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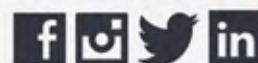
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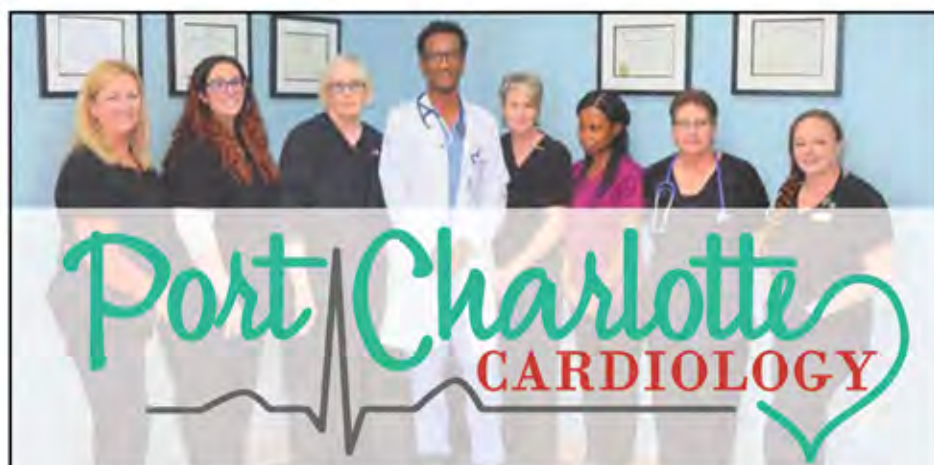
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MOVING IN THE RIGHT DIRECTION

By Dr. Cindy Vaccarino, DPT, Director of the Physical Therapist Assistant program at Hodges University

The path to becoming a Physical Therapist Assistant (PTA) varies, but the passion for helping others enjoy their lives more is a shared thread. Those who pursue a career as a PTA have a few additional things in common: an interest in health, the outdoors, sports, or an active lifestyle.

Becoming a PTA combines that passion for helping others with lifestyle interests for a career that is rewarding. The name of the program may be a little misleading with the word "assistant." PTAs are very much involved in the planning and care of their patients, from that first meeting to the last session. PTAs work under the direction of a licensed physical therapist. Like a PT, the PTA works closely with their patients to help them reach their goal. That could mean regaining full range of motion after shoulder injury or surgery, walking without crutches or a walker, to regaining mobility and strength for an athlete.

I can say firsthand that the feeling you get when you see your patient reach their goal is incredibly satisfying. It's something that never gets old. From where your patient starts, the hard work it takes to make progress, and yes, there can be setbacks too, but when they reach their goal and you see the smile on their faces, it's inspiring.

The journey to become a PTA is a goal you can achieve in less than two years. Our program at Hodges University is intense, and you do work hard, but you have the support of your instructors, and the comradery of your classmates, to help you along the way. Our instructors are all experts in the field, so our students learn even more than what's taught in class. We have two, modern labs that are equipped with all that that students need to practice what they learn. From there, they do clinical rotations at area hospitals and physical therapy centers. All of this is done to prepare them for their license exam, and give them the knowledge, skills, and confidence to make a positive impact on their patients' lives.

Overall, our students pass the license exam on the first try at an average rate of 94 percent. I'm proud to say that our most recent graduating class



accomplished this at 100 percent. And 100 percent of our graduates are working in the field within a year of graduating.

The need for PTAs on a national level is exponential. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, the average annual salary for a PTA in Florida is nearly \$65,000, and the demand for PTAs is expected to grow 26 percent through the year 2031. That's over 25,500 jobs!

In two years or less, you could be helping others improve their lives as a PTA. You can learn more about our program by visiting Hodges.edu, calling (239) 938-7744 or visiting our campus on the corner of Colonial and Winkler in Fort Myers.



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Mark Walter M.D.

STEM CELL ORTHOPEDICS

A Nonsurgical Solution for Serious Orthopedic Problems

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As a physician, I have specialized in regenerative orthopedics for over 20 years. With advances in stem cell science we now have a viable nonsurgical alternative for a whole host of orthopedic problems. In fact, as you understand the full power of using your own stem cells and growth factors from your blood (PRP), you may agree that this safe, minimally invasive and easily applied technology should be considered as primary care orthopedics. If you have persistent joint, back or neck pain that lasts more than a month or two and significantly affects your quality of life, I should be the first doctor you consult with, not the last. In about 85% of cases stem cells, properly prepared and injected correctly, will be able to solve the problem or at least improve the issue significantly within a month or two.

Some of the more common issues that stem cells can address are knee or hip arthritis, degenerative disc problems or pain involving the low back or neck region, rotator cuff or shoulder arthritis and ankle or thumb arthritis. In addition, since stem cells address cartilage, ligament and tendon damage of all sorts, stem cell orthopedics is often the treatment of choice for all types of musculoskeletal injuries or degeneration.

In medicine, as in any other field, critical to solving any problem is correctly diagnosing the root cause of the issue. When I evaluate a patient's problem I use a technique called palpation interrogation. If I palpate a specific structure and region and reproduce a patient's pain i.e. "the jump sign", we have correctly identified the pain generator and damaged region that requires regenerative injection therapy to resolve. As simple as this technique sounds it is an immensely useful tool to identify and prioritize the root cause (s) of a patient's pain. As useful as MRI and ultrasound can be for certain types of problems, they fail to identify the micro tears in ligaments, tendons and joint capsules which are often the root-cause of pain. Hence, in my opinion, palpation interrogation skills are critical to the correct diagnosis and resolution of almost all orthopedic problems.

Once we understand where a patient's pain is actually coming from, we can apply ourselves to fixing it. In my own stem cell orthopedic center, the protocol I use is as follows, all of which is done in the office setting in a few hours. First, we take about 8-12 small vials of blood with a standard phlebotomy technique. Then we take about 60-100cc of fat, usually from the belly, with a gentle lipo-sculpting technique. Then the patient rests comfortably for an hour or two while we isolate the stem cells from the fat and the growth factors from the blood. Then we inject the stem cells/PRP mixture into the affected joints and carefully pepper the affected ligament and tendon attachments that are often such big pain generators. Patient rests for a few minutes and we are done.

The real beauty of such a procedure is there is only minimal downtime. Patients walk in and walk out. They can return to activities of daily living the next day. Also, if the stem cell/PRP combo is prepared and injected correctly, as previously mentioned.

About Dr. Walter

Mark Walter MD has pioneered the field of regenerative orthopedics for the last 22 years and is considered one of the top stem cell orthopedic specialists in Florida. Dr. Walter completed his MD degree at McGill University (1980) and went on to do five years of post-doc work in regenerative orthopedics with the world famous Hackett-Hemwall foundation (in association with the University of Wisconsin). Dr. Walter has collaborated with the top teachers in the world and is a leading expert in using a patient's own stem cells to heal joint, back and neck pain and avoid the need for invasive surgery. *Dr. Walter is author of Stem Cell Orthopedics - A New Way to Fix Joint, Back and Neck Problems (available on amazon).*



To book a consultation or reserve a seat at an upcoming free seminar (given bi-monthly) please call Dr. Walter's office in Sarasota at 941-955-4325 or email stemcellortho@gmail.com. For additional information and background, please visit us at regenortho.com.

we have about an 85% chance of long-term resolution of the issue. Since healing times vary on a patient's healing capacities, severity of degeneration of the tissues and the area or region involved, it is hard to predict if a patient will notice improvement in a week or two or if it will take 4-6 weeks before patients notice significant improvement. If a patient's healing is delayed, we may elect to do a booster PRP treatment at about the 6-8 week mark. The stem cells remain alive for at least 4-5 months, if they are sluggish they may benefit from a booster PRP session to reignite their activity.

