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June 2023

Manatee/Sarasota Edition - Monthly

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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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# Weight-Loss Surgery and Belief in Herself Helped Jenny Rodriguez Change Her Life

"From the very beginning Dr. Rekkas shared that weight-loss [bariatric] surgery is not a magical tool. I would need to commit to lifelong change in the way I care for myself," says Jenny Rodriguez, a Manatee County School District secretary.

Jenny had robotic sleeve gastrectomy ("gastric sleeve") surgery at Manatee Memorial Hospital in December 2019. This type of bariatric surgery reduces the size of the stomach so that the patient feels full with less food, while still absorbing all of the needed nutrients.



Stelios Rekkas, MD, FACS, FASMBS

"The first thing I stress to patients is that surgery is just a first step. It's the patient who makes the difference in their own life when they commit to using the lifelong tools we give them to help keep the weight off," says Stelios Rekkas, MD, FACS, FASMBS, Manatee Weight Loss Center (MWLC) physician and director of the surgical weight loss program at Manatee Memorial Hospital.

Jenny had been struggling with trying to lose weight for more than 12 years. She was diagnosed with high blood pressure, high cholesterol and sleep apnea and suffered pain in her knees and feet, all while continuing to gain weight "super-fast," as she put it.

During the process leading up to surgery, she consulted with a gastroenterologist, a nutritionist and a psychologist and received an intensive education on healthy-eating habits and exercise from the MWLC's dietitian. She was also introduced to a support group.

**"I felt as if I was being gifted with a life-changing opportunity," she says of her weight-loss procedure.**

Now Jenny says she always makes sure she keeps her body moving. If she doesn't feel like working out some days, she takes a long walk instead.

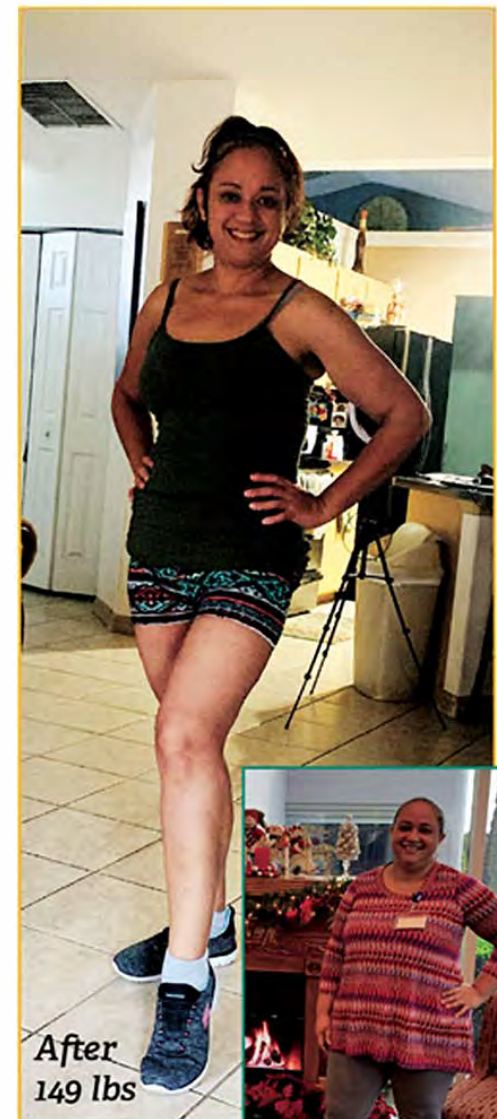
And she says of the Manatee Weight Loss Support Group, "I saw myself as a food addict. When I got to meet others who were struggling with similar issues, I stopped feeling so alone. The group talks all the time on Facebook, sharing recipes and resources. Some people who had surgery many years ago are still attending this support group.

"Not only has my life changed physically, but also emotionally," she adds. "Change starts from within. The surgery helped me take the steps toward becoming the healthy person I always wanted to be. My advice to others on a similar journey would be to make the necessary adjustments, commit to the process, and believe in yourself.

