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 **FREE**

## CAROTID ARTERY DISEASE

UNDERSTANDING  
THE INCREASED  
RISK OF STROKE

## ADVANCING VISION RESTORATION

EXPLORING LASER  
CATARACT SURGERY  
AND PREMIUM LENS  
OPTIONS

## MEN'S HEALTH

## MOVING IN THE RIGHT DIRECTION

**DR. CINDY VACCARINO, DPT**

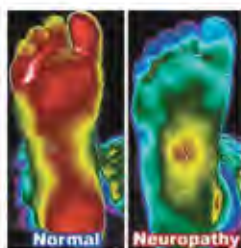
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*Dr. Danielle Zappile is a chiropractic physician, she has been in practice since 2009.*

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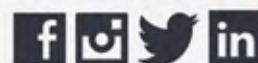
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# MOVING IN THE RIGHT DIRECTION

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

**T**he 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!**

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# CAROTID ARTERY DISEASE

## Understanding the Increased Risk of Stroke and the Advantages of TCAR Procedure

**C**arotid artery disease poses a significant risk to individuals worldwide, as it is a leading cause of stroke. This condition occurs when the carotid arteries, responsible for supplying blood to the brain, become narrowed or blocked by a buildup of plaque. The risk of stroke significantly increases with carotid artery disease, making it crucial to explore effective treatment options. One such procedure, Transcarotid Artery Revascularization (TCAR), offers a promising alternative to the traditional method known as carotid endarterectomy (CEA). In this article, we will delve into carotid artery disease, the heightened risk of stroke, and how TCAR offers a safe approach to treatment.

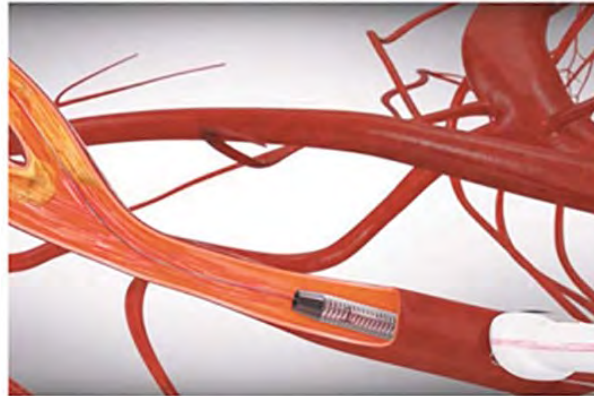
### Understanding Carotid Artery Disease

Carotid artery disease occurs when plaque accumulates in the carotid arteries, obstructing blood flow to the brain. Plaque consists of cholesterol, fat, calcium, and other substances that gradually accumulate on artery walls, forming a sticky substance. Over time, this buildup can narrow the arteries, restricting blood flow. In severe cases, the plaque can rupture, leading to the formation of blood clots that may cause a stroke.

### The Increased Risk of Stroke

Carotid artery disease significantly raises the risk of stroke. As the arteries narrow, blood flow to the brain is compromised, increasing the likelihood of clot formation. If a clot breaks loose and travels to the brain, it can block a smaller artery, resulting in an ischemic stroke. Ischemic strokes account for approximately 80% of all strokes and can cause severe brain damage or even death.

Moreover, carotid artery disease poses an additional risk when the plaque becomes unstable or ruptures. This can trigger the formation of larger clots, leading to more severe strokes. Therefore, early detection and appropriate intervention are vital in mitigating the risk of stroke associated with carotid artery disease.



### The Advantages of TCAR Procedure

Transcarotid Artery Revascularization (TCAR) has emerged as a minimally invasive alternative to carotid endarterectomy (CEA) for treating carotid artery disease. TCAR combines the benefits of traditional surgical techniques with innovative technology, resulting in improved outcomes and reduced risks.

Unlike CEA, which involves a large incision in the neck, TCAR uses a smaller incision near the collarbone. Through this incision, a sheath is inserted into the carotid artery, allowing blood to be temporarily rerouted outside the body, minimizing the risk of stroke during the procedure. The blood is filtered and returned to the body through a second sheath inserted in the femoral vein.

TCAR offers several advantages over CEA. Firstly, it reduces the risk of stroke during the procedure by reversing blood flow away from the brain, preventing any dislodged plaque or debris from reaching critical areas. Additionally, TCAR minimizes the risk of nerve damage, as the procedure involves precise control over blood flow.

Moreover, TCAR is suitable for high-risk patients who may not be eligible for CEA due to prior neck surgeries, radiation therapy, or anatomical considerations. The procedure is generally associated with faster recovery times and reduced scarring compared to CEA.

Carotid artery disease presents a serious risk of stroke due to the potential for plaque rupture or clot formation. However, by understanding the disease and the available treatment options, individuals can take proactive steps to mitigate these risks. The TCAR procedure offers a safe alternative to the traditional carotid endarterectomy surgery, significantly reducing the chances of stroke during the intervention. By opting for TCAR, patients can benefit from improved outcomes, faster recovery times, and ultimately, a reduced risk of stroke. Consulting with healthcare professionals can provide individuals with the necessary information to make informed decisions about their vascular health and well-being.

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# ADVANCING VISION RESTORATION

## Exploring Laser Cataract Surgery and Premium Lens Options

By Rick Palmon, M.D.

When it comes to restoring vision impaired by cataracts, modern advancements in ophthalmology have revolutionized the treatment process. Laser cataract surgery, in conjunction with premium lens options, offers patients enhanced visual outcomes and improved quality of life. In this article, we delve into the remarkable innovations provided by board-certified ophthalmologists, focusing on the benefits of laser-assisted cataract surgery and the various premium lens options available. By shedding light on these cutting-edge techniques, we aim to empower patients to make informed decisions about their vision health.

### Laser-Assisted Cataract Surgery

Traditionally, cataract surgery involves manual incisions and the use of handheld instruments to remove the cloudy lens. However, with the advent of laser-assisted cataract surgery, precision and safety have reached new heights. This advanced technique utilizes femtosecond laser technology, enabling surgeons to perform key steps of the procedure with unparalleled accuracy.

The benefits of laser cataract surgery are manifold. Firstly, the laser's precise incisions allow for a customized and self-sealing corneal wound, promoting faster healing and reducing the risk of infection. Secondly, the laser assists in fragmenting the clouded lens, enabling easier and gentler removal. Additionally, it aids in the precise placement of premium intraocular lenses (IOLs), maximizing visual outcomes. The procedure is typically painless and requires minimal downtime, with patients experiencing a swift recovery.

### Premium Lens Options

Once the cataract is removed, the choice of intraocular lens is crucial in determining the patient's visual outcome. Premium lens options offer advanced features that can address additional refractive errors, reduce dependence on glasses, and enhance visual clarity.

Multifocal IOLs provide patients with the ability to see at various distances, minimizing the need for glasses after surgery. These lenses have multiple focal points, allowing individuals to seamlessly transition between near, intermediate, and far vision.



Accommodating IOLs, on the other hand, mimic the natural focusing mechanism of the eye, providing a range of vision without relying on the ciliary muscles.

For patients with astigmatism, toric IOLs correct the asymmetrical curvature of the cornea, reducing or eliminating the need for astigmatic glasses or contact lenses. Additionally, advanced technology IOLs, such as extended depth of focus (EDOF) lenses, can optimize vision by extending the range of clear vision, especially in low-light conditions.

As a board-certified ophthalmologist, the goal is to offer patients the best possible visual outcomes following cataract surgery. Laser-assisted cataract surgery, combined with premium lens options, represents a significant step forward in achieving this goal. By harnessing state-of-the-art technology and personalized lens selection, ophthalmologists can tailor treatments to meet individual needs and aspirations. Patients can look forward to improved vision, reduced dependency on glasses, and an enhanced quality of life. Consulting with a qualified ophthalmologist and exploring the available options is the first step toward regaining crystal-clear vision and experiencing the world anew.



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**F. RICK PALMON, M.D.**  
LASIK, Corneal and Cataract & Lens Replacement Surgeon

Dr. Palmon is a board-certified, fellowship-trained cataract, refractive and corneal surgeon.

He earned his bachelor's degree in Biology from Georgetown University, graduating magna cum laude, and then received his medical degree from the Tulane University School of Medicine. He completed his internal medicine internship at the Hospital of the University of Pennsylvania, followed by a residency at Wills Eye Institute at Thomas Jefferson University. His fellowship in cornea and refractive surgery was completed at the University of Minnesota.

Dr. Palmon specializes in premium cataract and lens replacement surgery, as well as laser vision correction with LASIK, Epi-LASEK and implantable lenses. He is sure to employ the most advanced treatments available for his patients including corneal cross-linking and corneal transplantation with Descemet Membrane Endothelial Keratoplasty (DMEK). Dr. Palmon also provides medical and surgical treatments for glaucoma.

Dr. Palmon is a diplomate of the American Board of Ophthalmology and certified by the American Board of Eye Surgery in refractive surgery. He is a member of the American Academy of Ophthalmology, American Medical Association, American Society for Cataract and Refractive Surgery and the International Society of Refractive Surgery to name a few. He has authored numerous scientific articles in ophthalmology journals and is a frequent speaker at ophthalmic symposia.

Originally from Philadelphia, he moved to Florida in 1994. He and his wife are empty nesters, having raised four adult children. In his spare time he enjoys tennis, biking, skiing and golfing.



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# Men's Health Month: Parkinson's Disease

## Parkinson's Disease Doesn't Discriminate

Parkinson's disease is a progressive neurological disorder that affects the movement of the body. The degeneration of dopamine-producing neurons in the brain causes it. **Dopamine** is a neurotransmitter responsible for transmitting signals and controlling movement and coordination.

As a result of the loss of dopamine-producing neurons, individuals with Parkinson's disease experience a variety of motor symptoms such as tremors, stiffness, and slowness of movement. They may also experience non-motor symptoms such as depression, anxiety, sleep disturbances, and cognitive changes. The onset of Parkinson's disease is usually gradual, and symptoms can initially be mild. Over time, the symptoms can become more pronounced and can significantly impact daily activities and quality of life.

While there is currently no cure for Parkinson's disease, medications and therapies are available to manage the symptoms. Treatment options may include dopamine replacement therapy, light therapy, physical therapy, speech therapy, and occupational therapy.

It is important to note that Parkinson's disease is a highly individualized condition, and symptoms and disease progression can vary greatly from person to person. Therefore, it is important to work closely with a healthcare provider who can tailor a specific treatment plan to your needs.

## Parkinson's and Sleep

- According to the National Institute of Health, men are twice more likely to have Parkinson's than women.
- While both women and men with PD tend to have similar symptoms with movement, men tend to have more difficulty with REM sleep behavior disorder (acting out physically while dreaming).
- Sleep is often negatively impacted by Parkinson's. Men living with Parkinson's report waking with stiffness and pain, making even small tasks more challenging.
- Difficulty with sleeping also negatively influences mood and can result in anxiety and/or depression.
- Although both men and women living with PD experience motor symptoms, some studies indicate that men may display more rigidity in movement while women may exhibit more tremors.



- There are many different treatment options for managing Parkinson's symptoms, but several reported to make a difference in **Quality of Life** include consistent exercise and improved nutrition, focusing on a diet rich with fruit and vegetables that promote overall good health and brain functions.

## How LASENE Can Help

Light therapy, also known as photobiomodulation therapy, is a non-invasive treatment approach that involves exposing the body to specific wavelengths of light to promote healing and reduce inflammation. While the exact mechanism by which light therapy may improve symptoms in Parkinson's disease is not fully understood, there are several hypotheses on how it may work.

One hypothesis is that light therapy may help to improve communication between the brain and the nervous system. Studies have shown that light therapy can increase the production of certain neurotransmitters, such as dopamine, which is known to be deficient in Parkinson's disease. By increasing the production of dopamine, light therapy may help to improve the communication between the brain and the nervous system, which could lead to improvements in motor and non-motor symptoms.

Another hypothesis is that light therapy may help to reduce inflammation in the brain. Inflammation is believed to play a role in the development and progression of Parkinson's disease and reducing inflammation may help to slow disease progression and improve symptoms. Light therapy has been shown to reduce inflammation in animal models of Parkinson's disease, and clinical trials are currently underway to investigate its potential in humans. One such study shows a 48% improvement in Sleep Quality – (problems falling asleep, balance, alertness, core functions).

## Comments from Men or Family Members receiving the LASENE Therapy:

- Noted loss in Parkinson's mask, and he smiles today. Also, improvement in gait and postural elevation.
- "I am taking naps once in a while before I was taking daily naps."
- No freeze gait today. Doing good, getting up better from a chair.
- Gait is smoother, with less throwing of the arms and torso for forward momentum.
- "The whole laser thing, I had a little bit of 'is this all good? I'm like, you know, is this going to burn anything?' (laughs) So it was great for me to see and understand that there wasn't any downside, but there was a bunch of upsides."
- "It was so bad I was very symptomatic, and we were looking for walkers. This program has given me inspiration and hope."
- "I used to look in the future and see this person in the wheelchair drooling, and now I don't see that. That's a horrible thing to see. And now I see improvement and I think I can stay that status quo. If I can just stay the way I am now, I'd be happy, really happy, and I think I can just stay like this."

