap. We also provide on-going "peace of mind" support following move-in to a residential community.

- **Residential Placement Services:** We work with families to identify the best senior living and care options, whether it is independent living, assisted living, memory care or skilled nursing. After creating a "short list" of potential solutions, we schedule tours and accompany clients on each visit. We assist in paperwork completion and moving arrangements.

Advisors at **Senior Care Authority** are, or have been, a caregiver for a family member. Each member of the team has also received accreditation as a Certified Dementia Practitioner. This allows staff to combine personal experience with professional training to support clients with compassion and skill.

As we begin 2023, senior managers and benefit professionals can take a bold step towards improving retention by recognizing and supporting your employees who double as caregivers. Not only will your bottom-line shine, but your workers will be more strongly committed to their work and your organization.

If you're interested in high touch, customized solutions to meet the needs of your workforce-- and your organization--call Bruce Nathanson, at Senior Care Authority at 212-913-9963 or visit our website <https://www.seniorcare-nyfl.com/ease.html>.



Senior Living and Care Solutions



# CBD and Your Pets

**C**BD, or cannabidiol, is a compound found in hemp and marijuana plants. It is non-psychoactive, meaning it does not produce the "high" associated with marijuana use. CBD has been found to have a number of potential health benefits for humans, and it is now being used to help pets as well.

One of the most common uses for CBD in pets is for pain management. CBD has been found to have anti-inflammatory properties, which can help to reduce pain and inflammation associated with conditions such as arthritis. It can also be used to help manage pain associated with cancer and other chronic conditions.

CBD can also be used to help manage anxiety in pets. Many pets suffer from anxiety, which can manifest in a number of ways, such as destructive behavior, excessive barking or whining, or even aggression. CBD can help to calm the nervous system, which can help to reduce anxiety symptoms.

CBD can also be used to help manage seizures in pets. Seizures can be a serious condition, and can be very distressing for both the pet and the owner. CBD has been found to have anti-seizure properties, which can help to reduce the frequency and severity of seizures.

CBD can also be used to help improve the overall well-being of pets. It can help to improve the appetite, promote healthy sleep patterns, and boost the immune system.



It is important to note that not all CBD products are created equal. It is important to do research and choose a high-quality, pure product that is specifically designed for pets. It is also important to consult with a veterinarian before giving CBD to your pet, as they can help to determine the appropriate dosage.

Overall, CBD can be a useful tool in helping to manage a variety of health conditions in pets. It can help to reduce pain and inflammation, manage anxiety, reduce the frequency and severity of seizures, and improve overall well-being. However, it is important to choose a high-quality product and consult with a veterinarian before giving CBD to your pet.

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.

## 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 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](https://hempjoi.com), stop by, or call us to find out more at (239) 676-0915.



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# Health Insurance IMPORTANT DATES!

By Ulla-Undine Merritt (Dee) National Producer Number (NPN) 8853366



**HEALTH INSURANCE** is more important than ever! There is no way to determine when something will happen or when you could be diagnosed with a serious medical condition. So, saying I am healthy, so I don't need health insurance makes no sense. Insurance is moving the financial risk from you to the insurance company. There are always options for about every budget. Work with a professional that is contracted with many carriers and offers multiple options. Many plans are available year-round, the government plans such as the Marketplace and Medicare have specific times that you can enroll unless you have a Special Enrollment Period due to, as an example loss of coverage, marriage, moving out of the plans service area, etc.

## **MEDICARE – Annual Enrollment Period October 15-December 7th, 2022, for January 1st, 2023, effective. Medicare Advantage – Part C & Part D Prescription Plans**

Most of the plans in your area have made many changes and things you might not notice, especially important, are your doctors still in network, what tier are your medications and maybe the tier changed, copays, coinsurance. What extras are the plans offering? Maybe you need extra dental, vision, hearing aids. Many plans include some wonderful extra benefits, but it is also particularly important to know how to use the benefit and if they work for you.