Importantly, if we are successful at rebuilding and healing an issue (or issues) this is a long-term solution. Once we are successful at structurally rebuilding the damaged tissues that are causing the pain and debility, we would expect the improvements to last for at least five or ten years.

OK, sound too good to be true? What's the downside? Since, if properly done, it's so safe, the main risk is you'll pay your money and you may not get the results you hoped for. God forbid, you elect to do a stem cell treatment and it doesn't work, you can always resort to surgery as your last option. The average stem cell treatment is 7-10K all in. (Unfortunately, to date, Medicare and insurance companies do not cover regenerative treatments since the field is still too new and not yet standardized). Nevertheless, for many, stem cells may be a God send and solve issues faster and more safely than any other approach. In the end, it's about quality of life. This is the medicine of the future!

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Grief, Loneliness and Depression in Aging

By Steven Stein, MD - Board-certified Psychiatrist

Loneliness and grief are common experiences that can affect us all but are often more prominent in older adults. Simply put, loneliness is the feeling of being disconnected and isolated from others, while grief is the emotional response to a loss, such as the death of a loved one or a change in life circumstances. Both experiences can have a significant impact on our mental and physical health as we age and can seriously impact our overall health and further lead to major depression. Educating oneself by building awareness and insight into the signs of loneliness and grief in yourself or a loved one can allow you to best manage the situation in hopes of better outcomes, quality of life and peace of mind. Managing this early can also help prevent or reduce the progression into complicated grief and depression which often require further psychiatric evaluation and care.

1. Look for signs of social isolation: people who are lonely may avoid social interactions, withdraw from activities they once enjoyed, or have limited contact with family and friends.

2. Monitor for physical changes: Loneliness and grief can also have physical effects, such as changes in eating and sleeping patterns, weight loss, and fatigue.

3. Pay attention to emotional cues: Elderly individuals who are experiencing loneliness and grief may express feelings of sadness, hopelessness, or worthlessness. They may also have difficulty concentrating, experience mood swings, or feel agitated.

Managing loneliness and grief in the older population:

1. Seek professional help: In many cases, professional help can be successful at addressing the complex emotions associated with loneliness and grief and can overall benefit the individual while helping avoid progression into clinical depression. This may involve working with a therapist or counselor, who can offer additional support and guidance.

2. Encourage social connections: One of the most effective ways to combat loneliness is by promoting social connections. This can be achieved by



encouraging participation in community events, connecting them with friends and family, or even introducing them to new hobbies or interests.

3. Provide emotional support: Individuals who are experiencing grief may benefit from emotional support, such as listening to their concerns, validating their feelings, and offering words of comfort.

4. Connect with support groups: Support groups can provide a safe and supportive environment for individuals to share their experiences and connect with others who are going through similar challenges.

5. Address physical health needs: Addressing physical health needs, such as aiding with daily living activities or addressing medical concerns, can help improve the overall well-being of individuals and reduce feelings of loneliness and grief.

Complicated grief is a condition where a person experiences intense and prolonged grief after a significant loss, which interferes with daily functioning. While grief is a normal reaction to the loss of a loved one, it can become complicated when the feelings of sadness, guilt, anger, and despair persist for an extended period. In contrast to major depression, complicated grief is triggered by a specific event, such as the death of a loved one, and is often associated with feelings of longing, yearning, and preoccupation with the departed.

Persons with complicated grief may experience a range of physical and emotional symptoms, including difficulty sleeping, loss of appetite, and an inability to engage in daily activities. They may also experience feelings of numbness, detachment, and hopelessness, which can make it difficult to seek help or support.

Major depression is a common mental health disorder that according to the National Institutes of Health has a prevalence of 21 million adults in the United States. This represents 8.4% of the adult population. Clinical depression affects practically all adults from varying walks of life, ages, genders, classes, and races, but according to the National Council on Aging, adults age 85 and above are the age group most likely to develop debilitating depression. It's characterized by a persistent feeling of sadness, hopelessness, and a loss of interest in activities that were once pleasurable. People with major depression often experience changes in their appetite and sleep patterns, as well as difficulty concentrating and making decisions. They may also feel fatigued and have low energy levels, which can affect their ability to carry out daily activities.

While depression can be caused by a variety of factors, including genetic, environmental, and psychological factors, it can also be triggered by stressful life events, for example, the death of a loved one, change in independence, change in mobility, change in physical or medical health, divorce or even change in living and/or working situations. Depression can have a significant impact on a person's life, making it challenging to maintain relationships, work, other daily activities and can limit one's overall quality and enjoyment in life.

In conclusion, loneliness, grief, and depression are very common experiences for many and they can have a significant impact on mental and physical health. By identifying the signs of loneliness and grief and taking steps to manage these experiences, we can help improve our overall well-being, and quality of life while promoting healthy aging and reducing the frequency and severity of depression. Encouraging social connections, providing emotional support, connecting with support groups, addressing physical health needs, and seeking high quality, non-judgmental professional and psychiatric help are all effective strategies for managing loneliness and grief. It's essential to seek professional help if you or someone you know is experiencing symptoms of depression or prolonged and intense grief after a significant loss, as treatment can help.



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MAY IS NATIONAL STROKE AWARENESS MONTH

THE IMPORTANCE OF STROKE PREVENTION AND AWARENESS

By Dr. Aneley Yegezu Hundae, M.D., FACC

As an invasive cardiologist, I have seen firsthand the devastating effects of stroke on my patients. Stroke is a leading cause of disability and death worldwide, and its impact is felt not only by those who suffer from it but also by their families and loved ones. However, the good news is that stroke is largely preventable, and increased awareness of the risk factors and warning signs can help reduce the incidence of this debilitating condition.

The primary cause of stroke is a blockage or rupture of blood vessels in the brain. The blockage can occur due to the buildup of plaque in the arteries (atherosclerosis), blood clots, or other factors. In some cases, a stroke can also be caused by bleeding in the brain due to a ruptured blood vessel.

While some risk factors for stroke, such as age and family history, cannot be controlled, many others can be modified or prevented altogether. High blood pressure, high cholesterol, smoking, diabetes, and obesity are all significant risk factors for stroke, and addressing these conditions through lifestyle changes or medications can help reduce the likelihood of stroke.

One of the most effective ways to prevent stroke is by managing high blood pressure. High blood pressure is the leading cause of stroke, and it increases the risk of stroke by four to six times. By monitoring blood pressure regularly and taking steps to lower it, such as reducing salt intake, exercising regularly, and taking medication if necessary, individuals can significantly reduce their risk of stroke.