Lasene is bridging the gap between the world's finest **Therapeutic Light Treatments** technology and proprietary advanced treatment protocols for rapid management of chronic pain and functional restoration of quality-of-life metrics for our patients living with Parkinson's, sleep disorders, deterioration of executive function, and other neurological degenerative ailments.

Our Parkinson's Program is part of a Lasene series of research-based protocols focusing on the world of pain management and neurological restoration. From our discoveries, we pioneer strategies to deliver safe, affordable, and effective care to assist those in need.

As the founders of Lasene, our mission is to bring the best of technologies and protocols together for the sole purpose of reducing the suffering associated with neurodegenerative and neuromusculoskeletal conditions and to bring our patients back to a more active and productive life.



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# REVOLUTIONIZING ELECTROTHERAPY FOR NEUROPATHY AND CHRONIC PAIN: The Future of Medium-Frequency Devices

By Dr. Danielle Zappile

In the field of health science, electrotherapy has emerged as a groundbreaking approach that stimulates the body's natural healing processes without invasive procedures. Spearheading this evolution is the Medium Frequency (MF) electrotherapeutic device known as HakoMed. This revolutionary invention offers a wide range of therapeutic applications, particularly in alleviating peripheral neuropathy symptoms.

## Advantages of Medium Frequency Currents

Medium Frequency currents provide distinct advantages over their low-frequency counterparts, as they penetrate deeper into tissues, enabling more extensive therapeutic applications. These currents can be harnessed to achieve various treatment outcomes, such as pain relief through nerve transmission pathway blocking, muscle training and stretching through muscle contracture stimulation, and wound healing and bone repair through cell division facilitation.

## Addressing Peripheral Neuropathy with HakoMed

HakoMed, an innovative Medium Frequency (MF) electrotherapeutic device, brings hope to individuals grappling with peripheral neuropathy. Peripheral neuropathy arises from damage to the peripheral nerves, which form an extensive communication network connecting the central nervous system (the brain and spinal cord) to other body parts. Its symptoms range from weakness and numbness to excruciating pain, primarily affecting the hands and feet. This debilitating condition significantly impacts the quality of life for those suffering from it.

## Beyond Pain Management -- Promoting Healing

The therapeutic benefits of HakoMed extend beyond pain management. The device plays a crucial role in promoting healing, a key aspect of peripheral neuropathy treatment. In cases of nerve damage, the healing process involves enhancing the health and function of nerve cells, which are closely linked to cellular metabolism and energy production.

## Influencing Cellular Processes

Two key players in these cellular processes are cyclic adenosine monophosphate (cAMP) and mitochondria. cAMP serves as an essential messenger within



cells, playing pivotal roles in various physiological processes, including pain modulation and nerve regeneration. Research has shown that MF current can influence the concentration of cAMP, providing an additional pathway through which the device alleviates peripheral neuropathy symptoms.

Mitochondria, often referred to as the "powerhouses" of the cell, are crucial for energy production. Healthy mitochondrial function is vital for the survival and function of nerve cells, particularly in cases of peripheral neuropathy where these cells experience stress. Interestingly, studies have demonstrated that exposure to MF current can significantly increase the number and size of mitochondria in cell cultures. This suggests that the MF electrotherapeutic device may enhance nerve cell health and function by bolstering cellular energy production.

## The Shaking Effect and Inflammation Management

One unique attribute of MF currents is their "shaking effect," which refers to the movement of charged molecules in the tissue under the influence of the alternating electric field. This movement aids metabolic processes, promotes the distribution and reduction of inflammation and pain mediators, and is particularly beneficial in managing the inflammation associated with peripheral neuropathy, especially when applied at high intensities.

## Frequency Modulation for Personalized Treatment

The true innovation of HakoMed lies in its use of frequency modulation instead of traditional amplitude modulation. This device adjusts the frequency of the MF current to align with the patient's medical condition and treatment needs. By doing so, the MF current can generate action potentials in a low-frequency rhythm, triggering therapeutic responses in the body. Insufficient treatment times exponentially decrease positive outcomes. Proper settings and treatment times are essential for treatment success.

## Advanced Features of HakoMed

HakoMed operates within the medium frequency range of 1,000 Hz to 100,000 Hz, modulating the working frequency within a band of several hundred to a thousand Hz, with a periodicity of 0 to about 200 Hz. The corner frequencies and modulation frequency can be further controlled over the treatment time using an integrated microprocessor module. Additionally, the device can superimpose two or more circuits, each differing in frequency by 0 to about 200 Hz. This capability ensures targeted and effective treatment delivery, particularly crucial for managing complex conditions like peripheral neuropathy.

## Conclusion

The MF electrotherapeutic device, HakoMed, represents a significant leap forward in the realm of electrotherapy. By harnessing the power of frequency modulation, it offers personalized and effective treatment for various health conditions, including peripheral neuropathy. By influencing key components of cellular health, such as cAMP and mitochondria, this groundbreaking device opens new avenues for non-invasive treatment of peripheral neuropathy. Its potential to stimulate the body's healing processes at a deeper cellular level makes it a promising tool in the field of non-invasive medical treatment. As our understanding of electrotherapy expands, devices like the MF electrotherapeutic device will undoubtedly play a vital role in shaping the future of health science.



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To learn more about the transformative benefits of HakoMed, the primary component of the advanced AngioGenics™ program, and how it can help individuals experiencing Peripheral Neuropathy or chronic pain, we encourage you to reach out to Dr. Danielle Zappile. Dr. Zappile is a highly skilled chiropractic physician at Straight To Health Center, renowned for her expertise in cutting-edge therapies. Take the first step towards a better quality of life by contacting Straight To Health Center today at 239-202-0999.



*Dr. Danielle Zappile has been a chiropractic physician since 2009 and has helped thousands of patients achieve their health goals.*

**Expect Better. Demand Better. Get Better.**



# Memory Matters

By Amy Hoffmann Schenk, RN, BSN, MS Ed, Community Engagement Lead

**J**une is Alzheimer's and Brain Awareness month! This provides us an opportunity to spread the word about Alzheimer's disease, and its impact on all of us. Did you know that the observance of Alzheimer's and Brain Awareness month is 40 years old this year? President Ronald Reagan initiated the observance in 1983. Sadly, Alzheimer's disease would impact President Reagan personally, and he died with the disease in 2004.

According to the 2023 Alzheimer's Association Facts and Figures report, 6.7 million people in the United States have Alzheimer's disease. From a risk perspective, 1/5 women and 1/10 men at age 45 have a lifetime risk of developing Alzheimer's disease. Alzheimer's disease impacts the entire family. Based on 2022 information, the Association estimates that unpaid caregivers provided 18 billion hours of care for those with Alzheimer's disease with a financial impact of \$339.5 billion dollars. Who are these unpaid caregivers? Spouses, partners, adult children and grandchildren, other relatives and friends. As you can see, the impact is staggering.

Talking about Alzheimer's disease is important. One third of people die with Alzheimer's or another dementia. There still may be a perceived stigma when one has a diagnosis of Alzheimer's disease that is not seen with other health concerns. Education and awareness are critical in eliminating the stigma. Alzheimer's disease is a brain disease, a process where brain cells, called neurons, become damaged and die. The Alzheimer's Association reports that from 2020 to 2025, the number of people in Florida with Alzheimer's disease will rise from 580,000 to 720,000. In five short years that is a twenty-four percent increase. The time to take action is today.

Taking care of our brains needs to be a top priority. Depending on what source you use, there are several approaches you can take proactively to keep your brain healthy. From Johns Hopkins University, here are five tips you can incorporate into your routine for a healthy brain:

Get your heart pumping through exercise. Of course, be sure to clear any physical activity with your health care provider, particularly if you are new to an exercise routine.



Stay on top of any chronic medical issues, including heart disease, hypertension, diabetes, and depression through regular visits to your health care provider.

Get your sleep! Many times, this is easier said than done. We know that sleep is important and two of the biggest sleep challenges are a result of sleep apnea and stress. If you are having issues with sleeping, talk to your health care provider.

Review your medications. Medications on their own can cause memory issues. Medication interactions can have a negative impact on memory and thinking. Discuss your medications with your health care provider or your pharmacist to evaluate if there are other options if necessary.

Stay socially engaged. Challenging our brains with new activities is helpful. When you are pursuing new activities and interests with others, you get the added benefit of social engagement.

In addition to these tips, we know that what we eat impacts all aspects of our health and wellness. The MIND diet is a diet that is based on the Mediterranean diet and adds the benefits of the DASH (Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension). The National Institute for Health notes that the Mediterranean diet, the related MIND diet (which includes elements designed to lower blood pressure), and other healthy eating patterns have been associated with cognitive benefits in studies. While the evidence is not as strong as it is for other interventions, it makes sense to manage your diet.

The diet that shows some promising evidence is the Mediterranean diet, which emphasizes fruits, vegetables, whole grains, legumes, fish, and other seafood; unsaturated fats such as olive oils; and low amounts of red meat, eggs, and sweets. A variation of this, called MIND (Mediterranean-DASH Intervention for Neurodegenerative Delay) incorporates the DASH (Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension) diet, which has been shown to lower high blood pressure, a risk factor for Alzheimer's disease. Every June, the Alzheimer's Association sponsors a fundraising event called The Longest Day. On the summer solstice, people from across the world will fight the darkness of Alzheimer's disease through a fundraising activity of their choice. Choosing to "go purple" in June, shows your commitment and passion for not only finding a cure for Alzheimer's disease, but also shows your support of all those living with the disease and their care partners.

The beauty of The Longest Day event is that you can choose anything you want to do to raise money. Are you a card player? How about a tournament to raise funds? More into physical activity? How about an event such as walking, running, pickleball, biking, playing tennis, or doing yoga? Are you someone who loves to entertain? Have a brunch, dinner, or cocktail event benefiting the longest day. Need more ideas? Check out this webpage to get your creative juices flowing!



<https://act.alz.org/site/>

[SPageServer?pagename=the\\_longest\\_day](https://act.alz.org/site/SPageServer?pagename=the_longest_day)

#### References:

<https://www.alz.org/alzheimers-dementia/facts-figures>  
<https://www.hopkinsmedicine.org/health/wellness-and-prevention>  
<https://www.nia.nih.gov/health/what-do-we-know-about-diet-and-prevention-alzheimers-disease>

**Do your part to keep your brain healthy and to learn more about Alzheimer's disease and dementia in June. At the Neuropsychiatric Research center there are many cutting edge clinical studies that are focused on addressing memory issues. Have any concerns about your memory?**



**Contact NPRC at 239-939-7777 today for your free memory screen.**



# ENHANCING MEN'S HEALTH: THE VITAL ROLE OF HEARING AIDS

By John Nobile - HAS (Hearing Aid Specialist), BC-HIS, ACA

**M**en's health is a topic of paramount importance, and one aspect that often goes unnoticed is hearing health. Hearing loss affects millions of men worldwide, impacting their quality of life, relationships, and overall well-being. Fortunately, hearing aids provide a remarkable solution to this prevalent issue. In this article, we delve into the significance of men's health and shed light on the invaluable benefits that hearing aids offer, emphasizing the transformative impact they can have on individuals' lives.

## Recognizing the Scope of Men's Health Challenges

When discussing men's health, several key concerns come to mind, such as heart disease, prostate health, and mental well-being. However, hearing loss is often overlooked despite being a common and impactful condition among men. According to the World Health Organization, over 466 million individuals worldwide experience disabling hearing loss, with men comprising a substantial proportion. Ignoring this issue not only affects an individual's ability to communicate effectively but also leads to social isolation, cognitive decline, and a diminished overall quality of life. Recognizing the importance of addressing hearing loss is essential for promoting comprehensive men's health.

## The Impact of Hearing Loss on Men's Well-being

Hearing loss can significantly impact men's overall well-being. Struggling to hear conversations, misinterpreting information, or feeling left out in social gatherings can lead to frustration, anxiety, and reduced self-confidence. Additionally, untreated hearing loss has been linked to cognitive decline and increased risk of dementia. Studies have also shown a correlation between hearing loss and mental health issues like depression and social withdrawal. By addressing hearing loss proactively, men can regain control over their lives, fostering better emotional and mental well-being.

## The Transformative Power of Hearing Aids

Hearing aids have revolutionized the lives of countless individuals experiencing hearing loss. These advanced devices are designed to amplify sound and improve hearing clarity, allowing men to regain



their ability to engage fully in conversations and enjoy the sounds of life. Modern hearing aids are discreet, comfortable, and technologically advanced, offering a range of features tailored to individual needs. From noise reduction and directional microphones to Bluetooth connectivity and rechargeable batteries, these devices provide convenience, flexibility, and improved user experience. With the right hearing aids, men can enhance their communication skills, maintain their relationships, and participate more actively in professional and social settings.

## Breaking the Stigma and Seeking Help

Despite the proven benefits of hearing aids, there remains a stigma surrounding their use, particularly among men. Many individuals hesitate to address their hearing loss, fearing the perception of aging or weakness. It is crucial to break down these barriers and encourage men to seek professional help for their hearing health. By normalizing the use of hearing aids and promoting open conversations, we can empower men to take control of their hearing health and improve their overall well-being.