CMS has made many rules for 2023 Medicare season. If you want to enroll or review your plan over the phone or on a Webex, you need to agree to be recorded and Medicare requires us to keep the recording for 10 years. In person appointments do not have that requirement, but you need to sign a scope of appointment that just authorizes us to talk to you about what you checked, such as Medicare Advantage or a Drug Plan it does not allow us to do anything but talk to you about these topics. Many plans have decreased the cost of Insulin which will be a huge savings for so many in 2023. Talk about maximum of \$2,000 drug cost in a year, is not valid in 2023 but hopefully in 2025. Many changes are happening year after year. Find an agent that will be there for you, year after year.

When you turn 65 you are eligible for Medicare, once you have worked 40 quarters roughly 10 years there is no cost for Medicare Part "A". Part A covers Hospitals, Skilled Nursing, Home Health & Hospice. Medicare Part B you can choose to take at 65 or you can hold off if you are still working and have credible coverage. If you do not have group health insurance that is considered qualified, and then you want it you would have a late enrollment penalty for each month you did not have Part B & Part D and that penalty will last for the rest of your life. Part B covers, doctors, imaging, blood work, ambulance, durable medical equipment, etc. Part D is a Medicare Drug Plan and covers medications. During your initial enrollment period it is especially important to understand your options! Medicare Supplements/Medigap Plans are NOT guarantee issue you may need to medically qualify. You can purchase a Medigap Plan during your 1st 6-month on Medicare Part B without medical underwriting. There are a lot of things you need to know. Again, work with an agent you can trust! **Especially important:** when you **move** you need to know your options. Can you keep the same plan? Do you need to make a change and what does that look like?

We offer **Free Medicare Seminars** in Lee & Collier County please e-mail [info@logicalinsurance.com](mailto:info@logicalinsurance.com) to register or call **239-362-0855** for dates. Medicare's website is [www.Medicare.gov](http://www.Medicare.gov).

## **MARKETPLACE – Obama Care/Affordable Care Act – open enrollment starts November 1st- December 15th for January 1st effective. December 16th to January 15th will have February 1st, 2023, effective.**

The website is [HealthCare.gov](http://HealthCare.gov), your local insurance agent can help you through the maze. The government also changes each year what how much you can earn to receive subsidy to help lower your cost for insurance. Many people are not aware that they do not need to forgo having health insurance and there are affordable options for them. Insurance is not just about the price of the premium but particularly important the network of doctors, hospital, etc. that you can have access to. Be careful carriers that are selling in your area might not have a good network, so the price might be right but if your hospital and your doctors are not in their network that is a problem. So always check the network!

Understanding deductibles, out-of-pocket maximums, what applies to the deductible? Do I have to pay the deductible before the plan pays? This differs by each plan, Copays vs. coinsurance if you do not understand ask, become informed about what you are buying and how it works.

**Individual/Family Health Insurance** – Being young and healthy does not mean you do not need health insurance. Do you know anyone that knew when they were going to be diagnosed with cancer, or when they were going to have a heart attack or even a serious accident? I do not, it happens, and insurance is there to help you get the care you need and limit your financial exposure. What are your insurance options, and what is best for you? Employer Group Coverage, Individual Medically Underwritten Health Insurance, Medicaid, or the Government Market Place Guaranteed Issue Health Insurance. There is a lot to know about the differences, as well as the cost. The monthly premium should not be your only consideration. *You do not know what you do not know so ask the experts, which do know about all of plans and can help educate and guide you thru the enrollment process. When it comes to medically underwritten plans most of them you can enroll all year long, but you can also be denied based on medical underwriting.*

**Logical Insurance Solutions** is a SWFL Insurance Broker that works with most of the carriers, we are happy to help you through the maze. This is what we do daily, it is second nature to us. We offer virtual seminars, one on one WebEx, phone and in person appointments.