Another important modifiable risk factor for stroke is high cholesterol. High levels of LDL (bad) cholesterol can lead to the buildup of plaque in the arteries, which can increase the risk of stroke. By adopting a healthy diet low in saturated and trans fats, increasing physical activity, and taking cholesterol-lowering medication if necessary, individuals can reduce their cholesterol levels and lower their risk of stroke.



Smoking is another significant risk factor for stroke. Smoking damages blood vessels and increases the risk of clot formation, which can lead to stroke. Quitting smoking is one of the best things individuals can do for their overall health, and it can significantly reduce the risk of stroke as well as other health problems.

Diabetes and obesity are also linked to an increased risk of stroke. Diabetes can damage blood vessels and increase the risk of clot formation, while obesity can lead to high blood pressure and high cholesterol, which are both risk factors for stroke. By managing these conditions through lifestyle changes or medication, individuals can lower their risk of stroke and improve their overall health.

Atrial Fibrillation is another condition associated with stroke. Having a diagnosis of atrial fibrillation increased your stroke risk by 6 fold. It is important you get screened for atrial fibrillation during routine check ups and get treated for stroke prevention before stroke strikes.

In addition to addressing these modifiable risk factors, it is also important to be aware of the warning signs of stroke. These include sudden weakness or numbness on one side of the body, difficulty speaking or understanding speech, sudden vision loss, severe headache, and dizziness or loss of balance. If any of these symptoms occur, it is important to seek medical attention immediately.

Early intervention is critical in minimizing the damage caused by a stroke, and treatments such as clot-busting medications and surgical procedures can be highly effective in preventing long-term disability. However, these treatments are most effective when administered within the first few hours after the onset of symptoms, which is why it is so important to seek medical attention immediately.

As an invasive cardiologist, I have seen the devastating impact of stroke on my patients and their families. However, I have also seen the power of prevention and early intervention in reducing the incidence of stroke and improving outcomes for those who do suffer from it. By taking steps to manage modifiable risk factors such as high blood pressure, high cholesterol, and smoking, and by being aware of the warning signs of stroke and seeking medical attention immediately, individuals can take control of their health and reduce their risk of stroke.



Dr. Aneley Yegezu Hundae, M.D., FACC

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Dr. Hundae received his Premedical and Doctor of Medicine Degree from Jimma University School of Medicine. He completed his Internal medicine Residency at Mercer University School of Medicine. His Heart Failure/Heart Transplant fellowship at the University of Miami Cardiovascular Fellowship Program. Cardiovascular fellowship at Baylor University Medical Center.

Board certifications

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AVOIDING NAIL FUNGUS

By Dr. Isin Mustafa, DPM, MSHS, DABPM, FACPM

Summer is just around the corner. You slide your feet into a new pair of shoes, but you are mortified to see your toenails are thick and discolored.

Most commonly, these changes are due to an infection of the nail cause by a fungus. Nail fungus can be difficult to treat, therefore the sooner you begin treatment the better chance you have of eradicating the fungus. Once the nail fungus has been present for an extended period of time, it is much more difficult to treat. Nail fungus also referred to as onychomycosis is an infection underneath the surface of the nail cause by fungi or yeast. When the fungi take hold, the nail becomes darker, debris can collect under the nail, and white discoloration may appear.

Overtime, the affected nails become very thick and difficult to trim. The fungus can even spread to adjacent nails. You may have been exposed to the fungi when walking around damp areas barefoot like swimming pools, locker rooms, and showers. Injury to the nail bed, even pressure from shoes, will make it more susceptible to the fungi. Anyone can be affected but people with chronic diseases, such as diabetes, circulatory problems, or immune-deficiency conditions, are especially prone to developing a fungal nail infection. Other contributing factors may be a history of athlete's foot and excessive perspiration. Treatment can take months to a year to completely clear the fungus. Your healthcare provider will discuss treatments options with you to determine what the best option is for you. Unfortunately, recurrence is common. For these reasons, prevention is key. Proper hygiene and performing daily foot exams including your toes are the first line of defense. Clean and dry feet can better resist infection by the fungus. Below are some tips to help you avoid nail fungus.

- Never go barefoot.
- Wear flip flops or shower shoes in public areas. For example, at public showers at the pool or gym. Walking around a public pool.
- Wash your feet with soap and water daily. Make sure to thoroughly dry your feet after washing, including between your toes. You may even want to wash your feet after the gym or going to a public pool.



- Disinfect you shoes with an OTC antifungal sprays or powder's.
- Wear moisture wicking and breathable socks. Socks made of synthetic fibers that wick moisture away from your feet are recommended. If your feet perspire than you should change your socks throughout the day. Don't share shoes or socks with others. Change your socks after exercise. You may also alternate gym shoes to allow the material to dry completely.
- Don't share clippers or foot products with other people. Disinfect instruments use to cut your nails and other pedicure tools
- Treat athletes foot if present
- Avoid tight fitting shoes and use shoes made with breathable material.
- If signs of nail fungus are present, avoid nail polish.
- Keep nails trimmed and clean. Nails should be at the same length as the tip of the toe.
- Wash your shoes, this includes hiking boots to sandals. Shoes that haven't been cleaned are a great place for fungus to thrive.

For more information about preventing or treating nail fungus contact your local foot and ankle specialist.

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.

Isin Mustafa, DPM, MSHS, DABPM, FACPM

Isin Mustafa, DPM, is a Podiatrist at Family Foot & Leg Centers in Port Charlotte, FL. She is a Fellow of the American College of Foot & Ankle Surgeons. Call 239-430-3668 or visit www.NaplesPodiatrist.com to make an appointment. Visit FootHealthFacts.org to learn more about foot and ankle conditions.



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CBD and Arthritis:

What You Need to Know

Arthritis is a condition that affects millions of people worldwide, causing chronic pain, inflammation, and stiffness in the joints. While there are many medications available to treat arthritis, many people are turning to natural remedies such as CBD. CBD, or cannabidiol, is a compound found in the cannabis plant that has been shown to have many potential health benefits, including pain relief and anti-inflammatory effects. In this article, we will explore the benefits of CBD for arthritis and how it can help improve your quality of life.

Arthritis is a broad term used to describe a group of conditions that cause joint pain and inflammation. There are many different types of arthritis, including osteoarthritis, rheumatoid arthritis, and psoriatic arthritis. While the exact causes of arthritis are not fully understood, it is believed to be a combination of genetic, environmental, and lifestyle factors.

CBD works by interacting with the body's endocannabinoid system, a complex network of receptors and neurotransmitters that play a role in regulating many bodily functions, including pain perception, inflammation, and immune response. By interacting with these receptors, CBD can help reduce pain and inflammation, making it an ideal natural remedy for arthritis.

Benefits of CBD for Arthritis

Pain Relief: One of the most significant benefits of CBD for arthritis is its ability to reduce pain. Studies have shown that CBD can help reduce pain in people with arthritis by targeting the body's endocannabinoid system, which plays a critical role in pain perception. CBD may also help reduce neuropathic pain, a type of pain that occurs when nerves are damaged.

Anti-Inflammatory Effects: Inflammation is a common symptom of arthritis, and it can cause significant pain and discomfort. CBD has been shown to have powerful anti-inflammatory effects, which can help reduce swelling and pain in the joints.