Men's health encompasses various aspects, and hearing health should be given the attention it deserves. Hearing loss can significantly impact men's lives, affecting their emotional well-being, relationships, and cognitive abilities. Thankfully, hearing aids offer a practical and transformative

solution. By addressing hearing loss and embracing the benefits of hearing aids, men can regain their independence, enhance their communication skills, and improve their overall quality of life.

If you or a loved one are struggling to hear clearly, we can help! We are located in Cape Coral and Fort Myers, FL., with our 5-star-rated hearing care. Call Nobile Hearing Aids today at 239-323-7389 for more information.

**John Nobile, HAS, BC-HIS, ACA** is a licensed hearing aid specialist and an ACA-certified audioprosthetologist who is also board-certified in hearing instrument sciences. With over 55 years of experience, he has transformed thousands of lives in Cape Coral and Fort Myers, FL, by providing his patients with the gift of sound. He is also a former veteran committed to providing all veterans with free services.



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# What Is Independent Living for Seniors?

**A**s you begin your search for senior independent living, you'll find yourself met with many new terms and sometimes complex options. What's a CCRC? What types of options are available? What's the difference between independent living and assisted living?

We've put together a primer of what independent living entails, as well as the benefits it can provide. Read on to learn more about how independent living can provide a vibrant lifestyle for today and peace of mind for the future.

## What is independent living?

*Independent living* is a term that describes a lifestyle that you'll find at a community. This type of lifestyle is for seniors who are healthy, active, and don't need assistance to live safely. Many independent living, residents like those at The Terraces at Bonita Springs choose to move into these types of communities because of the carefree lifestyle, focus on wellness, and socialization opportunities they don't get from living on their own.

## Types of Independent Living Communities

Independent living communities can be stand-alone or part of a larger community. Both options have different benefits, but the independent lifestyle can be quite similar.

### Retirement Communities

Also known as 55+ communities, this type of lifestyle is for individuals who want the privacy of owning their home but also want the services and amenities that come from a senior community. These types of community offerings can include a pool, a clubhouse, maintenance-free or low-maintenance homes, and social activities. These communities operate similarly to an HOA neighborhood, with dues that are paid to cover certain services and amenities.

### Life Plan Communities

These are also known as continuing care retirement communities (CCRCs).

Life Plan Communities like The Terraces at Bonita Springs offer a variety of senior care services, including assisted living, memory support, skilled nursing, and rehabilitation. Independent living residents have priority access to these different levels

of senior care if needed, which provides peace of mind for the future. The community also has a plethora of services and amenities to help seniors stay active, healthy and well.

## Benefits of Independent Living

The benefits of moving to a community are many, with very little downside. In fact, most of the residents at The Terraces tell us that they wish they'd moved here sooner! Moving into independent living can help seniors stay active and healthy for as long as possible, since every aspect of life has been designed with the needs of aging adults in mind. Here are just a few more benefits of the independent living lifestyle:

- No more home maintenance, thanks to a maintenance-free environment
- Peace of mind with assisted living and memory care services available
- So many socialization opportunities
- Planned and available activities and events every day
- Delicious dining options from formal to casual
- And so much more!

## What To Consider When Looking for Independent Living Options

Does independent living sound like the right solution for you or a loved one? It's important to know what your wants and needs are so that you're better able to weigh the options available to you. Here are a few factors to consider when looking into independent living options:

- What sort of care levels are available, and are they available on site?
- Is there a LifeCare contract offered and what does it cover?
- What sort of services and amenities are available on site?
- How does the community provide health and wellness opportunities for adults at all ages?
- How full is the event calendar, and are there options that interest you or a loved one?
- What is the dining situation like?

## How Much Does Independent Living Cost?

The cost for independent living can vary greatly from community to community. The price tag associated with this lifestyle depends greatly on location, contract type, and services offered. Depending on the type of community you choose, you may need to pay a large entrance fee, plus a monthly fee that covers most, if not all, of the benefits of the community.

While health insurance doesn't cover independent living for seniors, there are some variables that can let older adults deduct some of their expenses when tax season comes around. A Life Plan Community with a Type A LifeCare contract like The Terraces can save you money now and in the future and can also lessen your tax burden depending on your individual situation.

## Discover an independent lifestyle that helps you age in style.

At The Terraces at Bonita Springs, our independent living options take the maintenance and worry out of everyday life. Choose from a variety of floor plans to fit your lifestyle, elegant dining options, and an active lifestyle with health service options all in one place. Learn more about us and see what your future could hold when you visit our community.

**Join us for our next event on  
June 14 at 3 pm.  
Call for more details!**

**The Terraces at Bonita Springs  
26455 S. Tamiami Trail  
Bonita Springs, FL 34134**

Are you ready to rightsize your living space while upsizing your lifestyle – all at the best value for LifeCare in Bonita Springs? Join us to find out how The Terraces, a Life Plan Community with a Type A LifeCare contract in Southwest Florida, makes it possible.

*Space is limited. Valet parking will be available. Please RSVP by Wednesday, June 7.*

Are you interested in learning more about The Terraces at Bonita Springs? Schedule a community tour and private lunch or dinner today by calling **239-204-3469** or take a virtual tour right now!

**The Terraces**  
— at Bonita Springs  
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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, patients 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.

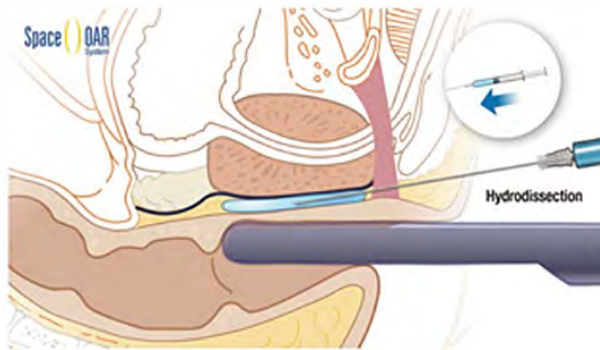
Radiation therapy typically takes place over several months, and SpaceOAR hydrogel stays in position for several months before it is safely absorbed by the body and removed through the urine. In a clinical study, SpaceOAR Hydrogel was shown to help minimize the impact on urinary, sexual and bowel quality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

Source: 1. <https://www.spaceoar.com>



**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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# OUCH! WHAT DID I JUST STEP ON?

By Joe Altepeter, DPM

**W**e have all been there...minding our own business, walking barefoot through the kitchen, on the beach, in the garden, around the pool, or shod through the worksite, in the woods, or on the sidewalk...when all of a sudden, sharp pain shoots through the bottom of the foot. Was it a lego, a dog toy, a smooth pebble or shell? Or was it something more sinister, like a splintered piece of wood, glass, metal or a sharper rock or shell?

An alternate scenario, you recall a sudden discomfort which promptly goes away, days or weeks later you notice a stain on your sock, an angry looking spot on your foot, and think to yourself "I stepped on something sinister the other day?"

These events may ultimately result in a puncture wound to the bottom of the foot. Sometimes these puncture wounds can leave a portion of the foreign object in or under the skin. If able to remove any foreign object, then you may have avoided further consequences of the injury. For those with residual foreign material in the skin, those with poor sensation in the foot, or those who endured an injury from a dirty object, there may be more to be concerned about. Prompt assessment in these instances will certainly be important for a good outcome, but may be helpful even if the object was completely removed.

Anyone who experiences a puncture wound should seek medical attention. Some particularly concerning changes that should prompt early presentation to a podiatrist or other member of your health care team would include open sores, purulence or pus, bleeding or drainage, pain or discomfort, redness localized or tracking, swelling, difficulty putting weight on the foot, or visualization of the object.

A visit with your podiatrist will include a review of current and past medical history, and thorough assessment of the problem at hand (or foot). Often-times obtaining radiographs, or x-rays, is an important step to rule in or out the presence of any retained foreign body. Some materials however do not show well on radiographs and advanced imaging may be necessary to identify and localize the object. If the object is visible or close to the skin, it could potentially be removed in the office, but it



is more embedded or involves considerable infection, surgery may be indicated. Antibiotics can be important, so testing for bacteria with a culture swab may be performed as well to help guide antibiotics. In the event of a particularly dirty puncture wound, an updated tetanus vaccination may be indicated.

The best way to treat a puncture wound is to not have one in the first place. The best odds of doing that comes with wearing the appropriate shoe gear for the task at hand...water shoes at the beach or in the lake, work boots on the job site, house shoes around the house. This is especially important for those dealing with numbness or loss of sensation to their feet. Even when wearing appropriate shoes, these injuries can happen. So do not be ashamed to ask for some advice on treatment.

*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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### 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.

## 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.*



## 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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## JUNE IS ACNE AWARENESS MONTH

# Common Acne Treatment Options

**A**nyone who has ever walked through the skincare aisle of their local drugstore knows that there are tons of acne-fighting products on the market. So, which one is right for you? Should you opt for an acne cleanser or spot treatment, or both? Choosing the right acne treatment can be challenging, to say the least.

While acne is a common problem among teenagers, many people don't just leave acne behind the minute they toss out those graduation caps. In fact, many adults well into their 20s, 30s and beyond still deal with regular acne outbreaks. So, how do you properly treat acne? There is no singular way to treat acne and the best treatment option for you and your skin will depend on the cause. While you might not know what's to blame for your acne symptoms a dermatologist certainly can help.

### Treating Acne on Your Own

If you are dealing with mild to moderate acne, look for products that contain these powerful acne-fighting ingredients:

- Salicylic acid
- Benzoyl peroxide
- Glycolic acid
- Sulfur
- Retinol

### How a Dermatologist Treats Acne

If you've tried over-the-counter acne products for more than 12 weeks and aren't seeing results, or if you are experiencing severe, deep or cystic acne then it's time to turn to a skin care professional for help. The first thing your dermatologist will do is determine the cause of your acne. From there, one or more of these treatments may be recommended:

**Prescription topical medications:** Certain topical medications act as an anti-microbial and anti-inflammatory, which reduces redness and inflammation associated with acne while also removing acne-causing bacteria from the surface of the skin. **A simple extraction:** You should never pick at your acne or try to pop a pimple on your own, as you could end up causing further irritation or scarring; however, a dermatologist knows the safest and most effective techniques for extracting blackheads and whiteheads safely.



**Birth control pills:** For women who notice breakouts that correspond to their menstrual cycle, certain birth control pills may be able to reduce the amount of androgen hormones, which in turn can reduce breakouts. Talk to your dermatologist about the birth control pills that are FDA approved to treat acne.

**Isotretinoin:** This is an extremely intense oral retinoid that is used for treating severe, cystic acne that isn't responsive to other treatment options. Isotretinoin is better known as Accutane, and this treatment can take up to nine months to see full results. Some patients will require multiple courses of treatment. Due to the nature of this strong medication, there are some possible side effects. It is important to discuss these side effects with your dermatologist before beginning Isotretinoin.

If you are having trouble getting your acne under control it's important that you have a dermatologist that you can turn to for customized care. Take control of your acne once and for all.

### What's on YOUR Skin?

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**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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**Garramone Plastic Surgery's** all-in-one Mommy Makeover reunites women with their pre-baby selves by addressing multiple post-pregnancy body concerns.

RALPH R. GARRAMONE, MD, FACS

A woman's body image can decline with loss of breast volume, which can result in sagging, irregularly shaped, and droopy breasts. After pregnancy, localized abdominal stretching, excess skin, fatty deposits, and stretch marks may be the hallmarks of pregnancy, but they aren't irreversible," says Ralph Garramone, M.D., a board-certified cosmetic and plastic surgeon and founder of Garramone Plastic Surgery, where he's been helping women in the Fort Myers area get back to their pre-baby selves since 2002.



"While there's no denying the joy of pregnancy, child-birth, and nursing, the resulting physical changes can take a toll on a woman's body and psyche, which can result in decreased self-esteem. Every woman can have excellent body confidence," says Dr. Garramone.

In addition to offering a cache of face, breast, and body procedures, as well as skincare treatments with his team of award-winning, medically trained Aestheticians, the practice developed the Mommy Makeover for women of all ages who want to experience a single recovery instead of multiple downtimes from individual surgeries.

Patients coming in for this procedure, Dr. Garramone notes, usually have excess skin, stretch marks, and underlying fascia fatigue (the tough, muscular layer unresponsive to exercise). To address these issues, the Mommy Makeover may involve abdominoplasty, or a tummy tuck, and an array of breast surgeries to address individual concerns with attention to post-pregnancy problem zones simultaneously.

"We aim to give each patient the best results by listening to what bothers them most," says Dr. Garramone.

## GREAT EXPECTATIONS

"Plastic surgery is a life-changing, personal experience," Dr. Garramone says, "and we take a detail-oriented approach to procedural explanations while providing realistic post-surgical expectations."

As for the procedure at the practice's state-of-the-art, accredited surgical facility, patients should plan on 2.5 to 4.5 hours for surgery with additional time spent in recovery.

According to Dr. Garramone, recovery isn't what it used to be 20 years ago. Dr. Garramone uses a long-lasting nerve blocker to aid in patients' discomfort; patients can expect to rest for approximately 10 to 14 days before returning to normal daily life, including work or at-home activities. Most patients are back to 90% of their normal daily activities within a month.