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*We do not offer every plan available in your area. Any information we provide is limited to those plans we do offer in your area. Please contact Medicare.gov or 1-800-MEDICARE to get information on all of your options.*



# ARTHRITIC KNEE PAIN: DO YOU REALLY NEED SURGERY?

By Physicians Rehabilitation

**W**alking, standing and exercising put a lot of strain on our knees. For example, a person that weighs 150 lbs. walking up a flight of stairs will put approximately 500 lbs. of pressure on their knees with each step. Not only is the knee one of the most intricate of all the joints in the body, but they are also the most susceptible to arthritis. Multiple types of arthritis affect the knees, but osteoarthritis is by far the number one type that surpasses all others.

## What is Osteoarthritis (OA) of the Knee?

Positioned between the three bones of the knee (the femur, tibia, and patella) the articular cartilage provides a smooth gliding surface and acts as a shock absorber. This cartilage is smooth and resilient but susceptible to wear and tear. Once the cartilage begins to break down it is difficult to stop and often the cartilage breaks down completely and wears away. This can cause soreness, swelling, and stiffness, and it is the beginning stages of osteoarthritis, or bone rubbing against bone, which in turn causes bone spurs and a great deal of discomfort.

Articular cartilage has no blood supply. The cells that make the cartilage are nourished by the synovial fluid, and hydrostatic pressure of the joint influences the health and pathological condition of arthritis. The wear and tear process can be slowed often by weight reduction, strengthening the muscles surrounding the joints, and by minimizing or reducing activities that put excessive weight on the knee joints. However, there are well-known non-invasive treatments that have helped numerous people regenerate knee joint function and tissue.

Osteoarthritis develops slowly, and the often the pain becomes worse with time. This type of arthritis is also known as degenerative joint disease, because it is often associated with the aging process. But occasionally, this process can also affect younger people too. The pain can be debilitating and interfere with daily activities, affect your ability to work and create limited range of motion in your life.

## MANY PHYSICIANS WILL RECOMMEND SURGERY, BUT DO YOU REALLY NEED IT?

### Knee Replacement Surgery is Permanent

Starting with a more conservative approach is a better choice. Knee replacement is a very extreme measure to take without considering all of your options for a condition as common as knee arthritis. Physicians Rehabilitation has an effective knee program that entails several non-invasive treatments that can alleviate pain, increase weight bearing and strength, and regenerate tissue.

### Physicians Rehabilitation's Knee Therapy Program Includes:

- PRP (Platelet Rich Plasma)
- Physical therapy
- Bracing
- Rehabilitation
- Supplementation and more

### Viscosupplementation

Viscosupplementation is an FDA approved, guided, hyaluronic acid injection. It is a gel like substance that is very similar to the synovial fluid in our joints, which reduces inflammation and increases cushioning and lubrication of your knees immediately. This treatment protocol is used to treat the symptoms associated with arthritis.

Viscosupplementation (also known as hyaluronic acid injection) involves injecting a lubricating fluid into the knee joint to promote more comfortable knee movement, reduce friction in the joint, and slow the progression of arthritis. This treatment is also commonly paired with physical therapy to help strengthen the joint and improve range of motion. At Physicians Rehabilitation, we perform viscosupplementation with the guidance of advanced fluoroscopic technology to achieve enhanced precision and provide our patients with optimal results. Viscosupplementation is considered to be a safe procedure, and is covered by Medicare and most insurances.

### 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.

Research studies and clinical practice have shown PRP therapy is 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

We are a leading provider of nonsurgical orthopedic solutions in the Florida. We cater to patients of all ages and lifestyles who are at their wit's end with symptoms of osteoarthritis and other debilitating joint conditions. If you're ready to find meaningful relief from your knee pain, we encourage you to consult with our board-certified physicians about your nonsurgical treatment options – even if other doctors have told you that surgery is the only answer.

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# A New Way to Treat Treatment-Resistant Depression

A New and Highly-Effective Therapy Designed to Help Those With Depressive Disorders, Anxiety, and PTSD

**F**or those who struggle with Treatment-Resistant Depression (TRD), depressive disorders, PTSD, or clinical anxiety, ketamine therapy is a rapid and robust modality having antidepressant effects. Standard treatments for these mental health disorders do not always work, and not only do they take a long time for patients to feel its effects (up to 2 months), but they also do not stay in the system if the medication is not taken regularly. Ketamine, however, is unique in that it enables and promotes connectors in the brain to foster and regrow. Through repairing the connections in the brain responsible for depression, ketamine promotes regrowth and repair of these connections. It is this reaction that is responsible for the efficacy of ketamine, not the presence of the drug in the body as other traditional forms of medications work.