Improved Sleep: Many people with arthritis experience disrupted sleep, which can make their symptoms worse. CBD may help improve sleep quality by reducing pain and anxiety, making it easier to fall asleep and stay asleep.



Reduced Anxiety: Living with chronic pain and inflammation can be stressful, leading to anxiety and depression. CBD has been shown to have anxiolytic (anti-anxiety) effects, which can help reduce stress and promote feelings of calmness and relaxation.

Fewer Side Effects: Unlike many medications used to treat arthritis, CBD is generally well-tolerated and has fewer side effects. While some people may experience mild side effects such as dry mouth, dizziness, or fatigue, these are typically mild and temporary.

How to Use CBD for Arthritis

CBD can be taken in many different forms, including oils, tinctures, capsules, creams, and gummies. The best method of consumption will depend on your personal preferences and the type of arthritis you have. If you are new to CBD, it is recommended to start with a low dose and gradually increase it until you find the optimal dose that works for you.

Arthritis is a chronic condition that can significantly impact your quality of life. While there are many medications available to treat arthritis, many people are turning to natural remedies such as CBD. CBD has been shown to have many potential health benefits, including pain relief and anti-inflammatory effects, making it an ideal natural remedy for arthritis. If you are considering using CBD to manage your arthritis symptoms, be sure to talk to your doctor first to ensure it is safe for you to use. With proper use and guidance, CBD may be able to help improve your quality of life and reduce your arthritis symptoms.

About Green Doc

We believe in improving the wellbeing of others through the proven and natural benefits of cannabis, and with GreenDoc the medical card process couldn't be easier.

We started GreenDoc for two reasons.

To share the healing qualities of marijuana with our community, and in doing so, begin to remove the stigma that has long been accompanied with the medicine.

Our family has a long history of military service, and it was painful to watch many of the veterans in our family and community suffer from chronic pain while being treated with an endless supply of opioid prescriptions pushed by greedy pharmaceutical companies.

We began looking into the research of marijuana and its medicinal qualities and knew this could be a solution for our family and friends. We wanted to make sure that anyone who qualified for, and could use medical marijuana, would be able to find a qualified doctor. Exploring the benefits of cannabis also led us to the new and exciting world of alternative cannabinoids – the other, often psychoactive, compounds in the cannabis plant.

While we are passionate about what medical marijuana and alternative cannabinoids can do for individuals, we understand the negative stigma they still carry. We are also aware that many are afraid to seek the relief that these products can provide because of the stigma. That is why support marijuana education and advocacy in the communities in which we operate.

We're both a medical marijuana facility as well as a no-card-required dispensary, and we seek to provide relief as nature intended.



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Treating Venous Ulcers at Joyce Vein & Aesthetic Institute

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

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

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



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

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

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

PATIENT TESTIMONIAL

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

Michael C.



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

SPECIALTY

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

DEGREES

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

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

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

TRAINING

Internship and Surgical Residency Lansing General Hospital, MI

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

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



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NEUROPATHY CAUSES

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

TESTIMONIALS

I have been a patient of Dr. Larry Johnson for over ten years for different low back and various joint pains. However, last year I started to suffer with pain and tingling in both of my legs and feet that would keep me from sleeping. Dr. Johnson explained to me that I was dealing with neuropathy and he could help to resolve my pain with a laser light therapy machine that he has used many times before for my condition. After six treatments, my pain was starting to go away and was finally gone after a few more treatments. I have always relied on Dr. Johnson to help me for any problems I have encountered over the years and I have always recommended him to my family and friends. Shirley W.

I travel a lot as a Realtor in Lee County, and also very active with physical activities. On a couple of occasions in the past, my feet would burn and hurt with walking and riding my bike. I was referred to Dr. Johnson by my father who had been a patient for several years. He used a light therapy treatment that eliminated my pain. I have always been very happy with the care I have received and the staff are very knowledgeable, caring and friendly. I would recommend his clinic to anyone suffering with any type of pain. Cathy S.

When I first came to Dr. Larry Johnson's office everyone was very friendly and made me feel so welcomed. I could hardly walk, but after a couple weeks of vitamin injection and Sanexas treatments I improved dramatically. I now recommend him to everyone. Ken F.

I came to Dr. Larry Johnson at the end of November 2022 with severe pain on my right knee. I was not able to walk without a walker because the pain was so bad. After receiving Sanexas treatments, along with Chiropractic care, I was able to walk without any assistance in about 3 weeks. I am still receiving weekly treatments and I have seen big improvements. I am very pleased with the results and I continue to feel better every day. Thank you to Dr Larry and his amazing staff. Tomi B.

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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.

TESTIMONIAL

A few years ago, I began to lose the feeling in my feet. This progressed into a pain so severe it interfered with my ability to walk. When my wife told Dr. Johnson about my condition, he called me into his office and said, "David, you know I can treat that." Actually, I didn't know he treated neuropathy, and besides that, I was cynical. My understanding was that the success rate for reversing neuropathy is abysmal. The reality was I didn't think he... or anyone else, for that matter, could do anything about it. But Dr. Johnson and I have been friends for twenty-eight years, so telling him I didn't think he could ease my pain was not an option.

Well, surprise for me the old cynic. From the very first treatment, the result was so dramatic that because of my disbelief, I did not say a word to anyone. Not a comment until I knew this treatment was the real deal. I started to experience relief, and by the end of the third week, I was asymptomatic.

Your milage may vary, but that's how my body responded. Now, I am able once again to walk my dog two to five miles a day, five days a week. Great staff. Thanks for all your care.
David R.

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HERE'S THE SKINNY ON WEIGHT LOSS

A MD's Guide

BY STEPHEN MILEY, MD

Let's start with a known fact. *All diets work and all diets fail.* Why is that? To understand this, we must add another fact. *Weight gain and obesity is a hormone problem.* The main culprit is insulin. Hormones control every function in your body. You are literally on autopilot most of the day. Hormones control your breathing, heart rate, metabolism, digestion, reproduction, just about everything you can think of, including your weight!! Stop breathing and if you are strong enough to hold it long enough you will pass out and as soon as you do you will immediately start breathing again.

Basically, you need to know 3 things.

- 1) Know what to eat.
- 2) Know when to eat.
- 3) Understand and if necessary, optimize your hormones.

What to eat:

We have been taught that calories are what determines if we gain or lose weight. Big lie!

What is important is the nutritional value and insulin impact of those calories. Do you really believe that 100 calories of Hostess Twinkies is of the same nutritional value as 100 calories of broccoli? Which helps fill you up more, has better vitamins, minerals, and nutritional value? Which will spike your insulin? Insulin has 2 main functions: to move glucose out of your arteries into your cells where it can be used as fuel, and secondly to stop burning fat.

Basically, when you eat a high carbohydrate food (particularly high glucose and fructose containing foods) your pancreas secretes large amounts of insulin so it can be used by your cells. It says, "I've got plenty of glucose. Don't burn fat. Store the excess as fat for later".

So, if your Insulin is high, you cannot burn fat.

Cortisol is your stress hormone. It is the "Fight or Flight" hormone. When it is triggered, it spikes your insulin. Now, all available glucose is shunted into your muscles so you can fight or run. Adrenalin is also released which stimulates your heart and heightens your awareness for the same reasons.