**When you believe in yourself, anything is possible."**

If you're feeling weighed down after trying everything to lose weight, put a Manatee Weight Loss Center consultation on your "New Year To-Do" list. Manatee Weight Loss Center offers comprehensive support and a dedicated staff to help you through every step of your weight-loss journey.

**Find inspiration from more stories like Jenny's. Visit: [msaweightloss.com](https://msaweightloss.com)**



*"I feel as if Dr. Rekkas and the weight-loss team are my family. They are still checking in on me!" Jenny Rodriguez says, one year after having gastric sleeve surgery at Manatee Memorial Hospital.*



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# Intranasal Esketamine (Spravato®)

## A Promising Treatment Modality for Treatment-Resistant Depression

By Steven Stein, MD - Board-certified Psychiatrist

**D**epression affects millions of people worldwide, with a significant number experiencing treatment-resistant depression (TRD) that doesn't respond to traditional therapies. However, an exciting breakthrough treatment modality known as intranasal esketamine, marketed as Spravato®, has emerged as a promising option for patients battling TRD. This article explores the concept of treatment-resistant depression, its impact on patients' lives, and the effectiveness of intranasal esketamine in providing new hope and relief to those who have not responded to conventional treatments.

### Understanding Treatment-Resistant Depression

Treatment-resistant depression is a condition where one has continuous depression despite multiple attempts at treating the disorder with antidepressant medications, procedures and/or psychotherapies. Approximately 30% of people diagnosed with depression are considered treatment-resistant. TRD can have devastating effects on practically all aspects of one's life, including mental and physical health, job performance, relationships and more. This condition affects far too many of us and our overall quality of life, but there is a new and exciting FDA-approved treatment now available.

### The Rise of Intranasal Esketamine

Esketamine was approved in March of 2019 and is the first new therapy indicated for TRD in over 30 years. In the few years since, intranasal esketamine, marketed under the brand name Spravato®, has gained recognition as an innovative, safe and effective treatment option for TRD. Esketamine is a derivative of ketamine, an anesthetic, and has shown rapid-acting antidepressant effects in several studies in recent years. Spravato® has been approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) for use in conjunction with an oral antidepressant for patients with TRD, is covered by most insurance providers, and can offer long-lasting symptom relief. Unlike some procedures that are more invasive or may require additional anesthesia or needles, esketamine is delivered under the supervision of a healthcare provider at a certified treatment center as a nasal spray (also referred to as intranasal).

### The Evidence and Efficacy of Intranasal Esketamine

To obtain FDA approval, investigators conducted a phase 3, multicenter, double-blind withdrawal study involving 297 patients who achieved stable

remission or response after 16 weeks of esketamine (56 or 84 mg), plus oral antidepressant treatment. Of the people suffering from treatment-resistant depression involved in the study, almost 70% achieved a response to esketamine plus an oral antidepressant after 4 weeks of use. Over 50% of these people had a full remission after the first 4 weeks. This therapy has also been shown to decrease the risk of depression returning by >50%. Most of the commonly used antidepressants treat depression by increasing levels of the neurotransmitters serotonin, norepinephrine, and/or dopamine in certain areas of the brain. Esketamine instead works on the brain's glutamate system by targeting the N-methyl-D-aspartate receptor. It is characterized by its fast-acting benefits due to restoring patients' synaptic connections between neurons. This is a unique mechanism of action of that differs from traditional antidepressants. This distinct approach allows for faster symptom relief, often within hours or days.

### Safety and Considerations

Spravato is not for everyone, so to best determine if a person can safely receive this therapy, they must first be evaluated by a REMS-certified healthcare provider. This initial consultation should also provide a full list of risks, benefits, contraindications, typical and serious side effects, alternative treatments and allow for the time and space for any additional questions. Once a determination has been made that a person is a good and safe candidate to receive this therapy, studies have indicated intranasal esketamine has a favorable safety profile. Common side effects such as dissociations and dizziness, are typically transient and resolve shortly after treatment. Clinicians closely monitor patients during and after each session to ensure their well-being.

The availability of intranasal esketamine as a treatment option offers new hope to individuals struggling with TRD. It provides an alternative to those who have not responded to other treatments and the hope of depression relief. However, it is important to note that esketamine treatment requires close medical supervision and must be administered in a healthcare setting.