Having performed thousands of surgeries for adults and children throughout his career, Dr. Garramone approaches every case with familiar ease. Forever humble, he's received numerous accolades, contributes to many medical publications, and enjoys the creative aspect of his work. He feels it is an honor to use his skills to change lives for the better.

"It's an exciting field to work in because there's always some wonderful new technology on the horizon," he says.

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# THE VITAL LINK BETWEEN MEN'S HEALTH, HYDRATION, AND ACTIVE SPORTS

By Dr. Doreen DeStefano, NHD, APRN, DNP

**M**aintaining optimal hydration is crucial for men's health, particularly during the summer months in Southwest Florida. Dehydration can lead to numerous health issues, making it essential to understand the signs and symptoms. In this article, we explore the importance of hydration in men's health and discuss why seeking a nutrient IV specialist is the best choice for addressing dehydration concerns.

## Understanding the Importance of Hydration for Men's Health

Proper hydration is fundamental for men's overall well-being and plays a vital role in various bodily functions. Adequate hydration supports optimal brain function, digestion, metabolism, joint health, and temperature regulation. It also helps maintain healthy skin, aids in nutrient absorption, and promotes cardiovascular health. Active men, including sports enthusiasts, should pay special attention to their hydration levels to enhance performance and prevent dehydration-related complications.

## Staying Hydrated in Sports

Golf and pickleball are popular sports enjoyed by men of all ages here in Florida. While they may not appear as physically demanding as high-intensity sports, they still require adequate hydration. Even moderate physical activity in these sports can lead to fluid loss through sweating. Therefore, it is crucial for men to consume fluids regularly during and after these activities to replenish lost fluids and maintain optimal performance.

## Recognizing the Signs and Symptoms of Dehydration

Dehydration occurs when the body loses more fluid than it takes in, resulting in an imbalance that can negatively impact men's health. Common signs and symptoms of dehydration include increased thirst, dry mouth, dark urine, fatigue, dizziness, muscle cramps, and headaches. Recognizing these indicators is essential for taking prompt action to restore hydration levels.

## The Importance of Nutrient IV Specialists for Addressing Dehydration

When facing dehydration, many people turn to IV bars for quick rehydration. However, seeking the expertise of a nutrient IV specialist is a more preferable option. Nutrient IV specialists like Root Causes



are medical professionals with specialized training in administering intravenous fluids and nutrients tailored to individual needs. Our offerings go far beyond rehydration to optimize health and wellness. We can accurately assess hydration levels, provide personalized hydration plans, and address any underlying health concerns that may contribute to dehydration. We have options for Hydration with added nutrients and antioxidants. Our "Happy Hour" selections are a great place to start!

Hydration is a critical aspect of men's health, especially during physical activities like golf and pickleball. Recognizing the signs and symptoms of dehydration is vital to prevent complications and maintain optimal performance. When seeking hydration solutions, it is advisable to consult a nutrient IV specialist rather than opting for an IV bar. Nutrient IV specialists offer tailored treatments, expert evaluation, and comprehensive care that aligns with individual health needs. By prioritizing hydration and seeking professional guidance, men can optimize their well-being and enjoy the benefits of an active and healthy lifestyle.

## 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.



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# UNLEASH THE POWER OF MEDICAL MARIJUANA

## TOP 7 BENEFITS FOR MEN

**M**en in Florida face various challenges, from coping with stress to managing pain and inflammation.

Medical marijuana has emerged as a powerful solution to these issues, offering numerous benefits for men's physical and mental health. In this article, we'll explore ten key benefits of medical marijuana for men, which could make a significant difference in your daily life. By the end, you'll be eager to explore the advantages of medical marijuana and how men can benefit from this natural alternative.

### Say Goodbye to Insomnia

One of the most common problems that men face is sleeplessness or insomnia.

A good night's rest is essential for maintaining overall health and well-being. Medical marijuana is known for promoting relaxation and improving sleep quality.

Its calming effects can help you unwind at the end of a long day, allowing you to fall asleep faster and stay asleep longer. By enhancing the quality of your rest, medical marijuana can boost your energy levels, mood, and overall performance during the day.

### Conquer Inflammation and Dominate the Gym

Inflammation is a natural response to injury, but chronic inflammation can lead to various health issues, including joint pain and reduced mobility.

For fitness enthusiasts and athletes, inflammation can be a significant roadblock in their quest for peak performance. Medical marijuana has potent anti-inflammatory properties, making it an ideal alternative to traditional pain relief medications. By reducing inflammation and alleviating pain, medical marijuana enables you to hit the gym harder and recover faster, ensuring you stay on top of your fitness game.

### Ignite Your Passion: Enhance Sexual Function and Desire

Medical marijuana has been found to impact sexual function and desire in men positively.



It can help alleviate performance anxiety and promote relaxation, allowing you to be more present and engaged during intimate moments. Moreover, medical marijuana improves blood flow and increases sensitivity, heightening the sexual experience. A recent study review in *Psychology Today* found 74 percent said cannabis improved their sexual satisfaction, while 59 percent said it increased their sexual desire.

With the help of medical marijuana, it may be possible to enhance and rekindle the spark in your love life.

### PTSD Relief: Reclaim Your Peace of Mind

Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) is a debilitating condition that affects millions of men worldwide.

The symptoms of PTSD, such as flashbacks, nightmares, and anxiety, can make daily life incredibly challenging. Medical marijuana has been found to reduce the severity of PTSD symptoms, helping men regain control over their mental health.

In a placebo-controlled, double-blind study published in March 2021 in *PLOS ONE*, it was found that cannabis was very beneficial for PTSD that can affect up to 20% of recent veterans. Over the course of a year, the study found that cannabis users reported a greater decrease in the severity of their PTSD symptoms. It was also found that they were more than 2.5 times as likely to no longer meet the diagnostic criteria for PTSD as those who did not use cannabis.

### Support Your Mental Health: Ease Anxiety and Depression

Mental health is critical to overall well-being, and medical marijuana has positively impacted various mental health conditions.

By promoting relaxation, reducing stress, and improving mood, medical marijuana can be a valuable tool in managing anxiety and depression. Medical marijuana's natural ability to bind with the endocannabinoid system can help balance brain chemistry and provide much-needed relief for those struggling with these conditions. A 2019 study of 103 adult patients found CBD to be better tolerated than routine psychiatric medications, displaying great promise as a tool for reducing anxiety in clinical populations.

### Alleviate Chronic Pain and Enhance Quality of Life

Chronic pain can be debilitating and negatively impact your daily life.

Medical marijuana has proven effective in managing various types of pain, from neuropathic pain to cancer-related pain. Its analgesic properties can help reduce the reliance on prescription painkillers, which often come with a host of side effects and the risk of addiction.

By using medical marijuana as a natural pain relief alternative, you can significantly improve your quality of life and enjoy your daily activities without being held back by pain.

### Strengthen Your Immune System and Ward Off Illness

A strong immune system is essential for preventing illnesses and maintaining overall health.

Research suggests that medical marijuana can support the immune system by modulating immune responses and reducing inflammation. According to research published in the *Journal of Neuroimmunology*, Cannabinoids can modulate both the function and secretion of cytokines from immune cells thus offering treatment opportunities for inflammatory diseases.

By incorporating medical marijuana into your health regimen, you can fortify your immune system and reduce your susceptibility to various ailments.



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# Myasthenia Gravis AWARENESS



**M**yasthenia gravis is a chronic autoimmune, neuromuscular disease that causes weakness in the skeletal muscles. These are the muscles that connect to your bones and contract to allow your arms and legs to move and make breathing possible. The muscles that are most affected include the eyes/eyelids, facial muscles, and the muscles that control chewing, swallowing, and talking.

**According to the Johns Hopkins Medical website, the most common symptoms include:**

- Visual problems, including drooping eyelids (ptosis) and double vision (diplopia)
- Muscle weakness and fatigue may vary rapidly in intensity over days or even hours and worsen as muscles are used (early fatigue)
- Facial muscle involvement causing a mask-like appearance; a smile may appear more like a snarl
- Trouble swallowing or pronouncing words
- Weakness of the neck or limbs<sup>1</sup>

## How is myasthenia gravis diagnosed?

A doctor can diagnose myasthenia gravis based on symptoms and various tests. One common way to diagnose myasthenia gravis is to test how you respond to certain medicines. Muscle weakness often dramatically improves for a brief time when you are given an anticholinesterase medicine. If you respond to the medicine, it confirms myasthenia gravis.

**Other tests that may be done include:**

- **Blood tests.** These tests look for antibodies that may be present in people with myasthenia gravis.
- **Genetic tests** to see if there is a family history related to the disease.
- **Nerve conduction studies.** A test called repetitive nerve stimulation is used to diagnose myasthenia gravis.
- **Electromyogram (EMG).** A test that measures the electrical activity of a muscle. An EMG can detect abnormal electrical muscle activity due to diseases and neuromuscular conditions.<sup>1</sup>

## Treating myasthenia gravis

There is no known cure for myasthenia gravis. However, available treatments can control symptoms and often allow you to have a relatively high quality of life.

**There are several therapies available to help reduce and improve muscle weakness, including:**

**Thymectomy**—An operation to remove the problematic thymus gland can reduce symptoms, possibly by rebalancing the immune system. Stable, long-lasting complete remissions are the goal of thymectomy and may occur in about 50 percent of individuals who undergo this procedure.

**Monoclonal antibody**—A treatment that targets the process by which acetylcholine antibodies injure the neuromuscular junction.

**Immunosuppressive drugs**—A group of drugs that improve muscle strength by suppressing the production of abnormal antibodies, such as prednisone, azathioprine, mycophenolate mofetil, and tacrolimus. The drugs can cause significant side effects and must be carefully monitored by a physician.

**Plasmapheresis and intravenous immunoglobulin**—Therapies that are used in severe cases of myasthenia gravis to remove destructive antibodies that attack the neuromuscular junction, although their effectiveness usually only lasts a few weeks or months.

Intravenous immunoglobulin is a highly concentrated injection of antibodies pooled from many healthy donors that temporarily changes the way the immune system operates. It works by binding to the antibodies that cause myasthenia gravis and removing them from circulation.<sup>2</sup>

## Paragon Healthcare

At Paragon Healthcare, we support the Myasthenia Gravis (MG) community through infusible therapies such as immunoglobulin (Ig), Soliris, Ultomiris and Vyvgart. Nationally, our infusion centers treated nearly 1k MG patients during April 2023 and more than 3.5k year-to-date. This puts us in a place to serve as many MG patients this year as the nearly 10k patients we supported in 2022.

A nationwide leader for more than 20 years in infusion care, Paragon specializes in immunoglobulin therapy through our IV Anywhere approach. As a key therapy to help manage myasthenia gravis, we offer Ig through either home infusion or our infusion centers. Providing exemplary care to our Ig patients through flexibility in treatment locations, clinical education and access to affordable solutions is vital.

**Specifically, we:**

- Created a Center of Excellence team with Ig-certified pharmacists and intake specialists. This team assesses each patient individually and educates patients and their physicians on our multiple Ig brands to ensure optimal clinical outcomes and broader access.
- Provide options for Subcutaneous Immunoglobulin Therapy (SCIg) and Intravenous Immunoglobulin Therapy (IVIg), including an in-home nursing support program for patient education, to offer more flexibility.
- SCIg is administered under the skin and can benefit patients with IV access challenges, prior adverse reactions to IVIg and specific lifestyle needs. IVIg is administered into a vein and offers patients registered nurses to infuse and monitor their therapy at our infusion centers.
- Work with most insurance providers, including Medicare and Medicaid, and connect eligible patients with financial assistance programs—the two most common challenges for Ig patients. Additionally, we review and help with benefits, prior authorizations, internal and external patient assistance programs and more.

As immunoglobulin therapy aids multiple conditions beyond MG, our team treats Ig patients of all ages from children to seniors across specialties including dermatology, hematology, infectious disease, neurology, primary immune deficiency, rheumatology, secondary immune deficiency and transplant.

1. Myasthenia Gravis (2023) Myasthenia Gravis | Johns Hopkins Medicine. Available at: <https://www.hopkinsmedicine.org/health/conditions-and-diseases/myasthenia-gravis>.
2. Myasthenia Gravis, National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke. Available at: <https://www.ninds.nih.gov/health-information/disorders/myasthenia-gravis>



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# The Importance of Progesterone Replacement in Both Men and Women

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

**O**f the many hormones in the body, a select few are typically categorized as being for one gender or for the other. Many people are often surprised to learn, though, that despite these hormones being more prominent in one gender, they are essential for proper body functioning in both.

One example of these hormones is progesterone, which is often considered for women, although it has many essential roles in men. However, progesterone can decline in both genders for a number of reasons, including with age or due to health conditions. When progesterone levels fall, unpleasant symptoms can occur, which is why progesterone replacement is a crucial treatment for those with unbalanced hormones.

## What Is Progesterone?

Progesterone is a hormone most often known to be released by the corpus luteum after a woman has ovulated. Also referred to as the “pregnancy hormone,” progesterone prepares the uterus for pregnancy by thickening the lining and preventing muscle contractions that would expel an egg.