Nowadays, a lot of us are chronically stressed, cortisol is always a little high, and so is your insulin. Thus, you can't burn fat even on a diet!

Eating a low carbohydrate diet, basically fresh vegetables and meat, or if vegan, plant-based proteins, is a healthy, nutrient dense, satisfying, and sustainable diet. More on this when you are in the Clinic!

When to eat:

If insulin is the problem, we now see eating foods that don't spike the insulin is the first step to taming the constantly high level. The second step is creating some time when there is no food being eaten so the pancreas is not stimulated to produce insulin and it naturally is low. Now you can and will burn fat. How do we accomplish this? 100 years ago, and longer, we did not eat 3 meals a day. Sometimes we ate every couple of days when food was scarce. During these times we would go to our reserve energy pool: *fat*. And we would burn this selectively. So we would burn fat, and our insulin would return to near zero. Today we achieve this by intermittent fasting. We stop eating at 8pm and don't eat again until noon the next day. When we do this our bodies burn fat, and the insulin stays low. Over time the Insulin Resistance we built up resolves and we can lose weight and keep it off, because we understand and work with our hormones rather than them controlling us.

Optimizing our Hormones:

Insulin is the main player in this challenge, and I hope you have at least a basic understanding of why that is. There are other hormones that are also important. As we gain weight, we also gain visceral fat. This is the fat around your organs and is what is responsible in large part in inflammation, and the metabolic syndrome. This develops because of diet and the slow progressive decline of your testosterone (for both men and women) and thyroid hormones. These are your metabolic hormones and

sometimes optimizing then makes a huge difference in long term healthy weight loss. Building muscle is important. It is the use of our muscles that is largely responsible for burning off fat. We start by checking all of your hormone information with laboratory analysis. If you want sustainable weight loss you need to optimize your hormones so that when you lose the weight it can stay off.

What about Semaglutide?

First, Semaglutide is a peptide that mimics the hormone glucagon-like peptide-1 or GLP-1. It has many receptors in the body but affects weight loss by targeting areas in the brain that control appetite, food intake, and slows the movement of food through the GI tract to make you feel full longer with less food.

GLP-1 agonists also cause your pancreas to secrete/release insulin and blocks the hormone Glucagon which causes the liver to release sugar. All these actions combine to make you eat less, feel fuller and lose weight easily.

There is a great deal to know about using this Peptide. You should not take it if you have a history of pancreatitis, thyroid cancer, or multiple endocrine neoplasia's. It must be started slowly and discover the dosage that works best for you. This therapy should be monitored by a physician who is very familiar with its use. Our patients are having great success! Come and see us in the Clinic!

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Skin Cancer Treatment

With more than a million new cases each year in the United States, skin cancer is the most common form of cancer in America. It can affect the skin on any part of the body, but it most frequently occurs in areas where the skin has the greatest exposure to the sun. Once a you have been diagnosed with skin cancer, you and your doctor will want to make the best decision about which is the best course of action. In this article we will look at some of the many options available to treat skin cancer.

Types of skin cancer

First, it is important to know which type of skin cancer a patient has. The major types of skin cancer are:

Basal Cell Carcinoma

Basal cell skin cancer occurs in the basal cell layer of the skin and is the most common type of skin cancer in people with fair skin. It commonly occurs on areas of the skin that have been exposed to the sun, such as the face. It rarely spreads to other parts of the body.

Squamous Cell Carcinoma

Squamous cell carcinoma occurs in the squamous cells. It is the most common type of skin cancer in people with dark skin, who typically get it in places, such as the legs or feet, that have not been exposed to the sun. In people with fair skin, it usually occurs in sun-exposed areas such as on the face, head, ears and neck. Squamous cell skin cancer can spread to other parts of the body.

Melanoma

Melanoma is the most aggressive type of cancer and the most likely to spread to other parts of the body. Melanoma occurs in the melanocyte (pigment) cells of the skin, and can form on any part of the body, regardless of past sun exposure.

Skin Cancer treatments and recovery times

Treatment for skin cancer depends on the type, size, and location of the tumor. Most options include the removal of the entire growth and are effective forms of treatment. Removal procedures are usually simple, requiring only a local anesthetic in an outpatient setting. Some of the treatment options for skin cancer include the following:

- Freezing
- Excision
- Laser therapy
- Mohs surgery



Depending on the stage and severity of the skin cancer, in addition to removal of the growth, chemotherapy and radiation may be recommended.

Freezing

Your doctor may destroy actinic keratoses and some small, early skin cancers by freezing them with liquid nitrogen (cryosurgery). The dead tissue sloughs off when it thaws.

Excisional Surgery

This type of treatment may be appropriate for any type of skin cancer. Your doctor cuts out (excises) the cancerous tissue and a surrounding margin of healthy skin. A wide excision — removing extra normal skin around the tumor — may be recommended in some cases.

Laser Therapy

Lasers can be used to remove a cancerous or pre-cancerous lesion. They do this by vaporizing the top layers of skin. Lasers have several advantages over conventional surgery. Laser surgery is faster. It can be used to treat multiple lesions or lesions that are on delicate areas. It takes less time to heal from laser surgery and the risk of infection is lower.

Mohs Surgery

This procedure is for larger, recurring or difficult-to-treat skin cancers, which may include both basal and squamous cell carcinomas. It's often used in areas where it's necessary to conserve as much skin as possible, such as on the nose.

During Mohs surgery, your doctor removes the skin growth layer by layer, examining each layer under the microscope, until no abnormal cells remain. This procedure allows cancerous cells to be removed without taking an excessive amount of surrounding healthy skin.¹

Reference:

1. Skin cancer (2020) Mayo Clinic. Mayo Foundation for Medical Education and Research. Available at: <https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/skin-cancer/diagnosis-treatment/drc-20377608>

We are here to help you live better, whether that means caring for your skin, elevating your look, or supporting your health and wellness goals now and in the future.

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

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

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



Cary L. Dunn, M.D.



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EARLY DETECTION SAVES LIVES:

WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW ABOUT THE LATEST LIFE-SAVING TECHNOLOGY

The best way to conquer, fight and overcome any disease state is to have early diagnostic testing at the onset of symptoms, or as a preventative measure. Individuals with high-risk factors for coronary artery disease, or certain cancers are highly encouraged to have annual screenings for their specific disease states potentials.

RAVE RADIOLOGY

At RAVE Radiology, they put your health at the forefront of their mission, by investing in the latest most up to date technology available. RAVE, Radiology Associates of Venice & Englewood understand the importance of providing the best methods and the most advanced diagnostic tools for their patients.

RAVE is a radiology practice, which has been active for over 30 years. They currently consist of 10 board-certified radiologists, many of which have postgraduate fellowships with subspecialty training, all of whom have years of full-time experience. There are over 90 healthcare professions working with RAVE to provide the best possible radiologic services in Sarasota County. In addition to their personnel, they have some of the best radiologic imaging devices available. Superior visualization makes your diagnoses accurate and timely, preventing potentially dangerous delays in initiation of your therapy. At RAVE, you can have confidence you're getting top-notch professional assistance in your diagnosis and care.