Treatment-resistant depression can be a debilitating condition, but intranasal esketamine, marketed as Spravato®, has emerged as a promising treatment modality with the potential to provide rapid relief from depressive symptoms, even in individuals who have not responded to traditional therapies. While

further research is needed to fully understand the exact way it works and its long-term effects, esketamine offers hope for patients grappling with TRD, providing an opportunity for improved wellness, mental health and a better quality of life.

### Steven Stein, MD

I am a board-certified general psychiatrist who works with adolescents, adults, and geriatric patients. I specialize in the evaluation and treatment of a wide array of psychiatric conditions including depressive and mood disorders, anxiety and panic disorders, ADHD, OCD, PTSD, personality disorders, and bipolar and schizophrenia spectrum illnesses. My clinic provides comprehensive care with a patient-centered approach and concentration on psychopharmacological interventions, while implementing supportive and motivational psychotherapies. All my staff are highly qualified, professional and courteous.

I am originally from the Tampa Bay, FL area where I completed my undergraduate and master's degrees at the University of South Florida. I attended medical school at Ross University School of Medicine and completed my psychiatric residency training at Tulane University School of Medicine.

I am based in Sarasota, FL and see local patients in person or virtually. I also accept patients virtually throughout the state of Florida. Outside of TTMC, I continue to treat patients in the hospital setting. I believe that stable mental health is a fundamental cornerstone of achieving overall optimal health, vitality, satisfaction, success and purpose.

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# Lymphedema and Vein Disease

By Dr. Lackey

## What is Lymphedema?

The lymphatic system protects the body against harmful bacteria and transports fluid from body tissues into the vascular system. Lymph vessels are thin walled to absorb fluid, bacteria, and protein for transport to the lymph nodes which eliminate waste and bacteria. Together, lymph vessels and nodes help maintain a healthy fluid balance. Lymphedema occurs when there is impairment of the lymphatic system, which disrupts normal fluid transport. If the lymphatic system is overwhelmed, damaged, or blocked, chronic swelling can occur. Over time this swelling can cause thickening of the skin and recurrent skin infections (cellulitis). It is a permanent condition which worsens over time if not properly treated. There is no cure, but symptoms can be managed which improve the quality of life.

## What Causes Lymphedema?

The leading cause of lymphedema is cancer and its treatment. However, chronic venous insufficiency may be the most important predictor of lymphedema in the legs. Primary lymphedema can be present at birth or inherited. Secondary lymphedema is more common and due to disruption of the lymphatic system from vein disease, cancer, radiation or chemotherapy, trauma, surgery, and obesity. Common symptoms include limb heaviness and fatigue, toenails that look like a ski jump, pitting edema, dry warm skin, and open venous ulcers.

## How Can I Counteract Lymphedema?

Exercise is one of the first steps to improve lymphatic function and to improve fluid removal. Additional treatment can include



manual lymphatic drainage, compression stockings, and pneumatic compression devices. Improved function can reduce cellulitis as well as fibrosis, and edema. Identifying underlying vein disease is one of the most important steps. The two diseases exist together, and you must treat the underlying vein disease in combination with lymphedema treatments for the best result.

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# KETAMINE FOR LYME DISEASE, MOOD AND PAIN MANAGEMENT

By Steven Reichbach, MD

**E**ach year about 30,000 new cases of Lyme disease are reported. According to the CDC, other methods of tracking suggest that number is actually closer to 476,000 diagnoses each year. Lyme disease is a debilitating disorder. Neuropathic pain syndromes are the root cause of many individuals' chronic discomfort. Neuropathic pain syndromes are related to many disorders including Lyme disease.