Those with depressive disorders, everyday tasks can be unbearable, affecting their overall quality of life. If the disorder is not managed at a core level, the individual will suffer the anguish that emotional and often physical symptoms can have. The introduction of ketamine in conjunction with behavioral therapy can help patients manage their condition.

## What is Ketamine Therapy and What is it Used to Treat

Ketamine therapy is an evidence-based modality prescribed and recommended to those with Treatment-Resistant Depression (TRD), treatment and management of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), anxiety, and/or underlying mental disorders. Ketamine-assisted treatment has proven to be highly effective in mitigating the side effects and symptoms of depressive disorders and comorbidities, whereas other pharmacological and first-line treatment methods have failed, or the patient has not responded well to the treatment.

*WhiteSands Recovery & Wellness is now offering ketamine therapy at their outpatient offices for those who qualify and meet the criteria.*

Offering a full continuum of care and customized treatment options means introducing the latest therapies to patients who struggle with underlying disorders. WhiteSands' inpatient programs provide the most comprehensive, all-inclusive treatment at every level of care. Being at the forefront of the newest and most advanced mental health and substance abuse treatment methods, WhiteSands is

proud to introduce ketamine therapy to help patients heal from depressive disorders like Treatment-Resistant Depression.

## How Ketamine is Offered and Administered

WhiteSands Recovery & Wellness administers Ketamine therapy in two ways:

- IV Infusion Therapy
- Nasal spray - SPRAVATO® (esketamine)

Patients considering ketamine therapy are first seen and assessed by a board-certified Psychiatrist and Registered Nurse where they will complete a blood test and urinary analysis (UA). Patients must pass all requirements of these tests before beginning ketamine therapy. A ketamine therapy plan is arranged for each patient so they are aware of where and when their next session is.

Ketamine therapy is administered seven times over four weeks. The procedure, which takes approximately 45 minutes, is completed in a comfortable and quiet room at a WhiteSands outpatient office where patients are administered their dose in a controlled environment. Once the process is complete, they are monitored for the proceeding hour by a Registered Nurse to ensure they are not experiencing any adverse reactions or side effects. Since patients cannot drive once they have completed their therapy session, we arrange a ride home for them.

## Efficacy of Ketamine Therapy in Treatment of Depressive Disorders

Or

## How Effective is Ketamine Therapy?

With the introduction of Ketamine for a range of depressive disorders, clinical trials and research indicate that 70-80% of patients who undergo the therapy no longer experience the negative emotions, moods, and symptoms of the depressive disorder they once did.

Ketamine therapy is becoming widely considered a treatment option for TRD for its rapid action and lasting effects. After just a single ketamine therapy session, patients reported a significant improvement in their anxiety and depressive symptoms.

## Ketamine has shown to:

- Mitigate chronic pain
- Alleviate depression
- Reduce suicidal ideation
- Dramatically lessen the symptoms of depression

With the COVID-19 pandemic taking a toll on mental health and exacerbating depressive disorders, the need for effective and safe therapy is crucial now more than ever. To maximize patient success in managing depressive disorders, it's important that patients are not provided with a 'band-aid' method, but with safe, non-dependency therapies. Ketamine therapy can provide that.

## Pricing

Ketamine IV therapy can be funded on an out-of-pocket, self-pay basis and is not covered by health insurance. WhiteSands Recovery & Wellness offers in-house payment plans, as well as third-party financing options.

SPRAVATO® is covered by major insurance providers. We accept all major medical insurance providers. SPRAVATO® can also be paid out-of-pocket for those who do not have health insurance.

Get in touch with our admissions team to discuss your financial needs.