CRITICAL CARDIAC TESTING

Cardiac Scoring is a Non-Invasive CT Scan of the heart, which calculates the risk of developing Coronary Artery Disease by measuring the amount of calcified plaque in the coronary arteries.

LEADING LUNG DISEASE DIAGNOSTIC TOOLS

CT Lung Screening: If you have been a heavy smoker, then you are at significantly increased risk of developing lung cancer. CT can find small lung nodules that might be cancer before any other test can detect them. If you are between the ages of 55 and 75, then national experts recommend you undergo low dose CT screening for lung cancer. These recommendations come from many groups of medical experts including the National Lung Screening Trial Research Team, the American College of Chest Physicians, and American Society of Clinical Oncology.

RAVE is committed to you and your family's health. If you wish to undergo a lung cancer screening, you should ask your doctor to order it, or you can contact RAVE directly to schedule an appointment.

THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN MRI AND CT SCANS

MRI uses a strong magnetic field, radio waves and a computer. This enables MRI to make very detailed pictures of bone, organs, soft tissues and any other body structures. Differences between normal and abnormal tissue is often clearer on an MRI image than a CT.

CT uses a very thin unique X-ray beam to produce detailed, cross-sectional views of the area being studied. CT is often the preferred method of diagnosing causes of pain and many different forms of cancer.

KNOW YOUR RISK FACTORS

CARDIAC

- Smoking
- Atherosclerosis
- Family History
- Shortness of Breath
- Lethargy
- Chest pain
- Leg pain

LUNG

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- Pollutants
- Asthma
- COPD
- Frequent Coughing
- Shortness of Breath and more...

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To find out if you're a candidate for CT Lung Cancer Screening, you can use the Lung Cancer Risk Calculator at <http://www.shouldiscreen.com>.

For more information on early diagnostic testing and screenings, please visit their website at www.RaveRad.com



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May is Better Hearing and Speech Month

By Dr. Noël Crosby, Au.D.

The Center for Disease Control supports Better Hearing and Speech Month, founded in 1927 by the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association. Each May, this annual event provides an opportunity to raise awareness about hearing and speech problems, and to encourage people to think about their own hearing and get their hearing checked.

Early identification and intervention for hearing loss is important. Many people live with unidentified hearing loss, often failing to realize that they are missing certain sounds and words. Checking one's hearing is the first step toward addressing the issue. Protect your hearing! And if you already have hearing loss or are experiencing pain, discomfort, or ringing in the ears, take steps to keep it from getting worse.

According to the World Health Organization's first World Report on Hearing, noise is now being acknowledged as an important public health issue and a top environmental risk faced by the world today. Over 50% of people aged 12–35 years listen to music via personal audio devices at volumes that pose a risk to their hearing. A rule of the thumb for staying safe is to keep the volume below 60%.

If you frequently use personal audio devices around loud sounds: instead of turning the volume up, consider using noise cancelling earphones or headphones. Listening through personal audio devices should not exceed 80 dB (adults) or 75 dB (sensitive



users: e.g., children) for 40 hours a week. Listeners who regularly use portable audio devices can expose themselves to the same level of sound in 15 minutes of music at 100 dB that an industrial worker would receive in an 8-hour day at 85 dB.

Did you know the average person is born with thousands of hair cells within their inner ear. These cells allow your brain to detect sounds. By the time you notice hearing loss, many hair cells have already been damaged or destroyed. You can lose 30% to 50% of hair cells before changes in your hearing can be measured by a hearing test. Damaged inner ear cells do not grow back. In addition to damaging hair cells, noise can also damage the auditory nerve that carries information about sounds to your brain. Early damage may not show up on your hearing test.

Although there is no treatment to restore normal hearing, you can prevent hearing loss from loud sounds. Protect your hearing! And if you already have hearing loss or are experiencing pain, discomfort, or ringing in the ears, take steps to keep it from getting worse. Get your hearing checked. Loud noises can cause hearing loss, but you can take steps to protect your ears.

How does one protect themselves from hearing loss?

People often voluntarily expose themselves to loud sounds through their headphones or through the stereo system in concerts, nightclubs, sporting events, and even fitness classes. Protect your hearing when shooting a firearm. Those using firearms for recreational purpose would benefit from learning about their safe use, which includes but is not limited to use of hearing protection. Is the noise too loud? If you need to shout to make yourself heard, then yes. And you need hearing protection such as earplugs or noise-cancelling earmuffs. Do not listen to headphones for a long time. Turn the volume down and take periodic breaks from the noise.

ADVANCED HEARING SOLUTIONS

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By Physicians Rehabilitation

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For the past 10 years at Physicians Rehabilitation, we have made it our mission to get people out of pain and back into an active lifestyle. Our goal is for you to be pain-free without any surgery or prescription medications. We do this by finding the root cause of your pain. Physician's Rehabilitation focuses on reducing inflammation with injections, regenerating worn tissues with regenerative medicine, and training with physical therapists on proper form and function. These three key components all increase activity levels and decrease pain levels.

New offerings in the specialty of "Interventional Pain Management" combine injections to remove pain with therapy to increase motion and movement without drugs or prescriptions. Physician's Rehabilitation offers procedures for pain management in our office. Some of our most successful treatments are discussed below.

Medial Branch Block for the Facet Joints

Medial branch nerves are very small nerve branches that carry pain messages from facet joints to the brain where they are experienced. The facet joints are small joints in the back of the spine that form connections between each vertebra. If these nerves are blocked or numbed, they will not be able to transfer the painful sensation from the joints to the brain. Therefore, this procedure is completed to see if your back pain is caused by the facet joints. The effect will last several hours or more. This is strictly a diagnostic block to test if the facet joints are the source of some of your pain.

Facet Joints

The facet joints are small joints in the back of the spine that form connections between each vertebra. If these joints are blocked or numbed, they will not be able to transfer the painful sensation to the brain. Therefore, this procedure is completed to see if your back pain is caused by the facet joints.



Sacroiliac Joint dysfunction

Sacroiliac joint dysfunction is an injury or inflammation of the sacroiliac (SI) joint which causes pain in the lower back region. The SI joint is formed by the connection of the sacrum with the ilium. This injection is used to both diagnose and treat your low back pain caused by inflammation of the joint. The effect might last a few hours to a few weeks or much longer. Pain relief in the first couple of hours after the injection is the most important as this tells us our diagnosis of SI joint-mediated pain is correct. If the symptoms do return, we will discuss other options available for extended pain relief.



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Epidural steroid injection

An epidural injection is an injection of steroids into the epidural space. The epidural space is located in the spine between the vertebrae and the dural sac, which surrounds the spinal cord. Theoretically, the steroid reduces the inflammation of the nerve roots as they exit the spine, which can help alleviate pain in the neck, back, and/or limbs.

Radiofrequency Ablation (RFA)

Radiofrequency Ablation is an injection that uses a specialized machine that generates a radiofrequency current. The current is then passed through a special needle placed next to the nerve (medial branch) which carries pain from the facet joints to the spinal cord. The current generates heat or other physical forces which interrupt the transmission of pain. Radiofrequency ablation is performed after the patient has benefitted from diagnostic medial branch nerve blocks. The effect will hopefully last for an extended period (one year on average). You will likely experience some increase in your neck or back pain over the next several days and then your pain should improve.