## Lyme Disease

The initial symptoms of Lyme are flu-like symptoms, joint pain, muscle weakness and brain fog. Lyme disease can cause significant disorders including neurodegenerative effects. If Lyme disease isn't promptly or effectively treated in the first two stages, late disseminated Lyme occurs weeks, months or even years after the tick bite. The Lyme bacteria have spread throughout the body and many patients develop depression, chronic arthritis as well as an increase in neurological and cardiac symptoms.<sup>1</sup>

- Arthritis in joints or near the point of infection
- Severe headaches or migraines
- Vertigo, dizziness
- Migrating pains that come and go in joints/tendons
- Stiff, aching neck
- Sleep disturbances, insomnia
- Disturbances in heart rhythm
- Mental foginess, concentration issues
- Numbness in the arms, legs, hands or feet
- Problems following conversations and processing information
- Bone infections
- Severe fatigue

Due to the pain and other symptoms associated with Lyme, it can cause psychological distress. Many patients succumb to using pain and antidepressant medications. Pain medications and antidepressants have adverse side effects and also, in many cases, show signs of cognitive decline in long-term use the other issue with standard pain medication is that they, more often than not, become ineffective and are unable to mask the pain signals. This is called treatment resistance. Pain medication and antidepressants don't treat the health condition; They merely mask the pain by disrupting the signals to the brain.

## ONE OF THE MOST PROMISING ALTERNATIVE METHODS IS KETAMINE IV THERAPY

### How does ketamine work?

Ketamine is an NMDA receptor antagonist. Through this mechanism, it is able to modulate the neurotransmitter glutamate. This, in turn, leads to a cascade of events that can allow for "hardwired" changes in the brain which may result in lifting of depression, reductions in anxiety as well as improvements in other mood disorders. It also allows for a "resetting" of the pathways responsible for central pain, which is a large component of chronic pain in many patients.

### Lyme and Ketamine Study

A recent double-blind, randomized, placebo-controlled clinical trial was conducted to evaluate the efficacy of IV ketamine in patients with treatment-resistant depression.<sup>15</sup> These investigators reported that IV ketamine was effective at reducing depressive symptoms in this patient population. The results of our case report and evidence from similar studies and preceding case reports substantiate the antidepressant efficacy of ketamine.<sup>4,16-18</sup> To our knowledge, there have been no other reports in the literature that have assessed the effects of IV ketamine in a patient with PTLDS until now.<sup>2</sup>

In this patient with whole-body chronic pain associated with PTLDS, IV ketamine drastically reduced pain levels. The patient's depression and suicidal ideations were also eliminated post-ketamine infusion.<sup>2</sup>

IV ketamine is currently used to help treat neuropathic pain syndromes such as CRPS, fibromyalgia, trigeminal neuralgia, migraines and herpetic neuralgia's. There is a growing body of evidence to support that it may have long term effects for pain relief.

### In recent FDA and other professional associated studies, patient results with ketamine show:

- Reduced pain
- Decrease depression
- Diminished suicidal thoughts and episodes
- Rapid ability to reverse depression and symptoms

### How is ketamine administered?

In our office, ketamine is administered intravenously. The initial series of infusions are completed

over a one week. For pain and over a two week. For mental health and mood disorders.

### Ketamine IV therapy impacts pain relief, mood, and anxiety and can result in positive treatment outcomes for the following disorders:

- Severe or chronic depression
- Chronic pain
- Bipolar disorder
- Obsessive compulsive disorder OCD
- Post-traumatic stress disorder PTSD
- Produces rapid onset of neural connections

With our ongoing drug related epidemic, ketamine therapy can reduce the risk of opioids, benzodiazepines, and other narcotic addictions. Physicians are often over prescribing these types of highly addictive drugs to help minimize or mask patients chronic pain, depression or other ailments. With ketamine therapy, the treatment is safe, non-habit forming and highly effective.

#### References:

1. Global Lyme Alliance, "Stages of Lyme Disease" Stamford CT, 2019, [globallymealliance.org](http://globallymealliance.org).
2. A. Hanna, Effects of intravenous ketamine in a patient with post-treatment Lyme disease syndrome, *Int Med Case Rep J*, 2017; 10: 305-308. Published online 2017 Aug 18 doi: 10.2147/IMCRJ.S137975, <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC5571854/>

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President and Founder,  
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# Treating Skin Cancer on the Face Requires Aggressive Removal, Along with a Delicate, Aesthetic Eye

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

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

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

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

## The Mohs Surgery Procedure

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



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

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

## Recovery from Mohs Surgery

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

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

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

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

To schedule your appointment please call **941-926-6553** or visit [luminarydermatology.com](http://luminarydermatology.com).