## Location

Ketamine-assisted treatment is offered at several WhiteSands Treatment outpatient locations. The facility has 17 outpatient locations throughout Florida, having on-site licensed medical staff and registered nurses who facilitate and monitor all ketamine therapy sessions.



**Dr. S. Mann, M.D.**  
Chief Medical Officer



**Lyndsay Henry, PhD**  
VP of Clinical Services



**Dr. H. Layman**  
Psychiatrist



**WhiteSands**  
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1-239-237-5473 | <https://whitesandtreatment.com>

If you or someone close to you is struggling with treatment resistant depression, anxiety, PTSD, mood disorders, or depressive disorders, get in touch with WhiteSands Treatment today at **239-237-5473**, or visit <https://whitesandtreatment.com>



# WHOLEHEARTED

By Jodi Thomas

I love Valentine's Day. Not just the flowers and the chocolate and all that good stuff, but I have always loved the idea of celebrating *love*... and on a trivial note, seeing all the pink and red hearts just makes me happy for some reason.

Lately I've been thinking a lot about my own heart. When reflecting on 2023 and what I hope for this year, I really desire to live *wholeheartedly*. And the first step in doing this is learning to pay attention to my **heart**. I'm reading a great book right now called *Soulful Simplicity* by Courtney Carver. I highly recommend it. In the book, she discusses living wholeheartedly and that we have to learn to *listen* to our hearts. She has an exercise where in a quiet moment, you place both hands on your heart, one hand on top of the other, and just sit in the quiet for a moment or two, and ask yourself, "What is my heart saying? What is my heart feeling?"

Yet, most of us are terrified to do this. Why? Because, without a doubt, most of us are never taught to listen to our hearts. We are taught to "suck it up," to keep pushing forward, to fulfill our myriad responsibilities, regardless what our hearts might be saying, or trying to say. And there are many times where we have to do just that—it's part of being an adult. But there's an equal, if not more, need for us to listen to those precious hearts of ours, that have often long been covered up by obligation, fear of what other people think, busy-ness, and self-medication with our vices of choice.

The primary reason we need to learn to listen to our hearts are that our hearts are **very important to God**. Proverbs 4:23 says, "Above all else, guard your heart, for everything you do flows from it." Think about what that says and the implication of it. Both good and bad flow from our heart, based upon the state of our heart. Ignore your heart for too long, and this is disastrous for living the kind of life that you once imagined for yourself.

In fact, our hearts are so valuable to God that they are the very place that Christ has decided to take up residence. Ephesians 3:17 says, "I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being, so that Christ *may dwell in your hearts through faith*." Additionally, Romans 5:5 says that God pours out His love into our hearts. Now, I spend a lot of time nurturing my relationship with God. But to be completely honestly, many times I don't feel God's presence or love. These are things that I have to take *by faith*. But even this comes from the heart, for Romans 10:10 says "For it is *with your heart that you believe* and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you profess your faith and are saved."

When I truly believe these truths, which comes from my very heart, that Christ actually lives in my heart and God's love is poured into my heart, I am empowered to live in God's love and to express that love to others in my day to day life. And folks, there is just nothing in life more important than that.

Not only does God reside in our heart, he desires to protect it. Philippians 4:7 says "And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, *will guard your hearts* and your minds in Christ Jesus." How does the peace of God guard our heart? It guards it against worry, against anxiety, against unforgiveness. . . all of the things that wreck havoc on our hearts and create stress in our lives.

Our hearts are so valuable to God, that He desires *all* of our hearts. In Luke 10:27, Jesus said the greatest commandment was to "*Love the Lord your God with all your heart* and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind."

When you see those pretty pink and red hearts this Valentines Day, I hope you are reminded that your heart is a unique treasure to God. There is no other heart like yours. It is so valuable to Him that Jesus died on the cross so that He could live there and God's love be poured out into your heart. Because your heart is of the utmost value to God, you need to value it, too. Learn to listen to it. Learn to respect it. Don't ignore it. I hope you will join me in the quest of living *wholeheartedly* in 2023.

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