Physicians Rehabilitation

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

Our goal is to identify the source of your pain, promote healing and eliminate your pain. We begin by giving you a thorough examination and quickly address outward symptoms of pain, such as inflammation while gathering your medical history and evaluating your symptoms to get to the root of your pain and dysfunction. Our therapists have found that these advanced technologies, along with a specialized physical therapy program specific to the individual condition, make for extremely successful pain relief treatments. If you or a loved one is suffering from pain, please call our office at (855) 276-5989, or visit us online at www.PhysiciansRehabilitation.com for more information.



MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS MONTH

By Dr. Brandon Fuller

As mental health issues have come to the forefront in recent years, many have sought more natural treatment options that don't involve pharmaceuticals and their potentially harmful effects. Acupuncture has become a popular option for treating mental health issues, including depression. But does it work? Before we answer that question, let's give a proper definition to both acupuncture and depression.

Acupuncture Defined

Acupuncture can be simply defined as thin needles (the width of a human hair) inserted into specific parts of the body called "points" or "meridians." Where the needles get inserted depends on the issue being treated. In Traditional Chinese Medicine (also known as TCM) it is taught that the body has a flow of energy or qi that regulates a person's health. If this flow of energy is disrupted, illness can occur. Applying acupuncture needles to these specific points can put the body back in balance and get the energy flowing as it should.

Depression Defined

WebMD defines depression as "an illness that involves constant feelings of sadness and a loss of interest or pleasure." They also define additional symptoms as difficulty sleeping or sleeping too much, lack of energy, suicidal thoughts, drastic changes to weight and appetite, irritability, difficulty

concentrating, remembering things or even making decisions, and feelings of guilt or worthlessness. Depression is most often treated with medication or therapy or a combination of both. The disheartening thing is that, according to WebMD, "between 19 and 34% of people with depression don't improve with these more traditional treatments. This has led to more people looking for alternative treatments including acupuncture.

What the Research Says

A 2010 study stated that, "Depression and anxiety together constitute a significant contribution to the global burden of disease. Acupuncture is widely used for the treatment of anxiety and depression and use is increasing. The theoretical basis for acupuncture diagnosis and treatment derives from traditional Chinese medicine theory. An alternative approach is used in medical acupuncture which relies more heavily on contemporary neurophysiology and conventional diagnosis."

If you suffer from feelings of anxiety and depression, talk to your acupuncturist to develop the appropriate treatment plan. Your acupuncturist will take a detailed health history and examination to help you determine the best course of action.



Studies have shown that the right "dose" of acupuncture was the key in helping patients see results and a reduction of the symptoms of stress and depression. A "dose" is defined as both the number of treatment sessions overall, as well as the number of acupuncture points addressed in each session. Studies have also shown that acupuncture can help to get heart rate variability back to an optimal range which can help improve issues with heart disease, hypertension, anxiety and depression, insomnia, migraines, and muscle pain.

While the number of studies is still few, many encouraging studies demonstrate great results for those suffering from anxiety and depression. In addition to regular acupuncture treatments, your practitioner can also recommend herbal supplements and nutritional and dietary changes that can also get your energy back in balance. And once you find your energy back in balance, there is a cascade of health benefits that can come from regular acupuncture treatments. Do not suffer another day. Call today and schedule your appointment so you can get a treatment plan in place and get back into balance.

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TAX TIME, DID YOU KNOW WHAT YOUR PARTNER CLAIMED

By James W. Mallonee

When you signed your 1040 form, did you know what your spouse, partner or joint filer entered on the form? Although this should not be a question, the reality is that many joint filers are not fully aware of what was entered and filed on form 1040. It is not uncommon for this to happen when a couple divorces or there is a death of one of the parties. If this is the situation within your family and you get notification from the IRS about an audit, you may be open to considering the innocent spouse relief statute provided by the IRS.

It is hard to imagine that one of the parties signing their 1040 annual tax form has no idea what the other joint party is claiming nor what their income was for the past year. However, when it does happen, the innocent spouse could get caught up in years of litigation to prove their innocence and more importantly stuck with having to pay tax on items they had no idea existed.

There are three relief provisions available under Section 6015 of the IRS code. They are: 1) Full or partial relief; 2) Partial relief for those couples who are divorced or separated; or, 3) Equitable relief which serves as a catchall where nothing fits the typical situation for relief.

Under Full or Partial relief, the filer requesting relief must have filed a joint return; 1) the return has an understatement of tax; 2) the relief requesting spouse did not know nor had any reason to know of the understatement; 3) it would be inequitable for the innocent spouse to be held liable for a deficiency; and, 4) the innocent spouse's request is timely. No doubt, the innocent spouse will have some heavy explaining to do on how it is he or she was unaware of what was filed with no knowledge of where all the income was coming from. In essence, the innocent spouse would have to prove that they had no reason to know of the understatement of income. The counter claim by the government is usually a duty by the innocent spouse to inquire as to what was filed on the 1040 return.

Under Partial Relief, the innocent spouse must have signed the IRS 1040 form and be divorced or separated at the time relief is being sought; and, it must

not be any later than 2 years from the time collection is underway. The beauty of this relief is that it is up to the IRS to prove the innocent spouse had actual knowledge of the circumstances which made an item not allowable or was not reported. If found favorably for the innocent spouse, the IRS will proportionally distribute the liability between the two parties.

The last relief available is equitable, which provides the innocent spouse with relief where no relief is available. To qualify for this relief the following circumstances must be present: 1) the tax liability must be attributable to a taxable item of the non-innocent spouse; 2) relief is not able to be given to the innocent spouse; 3) no assets were transferred between the spouses in an attempt to create a fraudulent scheme; 4) the requesting spouse did not transfer disqualified assets to the non-requesting spouse; 5) there is no knowledge of participating in the filing of a fraudulent joint return; and, 6) the relief being requested is timely.

Under the last relief available (equitable), the innocent spouse would need to show that the two parties are no longer married, the innocent spouse will suffer economic hardship from their lack of knowledge, nor did they have any reason to know of the filed understatement. Generally speaking, it's always good to remember that the innocent spouse bears the burden of proving they are entitled to relief which can be quite daunting when dealing with the government. As a result, be sure to keep good records of what you knew and what was a surprise to you.

When considering seeking relief under the innocent spouse Section 6051 of the IRS code, you need to think through the cost and time needed to file and seek relief. Seeking such relief may exceed any amounts that you might save. As a result, if you wish to seek relief, seek out the attorney of your choice who deals with the IRS and inquire whether it makes sense.

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



James W. Mallonee (Jim Mallonee) is a graduate with a B.A. degree from the University of South Florida and a Master of Science degree from Rollins College in

Winter Park, Florida. He obtained his Juris Doctorate from the University of the Pacific, McGeorge School of Law in Sacramento, California. Prior to returning to Florida to practice law, Mr. Mallonee was employed by Intel Corporation for 22 years in such locations as New Jersey, Florida and California.

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

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

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All-In-One Dental Visit with CEREC

By Dr. Joseph Farag

New technologies are making our lives simpler and easier everyday and dentistry has certainly not been left behind. Thanks to a great new system called CEREC, you can now have a high-tech smile in a single visit.