Cary L. Dunn, M.D.



Janet Delaney, ARNP-BC



Cynthia Spencer, APRN-BC



Michael Van Vliet, M.D., FACS



**LUMINARY**  
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## WHY SENIORS ARE CHOOSING LIFE PLAN COMMUNITIES OVER AGING IN PLACE

**W**here do you see yourself in retirement? Will you be busy at home or branching out as part of a larger community? How will you spend your free time? If you're considering the options of aging in place at home or moving to a Life Plan Community – also known as a continuing care retirement community (CCRC) – it pays to look closely at the costs and benefits of each option. Keep in mind that perspectives may evolve and priorities may shift as you make plans for your future.

### THE REALITIES OF AGING IN PLACE

The idea of aging in place in your home may sound appealing, but modifying your home with age-friendly features and/or potentially hiring in-home care can be expensive, labor-intensive, and stressful. Most private homes have to be modified to accommodate the needs of seniors, such as wider hallways, wheelchair-accessible bathrooms, and entryway ramps. People often assume the option of staying in their home will be less costly than moving to a Life Plan Community. However, you may be surprised to see how the costs add up in the long run.

Instead of living with the burden of home maintenance and the uncertainty of how to handle future health care needs, you can live in luxury and comfort when you choose a Life Plan Community. Plus, you'll enjoy the peace of mind that comes with having a solid plan for the future.

### WHAT IS A LIFE PLAN COMMUNITY?

A Life Plan Community, also called a continuing care retirement community (CCRC), provides an exceptional value for older adults who want financial protection from the rising costs of senior care and guaranteed care for life. The entrance fee, which is paid upfront to secure your place in the community, ensures you'll have priority access to health care services offered by the community, such as assisted living, memory care and skilled nursing care ... and that you can receive these services at prices well below market rates. If you're on the fence about moving to a Life Plan Community, here are some compelling reasons to choose a community like Freedom Village of Bradenton for your next home:

#### Maintenance-free Living

Owning and maintaining a home is a lot of work, and there may come a time in life when you'd rather be relaxing or spending time with loved ones instead of doing chores around the house. When you move to a Life Plan Community, you can let the professionals



take care of lawn mowing, housekeeping, meal preparation, home repairs and more. You'll have more time to enjoy what you've earned, and more freedom to travel without worrying about who will take care of your home while you're away.

#### Financial Security

Choosing a Life Plan Community with a Life Care contract can save you money by protecting you from the rising costs of senior care. Life Care gives you guaranteed access to higher levels of care at predictable monthly rates with little to no increase above the cost you pay for independent living.

#### Resort-like Lifestyle

With distinctive homes and floor plans to fit every lifestyle, you can customize your senior living residence to match your preferences. Plus, you'll enjoy a host of amenities and services that make each day fun and fulfilling. You can choose to be as active as you'd like, with an array of wellness activities, educational lectures, social events and more. Experience the benefits of a Gulf Coast retirement lifestyle at Freedom Village of Bradenton.

#### Social Engagement

Maintaining social connections as you age is one of the best ways to protect your health and well-being. It's easy to expand your social circle when you choose to be part of a community filled with friendly and like-minded peers. Seniors who age in place at home are often at risk for social isolation, especially if they aren't driving places to visit friends and socialize. Learn more about how senior living combats social isolation.

#### Peace of Mind for Your Loved Ones

You can't predict the future, but you can take control of your options now so your loved ones don't have to worry. Moving to a Life Plan Community means they won't have to rush to find health care if the unexpected happens and you suddenly need help with

activities of daily living or round-the-clock care. Your family will have peace of mind knowing you'll have access to advanced levels of care, if needed, along with the safety of having staff available 24/7 should an emergency occur.

### DISCOVER TRUE FREEDOM

It's normal to feel hesitant about giving up the space you have at home to move into a senior living community. However, once you experience the expansive lifestyle waiting for you at Freedom Village of Bradenton, you'll see how your living space opens up to a whole world of opportunities that you don't want to miss.