Despite its primary role in preparing the female body for pregnancy, though, progesterone is also vital for men, albeit with different roles.

Let’s further discuss the role of progesterone in both genders and why it is crucial for men and women to have balanced progesterone levels.

## The Role of Progesterone in Women

Progesterone varies considerably through a woman’s menstrual cycle, with it being produced in low levels during the first half but rising considerably following ovulation. If a woman becomes pregnant, progesterone remains high throughout the pregnancy and aids in breast milk production upon delivery of the baby.

While the ovaries initially produce progesterone, the placenta begins producing progesterone at a higher rate after 8 or 10 weeks of pregnancy. This increase in progesterone keeps the body from releasing more eggs and prepares the breasts to produce milk.



Despite the role of progesterone in pregnancy, it can also be used to prevent pregnancy. In fact, progesterone is often used by itself or in combination with estrogen in hormonal contraceptives. When in this format, it helps the cervical mucus thicken, making it difficult for sperm to reach and fertilize an egg. It can also cause the uterine lining to thin, or it may stop ovulation entirely.

Because of these extremes in the body, promoting an ideal amount of progesterone is critical for healthy fertility, if pregnancy is a woman’s goal.

## Signs Of Low Progesterone in Women

Some signs of low progesterone in women include:

- missing periods or having abnormal periods
- uterine bleeding
- repeated miscarriages
- spotting and pain while pregnant
- infertility

Progesterone and estrogen are also closely related, so if progesterone is too low, it may cause estrogen levels to become high, which can cause weight gain, headaches, or mood swings.

## The Role of Progesterone in Men

Despite being considered the “pregnancy hormone,” progesterone is also an essential hormone in men.

In men, progesterone plays a vital role in mood regulation and keeping the mind calm. It also impacts libido and promotes fertility from the man’s side. This is because progesterone influences spermiogenesis, or the creation of sperm; if the amount of progesterone in a man is too low, the body might not be able to produce as much sperm, which can influence a couple’s ability to conceive.

Progesterone is also crucial for the biosynthesis of testosterone, otherwise known as the male sex hormone, which is responsible for the development of secondary sex characteristics such as body hair, muscle growth, and a deeper voice.

Progesterone also plays an essential role in the male body regarding counteracting the effects of estrogen, which can cause testosterone levels to decline. Proper progesterone levels ensure that these sex hormones are in the correct balance.

## Signs Of Low Progesterone in Men

Some of the signs of low progesterone in men include:

- hair loss
- low libido
- fatigue
- weight gain
- depression
- breast growth
- muscle loss
- bone loss
- erectile dysfunction

Low progesterone levels can also increase the risk of certain health conditions such as arthritis, osteoporosis, prostate cancer, and prostatism.

## Estrogen Dominance and Progesterone

Progesterone is an antagonist to estrogen, giving it an important role in keeping estrogen levels in check. However, this also means that if progesterone levels are too low, estrogen levels can become high without anything to keep them in the correct range, a condition called estrogen dominance.

While estrogen dominance is most often referred to in women, it can affect men as well, with both genders having shared and also different symptoms.

Women with estrogen dominance may have symptoms that include:

- swelling and tenderness in the breasts
- low libido
- bloating
- weight gain
- mood swings
- headaches
- increase premenstrual syndrome symptoms
- fatigue
- cold hands or feet
- memory problems
- anxiety and panic attacks



Men can share some of the above symptoms in addition to experiencing infertility issues, breast tissue growth, or erectile dysfunction.

Normal estrogen levels in adult, menopausal women range from 15 – 350 pg/ml. In adult men, estrogen levels should range from 10 - 40 pg/ml. Estrogen counts higher than these ranges may signify low progesterone.

#### What Causes Low Progesterone?

There are many causes of low progesterone, some due to a temporary situation, whereas others may be more chronic.

#### Hypothyroidism

Many of the hormones in the body interact, which is evident between the thyroid hormones, T3 and T4, and progesterone. With hypothyroidism, the thyroid does not produce enough hormones, and since the thyroid is responsible for regulating the endocrine system, this can then influence how well the body is able to produce progesterone.

It is also possible for low progesterone to lead to hypothyroidism, so this connection is bi-directional.

#### Low Cholesterol

Cholesterol is needed by the body in order to make progesterone. So, if your cholesterol is low, your body does not have enough of the building blocks required to produce enough progesterone.

#### Stress

Stress contributes to many health conditions, and low progesterone is one of them. This is because the hormone secreted by the body when in a perceived stressful situation, cortisol, utilizes the resources needed to make progesterone.

Essentially, when the body is stressed, it halts progesterone production in order to increase the amount of cortisol produced. For those experiencing chronic stress, this means that cortisol continually interferes with progesterone production.

#### Anovulatory Cycle

An anovulatory cycle is a menstrual cycle where ovulation does not occur. Since a rise in progesterone is triggered by the release of an egg and the empty follicle it leaves behind called the corpus luteum, an anovulatory cycle results in no increase in progesterone.

Anovulatory cycles are common in those on certain types of birth control or with PCOS.

#### Abnormal Bodyweight

Your body weight can play a prominent role in progesterone production because of its impact on the menstrual cycle. This is because women need a certain amount of body fat in order to have a regular cycle, which leads to ovulation and a rise in progesterone. Because of this, low body weight may impede ovulation, leading to no progesterone production.

Problems can occur at the other end of the spectrum as well, though. This is because fat cells produce estrogen, so high body fat can result in an overproduction of estrogen, which can lead to low progesterone. Studies have shown this correlation between obesity and low progesterone in men as well.

#### Prolactin Disorder

Prolactin is a hormone produced by the pituitary, and it negatively affects the production of sex hormone precursors. Those with hyperprolactinemia produce too much prolactin, which can disrupt the menstrual cycle, keeping progesterone from being produced.

#### Correcting Low Progesterone

Progesterone replacement therapy involves progestins, which are synthetic compounds mimicking the effects of progesterone on the body.

Some reasons why someone may be treated with progesterone hormone therapy are to:

- correct a low amount of progesterone due to underproduction
- bring on menstruation
- reverse low progesterone resulting from certain medications
- replace progesterone that is limited due to specific medical procedures

There are many different forms of progesterone hormone therapy, such as:

- injections
- oral capsules
- vaginal gels
- vaginal inserts
- vaginal suppositories

The ideal method of progesterone replacement will depend on gender, symptoms, and personal preferences.

#### The Importance of Progesterone Replacement

Besides helping to address problems with fertility, progesterone replacement can also be essential for a healthy pregnancy in women. For example, women who are pregnant, but have low progesterone, may be at a greater risk of preterm delivery or miscarriage. Replacing progesterone can help prevent these complications from occurring.



Progesterone replacement produces similar benefits in men regarding improving fertility due to its role in spermatogenesis and the fact that low progesterone can lead to erectile dysfunction.

Progesterone can also help with other symptoms affecting well-being, including those that appear in men with low progesterone. These benefits can include an improvement in mood, better sleep, and stronger bones.

Some cases of low progesterone are temporary, but for those suffering significantly from low progesterone, it is likely due to a chronic cause, and the only way to find relief is by addressing the hormonal imbalance.

Progesterone can be supplemented in many forms, such as injections, pills, or creams, which help raise progesterone levels and assist the body in functioning correctly, reversing unpleasant symptoms. Working with a doctor who specializes in hormones can also ensure that you get just the right amount of progesterone, as too much can also cause problems, especially for those looking to conceive.

By adequately balancing progesterone, all other hormones in the body can work in balance again, significantly improving your quality of life.

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# SHOULDER PAIN & INJURIES CAN BE HEALED WITHOUT SURGERY

By Dr. Sebastian Klisiewicz, D.O.

## PLATELET RICH PLASMA (PRP) OR BONE MARROW STEM CELLS MAY BE THE ANSWER

**T**he shoulder is a complex joint with many moving parts. It has more mobility than any other joint in the body, and because of this it is vulnerable to injuries and chronic pain. Conditions such as tendonitis, rotator cuff tears and arthritis are common in the shoulder, often leading to pain, weakness and a limitation of function. Unfortunately, many people just bare the pain without seeking medical care. Often they are scared that surgery or medications are their only options. But there is another option, latest research has shown that Regenerative Medicine can heal the shoulder and stop the pain.

### The "Old" Standard Treatment for Shoulder Pain

Traditional treatment for most shoulder conditions typically involves physical therapy, steroid injections or surgery. Physical therapy is a great first line treatment, but often it is inadequate by itself to treat many shoulder conditions. Steroid injections are frequently offered as the next step. Unfortunately, these only mask the pain and come with an array of unwanted side effects. Steroid injections can actually weaken the tendons and ligaments and increase the progression of tendon tears and arthritis. Surgeries such as a rotator cuff repair or a joint replacement are often offered as "the only option left". These are serious medical procedures with long recovery times and potentially serious complications. Luckily for shoulder pain sufferers, there is a new non-surgical option that is natural, safe and effective.

### The New Frontier of Non-Surgical Shoulder Care

The shoulder, like all other tissues in our body, can heal naturally without surgery. It can do so with the right stimulus and a proper healing environment. Regenerative Medicine injections with Platelet Rich Plasma (PRP) or Bone Marrow Stem Cells are that stimulus that can start the healing process. When Regenerative injections are combined with physical therapy and proper nutrition, the torn tendons, ligaments and cartilage can actually heal. This can resolve pain and restore normal function, without surgery or other toxic medications!

PRP or Stem Cells can be thought of as a gift from your own body as they stimulate the body's natural immune system to help you heal. PRP is a solution



of concentrated platelets made by spinning your own blood in a centrifuge. The platelets are packed with growth factors that kick start the healing response. Stem cells are the "master orchestrators" of regeneration. They sense the environment and release growth molecules that stimulate tissue healing and decrease inflammation. The best and most studied stem cells for orthopedic conditions are safely obtained from the bone marrow of the pelvis. Unlike other "stem cell like" products, these are **real living cells** that come from your own body.

The choice of using PRP or Bone Marrow Stem Cells is based on the severity of the injury and other physiologic factors. These products are carefully injected into the injured area under ultrasound guidance. Once injected, they stimulate regeneration of tendons, ligaments and joint cartilage. This increases joint stability, decreases pain and improves overall function. Regenerative Medicine injections with PRP or Stem Cells don't just mask the symptoms, they heal the shoulder and provide long term results.

### An Integrated Team Approach Provides Best Results

The most effective way to treat shoulder pain and injuries is to combine Regenerative Medicine injections with specialized physical therapy and proper nutrition. The injections stimulate the healing, but specific therapeutic exercises and manual therapy support the healing process. A well-balanced diet that is rich in fruits, vegetables and high-quality proteins can also support tissue regeneration and decrease unwanted inflammation. Sometimes specific nutritional supplement may also be needed to prepare the body for the healing journey.

At Integrative Rehab Medicine, we specialize in non-surgical ways to heal the body. Our medical and therapy staff are highly trained in the most advanced Regenerative techniques to help you heal, eliminate pain and restore function. We are leading experts in the use of PRP and Bone Marrow Stem Cells in Southwest Florida. If you are tired of pain stopping you from living the life you want to live, schedule your consultation today and find out if PRP or Stem Cells can help you get your life back.

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*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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# Understanding Polycystic Kidney Disease

By Neetu Malhotra, MD

**C**hronic Kidney Disease (CKD) means that the kidneys have become damaged. The common causes of CKD are diabetes mellitus, hypertension, inherited diseases, and nephritis.

Polycystic kidney disease is the fourth leading cause of kidney failure and 600,000 people in the United States have the disorder. Polycystic kidney disease (PKD) affects the kidneys with cysts that grow and are filled with fluid. These cysts can damage the kidneys, and essentially take over the kidney's ability to work properly, especially if there are numerous cysts growing at one time. These cysts can severely reduce kidney function.

Poly cystic kidney disease can also affect other organs in the body including the spleen, ovaries, liver, pancreas, bowels, brain, and heart. Most people don't develop PKD until middle age, and the symptoms can range from mild to severe.

## The primary symptoms of PKD are as follows:

- High blood pressure
- Back or side pain
- Swollen abdomen
- Blood in the urine
- Frequent bladder and/or kidney infections
- Fluttering or pounding chest
- Chest pain
- Headaches

50 to 60 percent of individuals with PKD will develop kidney failure.

## PKD Treatment

Individuals with PKD will need dialysis and possibly a kidney transplant. There are also medications that can help treat the disorder and certain diets that will help to prevent the growth of the cysts, which can stop the progression of the disease. PKD can be genetic, so it's best to speak to your physician about your children's health or any planned pregnancies.

## How Can the Progression of Kidney Disease Be Delayed?

1. Keeping blood pressure under 130/80 or if you have diabetes or protein in the urine, under 125/75.
2. Taking certain types of medications called ACE-Inhibitors or angiotensin receptor blockers.

3. If you are diabetic, keeping blood sugars tightly controlled (HbA1c less than 7.0).
4. Avoiding medications that harm your kidneys such as non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs. (NSAIDs). Examples are Motrin, ibuprofen, Aleve, Advil, Naprosyn. A Cox-2 inhibitor called Celebrex is also harmful.
5. Avoiding, if possible, IV contrast dye used for CT scans and heart catheterizations and gadolinium used in MRIs.
6. Controlling your cholesterol.
7. Quit smoking.
8. If overweight, losing weight.
9. Treating anemia if present.
10. Avoiding Fleet phospho-soda (oral) and Fleet enemas for patients in Stage 4 and 5 chronic kidney disease.