In days gone by, you may have needed to visit the dentist two or three times to have a quality, white ceramic restoration. The dentist would need to take a special impression to make a plaster model for the dental laboratory to generate an extra replica of your tooth in order to hand-make your porcelain restoration. The craftsmanship of the laboratory technician is highly regarded, but generally requires a minimum turn-around time of two weeks, leaving you to function with a temporary, generally plastic, restoration.

Instead of multiple dentist appointments and weeks for a complete restoration, CEREC allows the dentist to achieve the same, if not better, results in a single visit.

CEREC is an acronym for Chairside Economical Restoration of Esthetic Ceramics. Translated, it means that a dentist can economically restore damaged teeth in a single appointment using high-quality ceramic material that matches. CEREC uses the latest Computer-Aided Design and Manufacture (CAD-CAM) technology incorporating a camera, computer and milling machine in one instrument to give you perfect, white fillings, veneers or crowns, all in a fraction of the time it used to take.



Here's how it works.

Once your dentist determines that CEREC is the correct course of treatment, your visit will begin by preparing the tooth. Any decay, if present, is removed, leaving as much possible of your healthy tooth to support the CEREC restoration. Next, your dentist will use a specially designed electronic camera that makes a digital 3D model of your tooth in seconds.

You can then watch your dentist design your new restoration on a computer screen, right beside the dental chair using the 3D image created by the camera. The virtual filling is then transferred into reality, again using CEREC. A solid block of porcelain ceramic is inserted into the CEREC milling unit. Special tools then sculpt your restoration to the finest detail based on the restoration designed on the CEREC computer.

The perfect-fit restoration is completed and placed in your mouth with the whole process only taking around an hour!

CEREC fillings are natural looking, smooth, white and hard-wearing, just like the enamel surface of the rest of our teeth. The ceramic material is biocompatible and is not effected by hot or cold.

The office of Dr. Joseph Farag offers CEREC restoration. For more details and CEREC or to schedule an appointment for a check-up please call (941) 764-9555 today.



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Slowing the Pace of Your Life

By Pastor Timothy Neptune

Remember the old merry-go-rounds on the playground when you were a kid? You would spin in circles until you felt like you were going to fly off. That's how life can feel if you don't make some necessary changes.

You live a much faster lifestyle than your parents did. Your children will live an even faster lifestyle than you did. As we enter a new year, perhaps it is a good time to evaluate the pace of your life and make some necessary adjustments. The Psalmist tells us:

2In vain you rise early and stay up late, toiling for food to eat—for he grants sleep to those he loves. Psalm 127:2

If you are getting up early and staying up late but still don't feel like you can get everything done... you are probably trying to do too much.

Living at a hectic pace comes at a price. You end up feeling more stressed because you are trying to cram too many things into your day. You end up having no margin in your life. As the margins get tighter the stress goes higher.

You have to take time to recharge your batteries. Here's a lesson I learned years ago: You have just enough time to do the will of God. If you can't get everything done on your "to do" list, maybe there are things on the list you shouldn't be doing.

I want to share with you two simple strategies to help you slow down the pace of your life so that you can enjoy life.

The first strategy is to learn to be content. If you're serious about slowing down, you don't start with your schedule—you start with your heart.

The Apostle Paul said this about contentment. *"I am not saying this because I am in need, for I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances. I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want. I can do everything through him who gives me strength.*" Philippians 4:11-13

If you're going to slow down your life, you have to learn contentment. Paul also said this about contentment: *"But godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into the world, and we can take nothing out of it."* 1 Tim. 6:6-7

What he is saying in these passages is that we need to understand that life isn't about things. Contentment means this: I don't need more in order to be happy.

I'm not waiting for *more* in order to be happy. I'm happy right now. I have dreams and I have goals but I don't need *more* in order to be happy. That's contentment.

Contentment will come easier when you realize two things: life is not a competition with other people and having *more* will not make you happier. This is not the message promoted by our culture, but it is true.



Jesus said it like this, *"Then he said to them, 'Watch out! Be on your guard against all kinds of greed; a man's life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions.'"* Luke 12:15

If you find yourself making statements like this:

- My life is a rat race.
- I don't know how I'm going to get it all done.
- I am just so exhausted.
- I don't know how much more of this I can take.
- I just want to escape.

These phrases are all warning signs that you are on the road to burn out. You need to slow down the pace. Perhaps as we begin this new year, taking an honest evaluation of your life and determine if some changes are necessary. Are you content in your life right now?

As the merry-go-round spins faster it is only a matter of time before you either get sick, or fall off. Or, better yet, just slow down, be content, and enjoy the ride.

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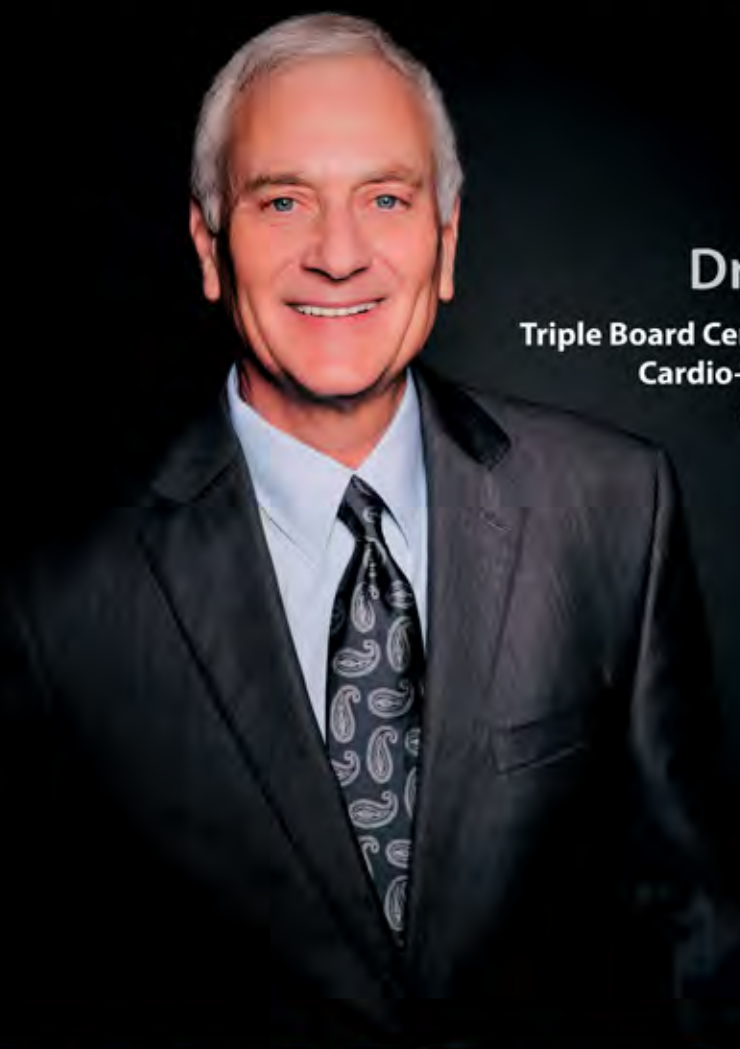
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