### JUNE EVENTS

**Security and Peace of Mind During Hurricane Season - Thur., June 8 | 11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.**

**Signature Club Reception and Friday Night Entertainment - Fri., June 9 \* 6-8 p.m.**

#### FEATURED EVENT

**Leadership Roundtable: Benefits of Worry-free Living at Our Life Care Community  
Thur., June 15 | 11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.**

This is a golden opportunity to learn about the worry-free lifestyle that Freedom Village residents enjoy during "speed dating" conversations with our leadership team. Executive director Scott McAlister and directors will rotate among tables to provide an overview of our community, including specifics about finances, the amazing dining, activities and amenities our residents enjoy, and our exceptional transportation, housekeeping and healthcare services.

**Resident Panel: The Joy of Starting Over at a Senior Living Community  
Thur., June 22 | 11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.**

**Friendship Lunch Table for Widows, Widowers, Singles - Tue., June 27 | 11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.**



**Freedom Village  
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# Robotic Surgery: What You Need To Know

## Could you tell us about your training and experience in robotic bariatric and general surgery?

I am board certified in general surgery and have received specialized fellowship training in minimally invasive, robotic and bariatric surgery. As a native of Anna Maria Island, my passion lies in delivering exceptional care to my community in Manatee County and ensuring that my patients receive the highest standard of surgical expertise and compassionate support.

In addition to my clinical practice, I am also a clerkship faculty at Florida State University College of Medicine. This role allows me to contribute to the education and training of future physicians, ensuring the next generation of surgeons is well-versed in the latest advancements in robotic surgery.

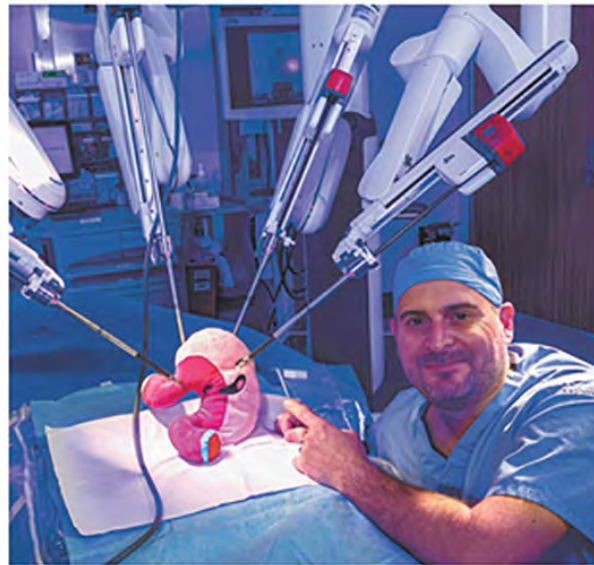
As a proctor for Intuitive, I have the privilege of training surgeons across the United States in utilizing the daVinci® robotic surgical system. By sharing my expertise and knowledge, I aim to empower fellow surgeons to leverage robotic technology for better patient outcomes.

My areas of expertise encompass various surgical disciplines, including weight-loss surgery, surgical management of acid reflux, complex hernia repairs and advanced colon surgery. I provide the highest level of care and support to patients seeking robotic bariatric and general surgery procedures.

## How has robotics advanced the field of general surgery in the past several years?

Robotics has brought significant advancements to the fields of general surgery and bariatric surgery. The integration of robotic technology has revolutionized the way we approach surgical procedures, offering numerous benefits for both surgeons and patients.

We can perform complex procedures with a 3D view, allowing for greater precision and control. The robotic arms provide surgeons with enhanced dexterity and range of motion, allowing for a more precise surgical procedure and less complications. The minimally invasive nature of robotic surgery has significant advantages. Smaller incisions result in reduced trauma to the patient's body, leading to



decreased pain, faster recovery times, shorter hospital stays, and minimal scarring. Patients can resume their daily activities and experience improved quality of life more quickly after robotic procedures.