## Associates in Nephrology

Associates in Nephrology has been providing comprehensive kidney care and transplant services in Southwest Florida since 1984. Our team of nephrologists, nurse practitioners, and medical assistants are engaged in all aspects of providing the most advanced services for kidney disease and kidney transplants.

## Chronic Kidney Disease Program

Chronic Kidney Disease (CKD) means that the kidneys have become damaged. The common causes of CKD are diabetes mellitus, hypertension, inherited diseases, and nephritis.

The purpose of the CKD program is to slow the progression of damage to the kidneys and treat associated complications such as hypertension, anemia, and bone disease. If we are unable to arrest the disease process and the kidney damage progresses to end stage renal disease (ESRD), our plan is to manage these complications while preparing patients for renal (kidney) replacement therapy. This therapy can consist of peritoneal dialysis, hemodialysis, home hemodialysis, or kidney transplantation.

Managing these complications and preparing patients for renal replacement therapy is a complex process of visits, treatment, and teaching sessions. Our medical team consists of nephrologists (kidney doctors), nurse practitioners, registered dietitians, nurses, and medical assistants.

## Services Provided

Associates in Nephrology provides treatment for many kidney related conditions, as well as kidney transplant services.

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- Dietitian Services for Kidney Patients
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- Electrolyte Disorders
- Fluid Overload, Edema (swelling)
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- Hypertension
- Injections of Aranesp for Anemia related to Kidney Disease
- Kidney Transplant Services: Patient and Donor Evaluations, Post-Transplant Follow-up Care
- Lupus Nephritis
- Nephrotic Syndrome
- Pyelonephritis
- Polycystic Kidney Disease
- Recurring kidney stones
- Renal Failure
- Renal Insufficiency

We work collaboratively with a patient's primary care physician and specialists to slow the progression of chronic kidney disease (CKD) and prevent or manage complications such as hypertension, anemia, and bone disease. Additionally, our multidisciplinary team of professionals can assist you in arranging a wide array of supportive services and education programs for patients in all stages of CKD. For patients with end-stage renal disease (ESRD), our nephrologists can prepare them for all renal replacement therapies: in-center or home hemodialysis, peritoneal dialysis, and kidney transplant.

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# Pain, Dryness & Irritation:

## How Women Are Rejuvenating Their Lives

By Joseph Gauta, MD, FACOG

**W**ho doesn't want to feel better and more confident about their sexual health? Many women try to hide their condition from their partner, or suffer in silence because they believe it's "normal" for them. That couldn't be further from the truth. Whether your pain is caused by endometriosis, pelvic conditions, vulvovaginal atrophy, hormonal dysfunction, or from medications, there are answers.

### Female Sexual Dissatisfaction Has Many Causes

Natural processes like aging, childbirth and menopause can have deleterious effects on a woman's sexual well-being and sensations. Since we all tend to avoid anything that doesn't feel good, a woman's sexual desires and success in achieving them are inversely related to the atrophy and scarring in the vaginal canal that these life-events can create, like tearing of the vagina during childbirth, dryness of the vaginal tissues after menopause, and the laxity of the vagina causing decreased sexual sensation. Sexual satisfaction can be negatively impacted by hormonal changes after menopause, but many women cannot take vaginal estrogens or do not find this treatment to be effective or convenient enough. This is where laser energy comes in: CO2 laser energy has been proven to regrow normal collagen (a necessary protein found in all of our organs) in the vaginal and vulvar tissues leading to improved "accommodation" and "stretchiness" of the vagina which in turn leads to greater sexual satisfaction and lubrication and a decrease in discomfort during and after sex.

### CO2RE Intima

Although, hormone therapy can be used to treat vaginal vulvar atrophy and dyspareunia (painful intercourse), sometimes it isn't enough. The CO2RE Intima procedure has helped countless women enjoy life like they used to. It is noninvasive, nonsurgical and is performed in your physician's office.



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- 100% showed significant improvement in vaginal health (elasticity, fluid volume, pH level, epithelial integrity and moisture)
- 91% reported an improvement in dryness

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### CO2RE Intima might be for you if:

- You want to relieve the signs of childbearing and aging in the vaginal area.
- You desire enhancement in sexual functioning and a better sexual experience.
- You seek vaginal cosmetic improvement and you want to feel more confident about your feminine health.

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Joseph Gauta, MD



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# CRYOTHERAPY: A COOL APPROACH FOR FACIAL REJUVENATION AND BODY TONING

In recent years, cryotherapy has gained popularity as a holistic approach to enhance wellness and promote various health benefits. Initially used in sports medicine for muscle recovery, cryotherapy has expanded its horizons to offer facials and body toning treatments. This article explores the exciting world of cryotherapy, focusing on its application in facial rejuvenation and body toning through CryoTherma™ technology.

## Understanding Cryotherapy

Cryotherapy involves exposing the body or specific areas to extremely cold temperatures for a short period. This exposure stimulates the body's natural healing mechanisms, resulting in a range of therapeutic effects. Cryotherapy can be applied in various forms, such as whole-body cryotherapy chambers, localized cryo devices, or CryoTherma technology.

## Cryotherapy for Facial Rejuvenation

Facials have long been sought-after for their skin-nourishing benefits, and cryotherapy takes them to the next level. Cryo facials involve the application of extremely cold temperatures to the face, tightening the skin, reducing puffiness, and promoting a youthful glow. The chilly sensation triggers vasoconstriction, which improves blood circulation and oxygenation, resulting in improved complexion and reduced signs of aging. Additionally, cryotherapy facials can help reduce inflammation, acne, and even diminish the appearance of scars.

## CryoTherma for Body Toning

When it comes to body toning, CryoTherma is a groundbreaking technology that combines cryotherapy with targeted heat therapy. This innovative approach allows for precise contouring of different body areas while simultaneously stimulating muscle growth and fat reduction. CryoTherma devices use a combination of controlled cooling and heating to induce thermal shock in the underlying tissues. This prompts the body to burn fat, tighten the skin, and build muscle tone.

## The Science Behind CryoTherma

CryoTherma leverages the principles of thermogenesis and cryolipolysis. During a CryoTherma session, the cold temperatures cause fat cells to contract and



crystallize, triggering the body's natural elimination process. The subsequent heating phase stimulates collagen production and enhances blood circulation, resulting in improved skin elasticity and tone. This dual-action approach makes CryoTherma a versatile treatment for both fat reduction and muscle toning. For best results, 3 to 5 sessions are recommended.

## Benefits of Cryotherapy with Facials and CryoTherma™

**Enhanced skin elasticity:** Cryotherapy facials and CryoTherma treatments promote collagen production, improving the skin's elasticity and reducing sagging.

**Improved muscle tone:** CryoTherma activates muscle fibers, promoting muscle growth and toning. It is particularly beneficial for stubborn areas that are resistant to traditional exercise routines.

**Fat reduction:** CryoTherma induces lipolysis, leading to the breakdown and elimination of fat cells. It can help reduce localized fat deposits and sculpt the body.

**Quick and non-invasive:** Cryotherapy treatments are generally quick and non-invasive, with minimal downtime. They provide a convenient alternative to surgical procedures for individuals seeking facial rejuvenation and body toning.

**Overall wellness:** Cryotherapy sessions can have additional benefits, such as reducing inflammation, boosting metabolism, improving sleep quality, and enhancing mood and mental clarity.

Cryotherapy has revolutionized the beauty and wellness industry, offering a unique and effective approach to facial rejuvenation and body toning. Whether through cryo facials or the innovative CryoTherma technology, the combination of extreme cold and controlled heat stimulates the body's natural healing processes, resulting in improved skin quality, reduced signs of aging, and enhanced muscle tone.



## THE COOLEST CREW

The Icebox Fort Myers Team takes pride in their passion and knowledge for Cryotherapy and all its health benefits that help our clients look and feel their absolute best.

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# C5 Nerve Masquerading as Shoulder Pain

By Dale Segal, MD

**T**he C5 nerve is the power line of the upper arm. It is the electric circuit that transmits signals back and forth from your brain to your shoulder.

When you raise your arm above your head it's your C5 nerve that sends an electric impulse from your brain through your spinal cord to your shoulder muscles. When you feel someone tapping on your shoulder to get your attention; that's your C5 nerve sensing pressure on your shoulder and transmitting that signal into your consciousness.

When you experience shoulder pain, it is your C5 nerve responsible for sensing that miserable feeling.

Common sense tells us that shoulder pain is caused by a problem in the shoulder. Shoulder arthritis, rotator cuff tears, biceps tendinitis, subacromial impingement are all common causes of shoulder pain. Less commonly considered is compression of the C5 nerve causing referred pain to the shoulder. Spine specialist commonly see patients with shoulder pain that are treated with therapy, injections, and surgery with limited success. There may be overlapping effects where shoulder treatment only partially alleviates symptoms with patients continuing to experience residual pain. These patients only come to find out later that their problem was a C5 nerve compression in the cervical spine all along.



Cervical radiculopathy is a condition caused by a compressed or pinched nerve in the neck. Cervical radiculopathy of the C5 nerve is a common cause of shoulder pain. Shoulder pain from C5 radiculopathy can occur with or without neck pain. If shoulder pain is not responding to conventional treatment, then a neck MRI should be obtained to evaluate the C5 nerve.

Clues that shoulder pain may be caused by a C5 radiculopathy include associated numbness or tingling in the arm or muscle weakness. Pain may be triggered by certain neck movements.

An orthopedic spine specialist can examine both the shoulder and neck to determine whether symptoms are the result of shoulder or cervical spine pathology. If compression of the nerve is identified, then treatment can be initiated and can result in complete resolution of shoulder pain. Clinicians and patients should always consider C5 radiculopathy in the diagnosis and treatment of shoulder pain.



**Dale Segal, MD**

Dr. Segal is a fellowship-trained spine surgeon specializing in minimally invasive and complex spine surgery. He completed a spine fellowship at Harvard University- Massachusetts General

Hospital and Brigham & Women's Hospital. He grew up in New York and graduated Summa Cum Laude from the University of Albany with a degree in biochemistry and molecular biology. He was awarded the John T. MacDonald scholarship to attend Florida International University where he obtained his medical degree and graduated with Alpha Omega Alpha honors. He completed his residency at Emory University and served as chief resident at the Emory Orthopedics and Spine Hospital. As a dedicated spine surgeon, he devotes his practice to the diagnosis and treatment of spinal disorders. His interests include minimally invasive, motion sparing techniques, degenerative diseases, navigation and robotics, deformities, fractures, and complex revisions. He has authored numerous peer-reviewed journal articles, book chapters and presented at national and international conferences. He is a member of several spine and orthopedic societies including NASS, AAOS, AOA. In his spare time, he enjoys spending time with his family, watersports, scuba diving, and hiking.

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# The Importance of Men's Health

## Celebrating June as Men's Health Month

**M**en's Health Month, observed in June, serves as a crucial reminder to prioritize the well-being of men and raise awareness about the unique health challenges they face. As an Internal Medicine doctor, I recognize the significance of addressing men's health issues, which are often overlooked or neglected. This article aims to shed light on the importance of men's health, the common health concerns affecting men, and the preventive measures that can lead to a healthier and more fulfilling life.

### Men's Health: An Underrated Concern

Despite advancements in medical care, men still tend to overlook their health needs, often prioritizing work and other responsibilities over their well-being. This negligence can lead to undetected health issues, delayed diagnoses, and preventable complications. Men's Health Month offers an opportunity to address this disparity and encourage men to take an active role in managing their health.

### Common Health Challenges Faced by Men

Men encounter various health challenges throughout their lives. Some prevalent concerns include heart disease, prostate health, erectile dysfunction, mental health issues, and certain types of cancer. By understanding these specific health risks, men can proactively adopt healthier lifestyles, seek appropriate medical care, and engage in regular screenings and check-ups.

### The Role of Preventive Measures

Preventive care plays a crucial role in maintaining men's health. Simple lifestyle modifications such as regular exercise, a balanced diet, and avoiding smoking and excessive alcohol consumption can significantly reduce the risk of developing chronic conditions. Additionally, routine screenings for conditions like high blood pressure, cholesterol, and certain cancers can help detect potential problems at an early stage when they are more treatable.

### Mental Health Matters

Men's mental health is another vital aspect that often goes unnoticed. Societal expectations, stigma, and a reluctance to seek help contribute to the underdiagnosis and undertreatment of mental



health disorders in men. Men's Health Month serves as an opportunity to break the barriers surrounding mental health, encourage open conversations, and promote access to appropriate mental health resources.

### Encouraging Men to Take Action

Axel Health urges men to prioritize their well-being by being proactive about their health. Utilize Men's Health Month as a reminder to schedule regular check-ups, discuss concerns with healthcare providers, and make informed decisions regarding preventive screenings. Remember, taking care of your health is not only vital for yourself but also for your loved ones who depend on you.