Robotics has enabled surgeons to create surgical plans that address each patient's unique needs and goals, ensuring the best possible outcomes and patient satisfaction.

## Are robotic weight-loss procedures covered by insurance?

Our surgical weight-loss program is MBSAQIP-accredited and has received all available distinctions from commercial insurances. We have a dedicated team that works closely with insurance providers to ensure that our patients receive the coverage they deserve for their weight-loss procedures.

We understand that navigating insurance coverage can sometimes be complex, so we provide our patients with the necessary support and guidance throughout the process. Our goal is to make robotic weight-loss procedures accessible to those who can benefit from them, and we work diligently to advocate for our patients' insurance coverage whenever possible.

If any patient has concerns or questions about insurance coverage for robotic weight-loss procedures, we encourage them to reach out to our team. We are here to provide clarity and assistance to ensure a smooth and successful journey towards improved health and well-being.

## What weight-loss procedures can be performed robotically?

With the daVinci® surgical system, we can perform robotic sleeve gastrectomy, robotic gastric bypass and robotic gastric banding procedures. These techniques have proven to be highly successful in helping patients achieve their weight-loss goals and improve their overall health.

## Why is personalized care so important?

Each patient is unique, and I believe in providing personalized care that aligns with their specific needs and goals. Before recommending any weight-loss procedure, I conduct a comprehensive evaluation and discussion with the patient to understand their medical history, lifestyle and weight-loss objectives. Based on this information, we collaboratively decide on the most appropriate robotic weight-loss procedure for them. This personalized approach ensures that the surgical plan addresses their individual needs, maximizing the chances of successful weight loss and overall well-being.

I also believe in providing comprehensive support throughout the entire surgical journey. From preoperative education and counseling to postoperative follow-up care, my team and I are dedicated to ensuring that patients feel informed, comfortable and empowered at every step. We are readily available to address any concerns or questions that may arise, offering the necessary guidance and support for a smooth recovery and successful long-term outcomes.

**To make an appointment with Dr. Rekkas, call 941-254-4957 or visit [msaweightloss.com](http://msaweightloss.com).**



232 Manatee Ave E | Bradenton, FL 34208  
(941) 254-4957

Individual results may vary. There are risks associated with any surgical procedure. Talk with your doctor about these risks to find out if robotic surgery is right for you. Physicians are on the medical staff of Manatee Memorial Hospital but, with limited exceptions, are independent practitioners who are not employees or agents of Manatee Memorial Hospital. The hospital shall not be liable for actions or treatments provided by physicians. For language assistance, disability accommodations and the nondiscrimination notice, visit our website.





# STEM CELL ORTHOPEDICS

## The Nonsurgical Option

By Mark Walter, M.D.

**M**any of us are excited about stem cell orthopedics and its potential. After all, who wouldn't be interested in a very safe, minimally invasive treatment that uses your own stem cells and growth factors (from your fat and blood) to heal many painful and troublesome orthopedic problems? Not only is it safer but for certain types of problems, the results with stem cells may be much better!

Can stem cells fix everything? Of course not. But it can fix at least 80% of common orthopedic problems like knee or hip arthritis, disc problems in the back or neck, rotator cuff or shoulder arthritis and many other degenerative conditions or injuries. The treatment is minimally invasive and super safe. In my own practice, my protocol is done in a single day as an outpatient procedure. You walk in, we take a little blood and about 60-120ccs of fat in a painless harvesting procedure (with only local anesthesia). You take a break and relax while we prepare the stem cells. Then we inject the stem cells and PRP in and around the specific area involved. And you walk out. The whole thing takes 3-4 hours, start to finish. Yes, you'll be a little sore for a day or two but downtime is minimal and you can return to activities of daily living within 24 hours.

What's the downside? The main risk is you may pay your money (because it's so new, stem cells are not yet covered by any insurance!) and it may not work as hoped.