Men's Health Month is an essential initiative that highlights the significance of men's health and encourages men to take control of their well-being. By raising awareness about common health challenges, emphasizing preventive measures, and promoting mental health support, we can work towards improving the overall health outcomes for men. Let's use this opportunity to empower men with the knowledge and resources they need to lead healthier, happier lives.



### Daniel Stanciu, MD

Dr. Stanciu is certified in Internal Medicine by the American Board of Physician Specialties as well as the American Board of Internal Medicine and has been practicing medicine since 2003. Dr. Stanciu earned his medical degree from the University of Medicine and Pharmacy in Timisoara, Romania. He completed his resident training in internal medicine at Wyckoff Heights Medical Center in Brooklyn New York.

Prior to coming to Axel Health Primary Care, Dr. Stanciu practiced as an internal medicine hospitalist. He is passionate about providing comprehensive, holistic, integrative care. By providing concierge services, Dr. Stanciu has the opportunity to spend an unlimited amount of time with each client to ensure an individualized plan of care that meets each clients' healthcare goals. He is currently working on his functional medicine certification. Dr. Stanciu enjoys educating each client regarding the best approach to health screenings, risk assessments, early treatment, and appropriate interventions. In his free time, Dr. Stanciu is athletic and enjoys multiple sports and spending time with his family.



### Joel Pelissier, MD

Dr. Pelissier is certified in Internal Medicine by the American Board of Internal Medicine and has been practicing medicine since 1996. Dr. Pelissier completed his residency training at Brookdale University Hospital and Medical Center. He also had the opportunity to study abroad receiving further training in France and Spain. He has been providing medical services to the Fort Myers Community for over 10 years and is passionate about providing comprehensive, integrative care and working with patients to ensure they obtain their healthcare goals. Dr. Pelissier is also a Certified Medical Examiner for the Department of Transportation (DOT). He is passionate about medical education and is a board review question writer for the Society of Hospital Medicine. Dr. Pelissier is fluent in Haitian Creole, French, English, and Spanish. He is also conversational in Portuguese. In his free time Dr. Pelissier enjoys spending time with his daughter, his family, exercising, and reading.



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# Semaglutide for Weight Loss

## What You Need to Know

In recent years, the prevalence of obesity has reached alarming levels worldwide, leading to an increased risk of various health complications. Traditional weight loss methods often fall short in providing sustainable results. However, a breakthrough drug called semaglutide has emerged as a promising option for individuals struggling with obesity. In this article, we will explore what semaglutide is, how it works, its effectiveness, potential side effects, and important considerations.

### What is Semaglutide?

Semaglutide is a medication that belongs to a class of drugs known as glucagon-like peptide-1 receptor agonists (GLP-1 RAs). Originally developed for managing type 2 diabetes, semaglutide has also been approved at a higher dose (2.4 mg) for the treatment of obesity. It works by mimicking the action of a hormone called GLP-1, which helps regulate blood sugar levels and appetite.

### Mechanism of Action

Semaglutide helps with weight loss through several mechanisms. Firstly, it slows down the emptying of the stomach, leading to increased feelings of fullness and reduced appetite. Secondly, it acts on the brain's reward system, reducing cravings and the desire to eat high-calorie foods. Lastly, semaglutide increases the body's insulin sensitivity, which aids in better utilization of glucose and fat storage.



### Effectiveness

Clinical trials have demonstrated the effectiveness of semaglutide for weight loss. In one study involving obese participants, those who received semaglutide injections alongside lifestyle interventions achieved an average weight loss of 15-20% over a 68-week period, compared to 2-3% in the placebo group. Such significant weight loss can have a profound impact on overall health and reduce the risk of obesity-related conditions like diabetes and cardiovascular diseases.

### Considerations

Before considering semaglutide for weight loss, it is crucial to consult a healthcare provider. Semaglutide is a prescription-only medication and

should be used under medical supervision. Individuals with a history of thyroid disorders, pancreatitis, or gallbladder disease may require careful monitoring while taking semaglutide. Additionally, it is essential to maintain a healthy lifestyle consisting of a balanced diet and regular exercise to maximize the benefits of semaglutide.

Semaglutide represents a significant advancement in the field of weight loss pharmacotherapy. Its ability to induce substantial and sustained weight loss, coupled with its safety profile, makes it a promising option for individuals struggling with obesity. However, it is important to remember that semaglutide is not a magic bullet and should be used in conjunction with lifestyle modifications. If you are considering semaglutide, consult with your healthcare provider to determine if it is the right choice for you. Remember, sustainable weight loss requires a holistic approach, combining medication, diet, exercise, and ongoing support.

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# MOST THREATS TO A MAN'S HEALTH ARE LARGELY PREVENTABLE

By Nadine "Deanie" Singh, APRN - Founder & CEO

**M**en are notorious for avoiding the doctor and ignoring unusual symptoms. Yet, most men's health threats are largely preventable. Please don't let complacency take a toll on your health. We can help you monitor your weight, blood pressure, and the level of cholesterol in your blood. Excess weight, high blood pressure, and high blood cholesterol are risk factors for cardiovascular disease. Healthy lifestyle changes, medications, or other treatments can help get your weight, blood pressure, and blood cholesterol under control. Let us help you create a personal medical management plan to help prevent disease, improve your symptoms and ultimately enhance your quality of life.

Premier Mobile Health Services' mission is to provide access to quality healthcare services to the medically vulnerable and those who are most at risk of developing and experiencing long term illnesses and hospitalization. We assist underserved and underinsured individuals of all races, ethnicities, religions, and lifestyles without stigma, prejudice, or borders. Patients without health insurance and with income below 200% of the Federal Poverty Guidelines pay nothing for care. Those who do not meet income guidelines receive significantly reduced rates. The homeless, victims of human trafficking and domestic violence receive free care. We also accept insurance, Medicare, and Medicaid.

Founded in 2018, we are a 501(c)3 organization based in Fort Myers, FL. As Founder and CEO, I am an Autonomous, Registered, Board-Certified Nurse Practitioner with over twenty years of nursing experience in various health practices.

While pursuing my master's degree, I wrote my dissertation about owning a mobile medical clinic after retiring. A few years later, while working in the hospital, I found that many young African American males were on dialysis and many others had chronic, preventable diseases that could have been avoided with earlier medical care. With a sense of urgency to care for the vulnerable, I bought my first mobile medical clinic with my personal savings from eBay. Premier now operates 2 mobile medical clinics and a walk-in clinic. The mobile clinics are a vital part of our operation and currently travel to 9 underserved communities.



Premier is your #1 source for primary care, disease prevention and health advocacy. Our life-impacting services include free health screenings for early detection and treatment, free school and sports physicals, blood pressure and diabetes screens with foot exams, drug screens, physicals with lab testing, lipid panels, basic metabolic profiles, prescriptions, flu and strep swabs, HIV, STD, INR, and TB testing plus comprehensive men's and women's wellness visits. We manage chronic diseases such as: hypertension, heart disease, diabetes, and hyperlipidemia. We offer Covid19 testing and vaccines, flu and pneumonia vaccines and ongoing blood work to manage and prevent immune compromising conditions. We provide medical supplies, medication reviews, smoking cessation education, and nutrition consultation. We aim to improve your quality of life, achieve your wellness goals, and bring health and longevity.

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changer for the uninsured and underinsured patients in Lee County. Access to quick lab results improves treatment planning since patients don't need to wait for their test results to come back for a second visit.

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## **We Provide Disaster Response Services**

Never in our wildest dreams did we anticipate responding to a disaster the magnitude of Hurricane Ian. As a local 501(c)3 non-profit organization, Premier Mobile Health Services is committed to providing its services for the long term by continuing to mobilize its mobile medical clinics to the areas that need the most help. Since September 28, 2022, our efforts have helped over 4,000 individuals. We get up every day and do what we do for the love of our community. Our fully staffed mobile medical clinics can travel to any disaster location in the State of Florida. We can bring licensed medical staff, medications, vaccines, and basic supplies where needed most. We provide lifesaving medical care but also bring love, hope, compassion, and a sense of well-being to the individuals we serve during the worst time of their lives.

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# Unveiling the Healing Power of CBD

## RELIEVING MIGRAINES NATURALLY

**M**igraines can be debilitating, affecting millions worldwide and impairing daily activities. As traditional treatments often fall short, many individuals are turning to alternative remedies. One such promising option gaining significant attention is cannabidiol, or CBD. Derived from the hemp plant, CBD is a non-intoxicating compound known for its therapeutic properties. This article explores the benefits of using CBD as a natural solution for migraines, highlighting its potential to alleviate symptoms, reduce frequency and severity, and enhance overall well-being.

### Understanding Migraines and Conventional Treatments

Migraines are severe headaches often accompanied by additional symptoms like nausea, sensitivity to light and sound, and visual disturbances. Traditional treatments primarily focus on symptom management through painkillers, anti-inflammatory drugs, and lifestyle modifications. However, these approaches may not provide satisfactory relief for everyone and can have side effects. This calls for exploring alternative options such as CBD, which interacts with the body's endocannabinoid system, offering a new perspective on migraine management.

### Alleviating Migraine Symptoms with CBD

CBD exhibits anti-inflammatory, analgesic, and neuroprotective properties that can be beneficial in mitigating migraine symptoms. By modulating the endocannabinoid system, CBD helps reduce pain



perception and inflammation, providing relief during a migraine attack. Furthermore, CBD's anxiolytic properties can help alleviate stress and anxiety, which are often triggers for migraines. Its ability to regulate serotonin levels in the brain may also contribute to managing migraine-related nausea and vomiting.

### Reducing Migraine Frequency and Severity

CBD's potential extends beyond symptom relief; it may also help reduce the frequency and severity of migraines. Regular CBD use may prevent the onset of migraines by addressing underlying factors such as inflammation and neurotransmitter imbalances. Studies have shown that CBD can modulate pain signals, potentially reducing the intensity of migraines. Additionally, CBD's neuroprotective properties may help prevent or limit the damage caused by migraines, reducing their impact on individuals' lives.

### Supporting Overall Well-being

Migraines not only cause physical discomfort but can also disrupt emotional well-being and impair daily functioning. CBD's interaction with the endocannabinoid system has been linked to promoting balance and homeostasis in the body. By reducing pain, anxiety,

and stress, CBD can enhance overall well-being and quality of life for migraine sufferers. Furthermore, unlike traditional migraine medications, CBD is generally well-tolerated, with minimal side effects reported.

While more research is needed to fully understand CBD's potential for managing migraines, the current evidence suggests promising benefits. CBD offers a natural, holistic approach to migraine relief, addressing symptoms, reducing frequency and severity, and supporting overall well-being. As with any treatment, it is essential to consult with a healthcare professional before incorporating CBD into a migraine management plan, especially for those on other medications. By embracing the healing power of CBD, migraine sufferers can find hope in a natural remedy that holds the potential to restore balance and improve their daily lives.

### About Hemp Joi

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

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

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

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# Digital Dental X-ray Exams Lower Radiation Exposure

By Dr. Ricardo S. Bocanegra, DDS

Computers are a part of daily life. They also play an important role in our dental office. We use computers to track your appointments, treatment details and insurance records. We also use them to capture, store and transmit your dental x-ray images.

Many diseases of the oral cavity (which includes the teeth and surrounding tissues and bone) cannot be seen by the eye alone when the dentist visually examines your mouth. An x-ray exam may help the dentist see what is happening in areas that the eye can't see, such as:

- small areas of decay between the teeth or below fillings
- bone damage from a tooth infection (such as an abscess) or a cyst
- bone loss due to periodontal (gum) disease
- developmental defects
- some types of tumors
- the effects of trauma
- the position of unerupted teeth in children and adults



Finding and treating dental problems at an early stage can save time, money and unneeded discomfort and help prevent more serious health problems. X-ray images may be able to help the dentist detect damage and disease not visible during a regular dental exam.

Our practice uses digital x-rays because they have many benefits over film x-rays. Digital x-ray images can be simpler to make, provide enhanced pictures and can save time for the dental team. They also make it easier for us to show these images to you, our patient.

Digital imaging uses an x-ray machine like that used for traditional dental x-ray images made with film. But instead of using film in a plastic holder, digital images are made using a small electronic sensor that is placed in your mouth to capture the x-ray image.

## There are many benefits to using digital dental x-ray images.

- Digital x-ray images may require less radiation. Even though conventional dental x-rays required a small amount of radiation, digital x-rays use even smaller amounts making them safer and more appealing to those patients concerned with radiation exposure.
- When the digital x-ray image is exposed, it can be sent directly to a computer and viewed right away. For x-ray film to be exposed, a staff member must process it in special chemicals. This takes longer than simply viewing the x-ray on a computer screen.
- Digital x-ray images can be enlarged on the computer screen. This makes it much easier for you and the dentist to see the pictures. Traditional x-ray films are viewed actual size.
- Digital x-ray images can often be corrected without having to make another x-ray exposure.
- The dental office can print or copy your digital x-ray images. They can also be sent electronically to insurance companies, which may help claims get processed faster.
- Digital x-rays are environmentally friendly. They eliminate the need for film and film processing chemicals.

## Dental X-rays and Safety Concerns

The main concern about being exposed to radiation is the risk of getting cancer years later. Dental x-ray exams require very low levels of radiation exposure, which makes the risk of potentially harmful effects very small. Dental X-ray exams have radiation levels equal to 2 to 3 days of naturally occurring background radiation. For example, a set of bitewing x-ray images creates only a small fraction of the radiation you are exposed to when flying on an airplane. Chest and spine x-rays and CT scans have much higher levels of radiation.

Digital dental x-ray tools and techniques are designed to limit the body's exposure to radiation. Dental practices limit the area exposed during a dental x-ray exam by limiting the size of the x-ray beam to the size of the film or sensor being used and by using a leaded apron and thyroid shield that x-rays cannot pass through.

Our office is committed to the safety of our patients and their oral health. We invest in the latest digital x-ray technology to minimize the exposure of radiation to our patients. Dental x-ray exams are an important part of your oral health care, don't put them off because of unwarranted safety concerns. If you have any questions concerning how often dental x-rays exams should be performed or would like more information regarding the safety and benefits of digital x-rays please contact our office at 239-482-8806.

*\*Source: American Dental Association*



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# Six Ways to Advocate for Yourself, The Caregiver, at Work

By Cynthia Perthuis, CDP, CADDCT, CSA

In May we shared Advocating for Yourself, The Caregiver, At Home. Today, we share Six Ways to Advocate for Yourself, The Caregiver, at Work.

According to AARP, one in six US employees spends 20 hours per week, on average, as an unpaid caregiver, assisting an older relative. Today, working mothers (there are 20 million in the US) have a lot of support from employers like child care assistance, flexible spending accounts for childcare, etc. But what about working daughters and working sons? There are 53 million unpaid family caregivers in the United States. Where is your help? The answer is, there is not a lot of it, which is why you must learn to advocate for yourself at work.

## 1. Start Planning Now

Caregiving will happen to you. Take a good look at your situation. How old are your parents or other potential people who may need you to provide care for them? The average age of someone receiving care is 69.4. The average age of the caregiver is 50.1. If you are a woman reading this, you are almost twice as likely to be the primary caregiver than your male counterpart. Start conversations about end of life care so you are not surprised later. Ask the people in your life about their expectations.

## 2. Talk to Your Supervisor

Sadly, only 56% of caregivers report their work supervisor is even aware of their caregiving responsibilities. Managers often report they did not know



about an employee's situation, but wish they had. Instead of leaving this vacuum for your employer to fill with speculation, talk to them. Tell them what is going on. Take your opportunity to shape the narrative.

## 3. Talk to Human Resources

Forbes reports that up to 80% of employees never look at their full benefits package. It is likely you do not know what your company actually offers. Do they offer paid time off for eldercare? Some do. What about flexible spending accounts geared towards paying for eldercare expenses like medicine and adult day care? By talking to Human Resources you can find out what is actually covered.

If HR does not have any support they can offer, show them what other companies are doing. Introduce them to EASE: Employee Assistance Solutions for Eldercare. ([www.seniorcare-nyfl.com/ease.html](http://www.seniorcare-nyfl.com/ease.html)). Or, find what other companies offer and share that. (Best Places To Work for Working Daughters 2022 list at [www.workingdaughter.com/bestco2022](http://www.workingdaughter.com/bestco2022).) The more Human Resources knows about the needs employees have the more they will be able to advocate for those needs.

## 4. Speak Up: It Is Okay To Cry At Work

Share your story with your coworkers. Most caregivers are afraid of the backlash of sharing their caregiving story, choosing to hide reality by blocking out "busy" time on their calendar instead sharing the truth of their life like, "Mom's Chemo Appt." But, if you do not speak out about the reality of your life, how will anyone else know it is okay to?

## 5. Create Your Own Support Network

With 1 in 6 people providing unpaid care to elderly relatives, it is likely that your coworkers are going through the same thing. Do what you can to change the culture. Create a Caregivers Lunch Hour where you and your coworkers come together and share local resources and success you have had. Perhaps you could wrangle a younger co-worker to be your planner. Or, ask your boss to hire an intern to plan events for you. College students need credit hours. When you are in the thick of it do not deny or downplay the utter exhaustion and loneliness you feel. All change happens when people share their story.

## 6. Keep the Long Term Perspective

As sure as caregiving comes, it also goes. When you are in the thick of it do not deny or downplay the utter exhaustion and loneliness you are sure to feel but remember caregiving ends. The average length of time for elder caregiving is 4 years. You will want to quit your job at some point. But, unless you have at least 30 years of income in the bank, do not. Do everything you can, but remember you can not do it all.

*Special Note: If you are management level and above, you have the responsibility to understand this issue now. Your employees need more support than you know. They will go the extra mile when they feel supported. If you would like to talk about your benefits package and how it can be enhanced to support caregivers, call us at (212) 913-9963 or (239) 330-2133. We can help you build a more robust benefits package.*

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# Medicare Things to Know...

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

CMS (Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services) CMS regulates marketing and plan presentations, including when companies are allowed to market, and how they market. **Unsolicited direct contact that was not requested or initiated by the consumer is prohibited.** This includes in-person (e.g., door-to-door marketing), telephonic (e.g., outbound telemarketing), electronic (e.g., email, voicemail messages, text messages) solicitation. DO NOT give anyone that contacts you without your permission your personal information.

There are companies that are using unethical marketing practices; do not let yourself be taken advantage of. Medicare and Social Security will never call you unless you reached out to them for a return call. There are companies calling individuals pretending to be Medicare, claiming to be there to help. Again, **Medicare will not call you to enroll you in a plan!** Some companies that may have your prescription Part D drug plan have been calling customers saying they are entitled to some free benefits. They try to switch you to an Advantage Plan Part C because they are more profitable. If that occurs you will not have Original Medicare anymore and, since it is illegal to have an Advantage Plan and a Medicare Supplement (Medigap) at the same time, you will lose your Medicare Supplement plan. You might never be able to get a supplement plan again. You must medically qualify for a supplement plan; if when you re-apply you are older and have developed illnesses that come with age, you could be ineligible.

Florida is an entry age state for Medicare Supplements; this means that all premium increases will be based off the age you were when you joined the plan. There are lower cost Medicare Supplements that work well if you are healthy and do not need a lot of care. The price of the lower cost supplement plan plus the out-of-pocket maximum you could pay if you got really sick is still less than the out-of-pocket maximum cost of most Advantage Plans. Insurance agents and insurance companies like to sell Advantage Plans because they make more money. I'm not saying they are bad, but you need to understand the true differences and what could happen in the future.



## Did you miss Medicare/Health Insurance Open Enrollment?

### THERE ARE: Special Enrollment Periods

- You turn 65 or are new to Medicare
- MOVING out of the Area, Moving to a New Area.
- You qualify for extra help with Medicare Prescription Drugs
- You dropped a Medigap Policy for the 1st time within the 1st 12 months
- Special Needs Plans - New or no longer requiring a Special Needs Plan
- Losing Coverage

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

**Individual/Family Medical Insurance** – There are other options available if you do not have pre-existing conditions. These plans can be a lot less expensive especially if you do not qualify for government subsidy. There are national carriers that offer particularly good plans with comprehensive coverage. You can buy them any time during the year. Do not go without coverage!

**Travel Insurance** - Most of our USA Health plans do not include coverage when leaving the United States, including Cruises. We recommend always getting a comprehensive Medical Travel Insurance Policy. They are less than you think and can make a world of a difference. There are Trip cancellation insurance policies that cover you for delays, cancellation, lost baggage; they can be costly but may also be well worth it; but check that the medical coverage is enough.

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

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

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

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

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# UNDERSTANDING PROBATE

## WHY PEOPLE GO TO GREAT LENGTHS TO AVOID IT

By Kelly L. Fayer, P.A.

**P**robate is the legal process of validating a deceased person's will and distributing their assets to beneficiaries. It involves resolving any outstanding debts or taxes, locating heirs, and transferring ownership of property. The probate process varies depending on the state and the value of the assets involved. While probate can be an essential tool for ensuring fair distribution of assets, many people try to avoid it because of its lengthy, expensive, and sometimes complicated nature.

### There are three levels of probate in Florida:

#### Formal Administration

Also known as formal probate, this is the most common type of probate in Florida. Formal probate is handled in the county Circuit Court where the decedent lived at the time of death. A Personal Representative will be appointed to oversee distribution of the assets that are in the decedent's name alone. If you are appointed as the Personal Representative, then it is recommended and sometimes required that a Florida probate attorney help you through the process and also address any discrepancies or disputes.

#### Summary Administration

This is an expedited form of probate administered when the total property and assets subject to probate are valued at \$75,000 or less. Assets subject to probate are assets that are in an individual's name that is deceased. The asset didn't have a beneficiary named or another owner on the asset.

#### Disposition Without Administration

When the decedent's assets are less than \$6,000 and less than the value of the final expenses, then a "Disposition of Personal Property Without Administration" form may be filed.

The personal representative (PR) is the person responsible for managing the estate during the probate process. The PR can be named in the deceased person's will or appointed by the court if there is no will. The PR is responsible for locating assets, paying debts, filing tax returns, and distributing assets to beneficiaries according to the will or state law.

Creditors also play a significant role in the probate process. They have the right to make claims against the estate for any outstanding debts. The PR must notify all known creditors of the deceased person's death and publish a notice in a local newspaper to alert any unknown creditors. Creditors have a specific time frame to make their claims and the PR can reject any claims that are not valid. If a claim is rejected, creditors can challenge the rejection in court.

The length of the probate process can vary widely, depending on the complexity of the estate and any disputes that arise. In some cases, probate can be completed in a few months, while in others, it can take several years. During this time, the assets of the deceased person are frozen, and beneficiaries may not have access to them until the probate process is complete.

Given the potential drawbacks of the probate process, many people take steps to avoid it. One way to avoid probate is by establishing a living trust. A living trust is a legal document that allows assets to be transferred to a trust during the person's lifetime, and then distributed to beneficiaries without going through probate after their death. This can help avoid the time, expense, and public scrutiny associated with the probate process.

Another way to avoid probate is by designating beneficiaries for certain assets, such as life insurance policies or retirement accounts. These assets pass directly to the designated beneficiaries, without going through probate.

Probate is a necessary process for ensuring fair distribution of assets after a person's death. The process can be lengthy, expensive, and complicated, which is why many people take steps to avoid it. Understanding the different levels of probate, the role of the personal representative and creditors, and the potential benefits of living trusts and beneficiary designations can help people make informed decisions about their estate planning. However, it is strongly recommended that you consult with an attorney familiar with Florida law to accomplish your estate planning goals.

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# HEALTHY AGING: WHAT DOES IT REALLY REQUIRE?

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

By Physicians Rehabilitation

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

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

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

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

### Regenerative Medicine

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



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

#### Viscosupplementation

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



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

#### PRP (Platelet-Rich Plasma)

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

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

#### Physicians Rehabilitation

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



## When You Are At Your Wits End

By Pastor Timothy Neptune

**H**ave you ever been at your wits' end? Have you ever been so confused that you didn't really know which way was up? Have you ever had the feeling, "I know I need to do something...but I don't know what 'some thing' to do."

The Bible tells the story of a group of sailors who went out to sea and encountered a huge storm that almost killed them:

*<sup>23</sup>Others went out on the sea in ships; they were merchants on the mighty waters. <sup>24</sup>They saw the works of the LORD, his wonderful deeds in the deep. <sup>25</sup>For he spoke and stirred up a tempest that lifted high the waves. <sup>26</sup>They mounted up to the heavens and went down to the depths; in their peril their courage melted away. <sup>27</sup>They reeled and staggered like drunken men; they were at their wits' end. <sup>28</sup>Then they cried out to the LORD in their trouble, and he brought them out of their distress. <sup>29</sup>He stilled the storm to a whisper; the waves of the sea were hushed. <sup>30</sup>They were glad when it grew calm, and he guided them to their desired haven. <sup>31</sup>Let them give thanks to the LORD for his unfailing love and his wonderful deeds for men.*  
Psalm 107:23-31

**Can you relate to this group of sailors?** Maybe the circumstances in your life have caused your courage to melt away. Perhaps you are going through a storm of your own. You may find yourself at your wits' end without any clear direction as to what to do next. If so, follow the example of the sailors in the Bible.

There first thing they did was cry out to the LORD in their trouble. Don't underestimate the power of prayer. An old gospel song says, "when God is all you have, you'll find He's all you need." God responded to the sailor's prayer by bringing them out of their distress. In fact, it says he stilled the storm to a whisper and the waves of the sea were hushed. God can do that in your life and in your situation as well. Call out to him. His timing is not always as quick as we may like but He knows what is best for each of us.

When the storm was over, the text says that God guided the sailors to their desired haven. They found their place of rest and peace. Storms don't last forever... and neither will yours. Keep your faith in God. Cry out to Him in your pain. Trust that He knows what's best and keep praying and seeking your desired haven... it may be just around the corner.

And then, don't forget to thank God when He does bring you through the storm. The story concludes by saying, "Let them give thanks to the LORD for his unfailing love and his wonderful deeds for men."

Storms, crises, pain and problems are an unfortunate reality of life. We grow through the pain and learn valuable lessons during these times. Don't give up, give in, or quit. When you find yourself at your wits' end...hang on, cry out to God, and look for His deliverance.



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