Sound too good to be true? Actually, it's not, but there is a big caveat. To get the best results you need to do the treatment properly. The field of stem cell orthopedics has grown rapidly over the last decade and of course, as with any new field, there is no standardization and much misconception and misinformation. It is also true that many doctors who are attempting to do these treatments do not have the right training or background to do it properly. I call them dabblers! They may mean well but their lack of knowledge, training and experience in regenerative orthopedics can greatly jeopardize the outcome. If someone has had a stem cell procedure and if the outcome of the treatment was poor, the first question is: who did it? And what type of stem cells did they use? Certainly, when it comes to healing, there can be poor biologic outcomes, but far more common is poor diagnostic and injection technique, improper selection or preparation of the stem cells or regenerative solution, and failure to educate the patient properly for follow-up and rehab.

There are three major determinants of the outcome of any stem cell orthopedic procedure. First and of prime importance, you need to make the correct diagnosis of the primary pain generators and inject them properly. Good medicine starts with the right diagnosis! For this, you need the right doctor with the right background and skill set. Make no mistake, regenerative orthopedics is a highly specialized field that is a totally different specialty than conventional surgical orthopedics. The outcome, as with any skilled procedure, will totally depend on the training, skill and knowledge of the practitioner.

The best regenerative doctors will have mastered a highly effective technique called Prolotherapy. It is a little known fact that the majority of pain actually comes from micro tears in the attachments of ligaments, tendons and joint capsules. These loose attachments and the resultant **joint instability**, are crucial concepts to understanding the pain picture in a patient. Unfortunately MRI and ultrasound are not sensitive enough to make these distinctions and really the only way to make a precise diagnosis and *prioritize* the primary pain generators in any given patient, is with a technique called *palpation interrogation*. If I palpate a specific site on a specific structure and it reproduces the pain, we call this the "jump sign". The bigger the jump sign the more important that specific structure is in the pain picture and the more crucial that we address that exact spot with injections.

Second, you need to use the right kind of stem cells and prepare them properly. For our purposes, autologous tissue (from your own body) is far safer and more effective than any other type of stem cells. In my experience, freshly prepared, DNA-matched stem cells are far more effective than umbilical tissue from a donor. There are two sources of autologous stem cells- fat and bone marrow. I prefer fat since it's easier to get and fat has a higher concentration of mesenchymal stem cells, which are the precursors of ligaments, tendons, cartilage and bone.

Finally you need the right follow-up and rehab program to give the stem cells the best healing environment to work optimally. After the stem cells are placed they live and continue to grow for at least 4-5 months. If, for any reason, a patient is slow to respond and fails to progress after 6-8 weeks, we usually suggest one or two PRP boosters at weeks 6-12 to help reignite the stem cells. The treatment plan for any given patient needs to be individualized depending on the severity and urgency of the problem, number of joints or regions injected, timeline and availability/willingness to come for several visits etc. If the problem is severe, I usually recommend to start with a stem cell/PRP combo to all affected regions, since this gives us the best chance for a rapid and substantial improvement. After all, I only get one chance to make a first impression. I want to turn every patient into a huge success case— and as quickly as possible!

Proper rehab is also important for optimal healing. The patient needs to use and move the areas involved without over-loading the attachments. If needed, painkillers such as tylenol and tramadol can be quite helpful to ease pain while the patient heals, but pharmaceutical anti-inflammatories are to be avoided as they interfere with healing. Good nutrition, reducing stress and proper sleep hygiene also help the healing process.

If you or someone close to you has a serious orthopedic problem I urge you to consider the stem cell option. If you do the treatment properly and optimize all the above factors, your chances of success are 80-85% for a long-lasting, great result. In the end it's all about quality of life. This is the medicine of the future!

### About Dr. Walter

Mark Walter, M.D. has pioneered the field of regenerative orthopedics for the last 22 years and is considered one of the top stem cell orthopedic specialists in Florida. Dr. Walter completed his MD degree at McGill University (1980) and went on to do five years of post-doc work in regenerative orthopedics with the world famous Hackett-Hemwall foundation (in association with the University of Wisconsin). He is a master Prolotherapist and a leading proponent of offering patients non-surgical alternatives for serious orthopedic issues. Dr. Walter has just released his new book *Stem Cell Orthopedics- A New Way to Fix Joint, Back and Neck Problems* (available on amazon).

For additional information, to book a phone or in-person consultation or reserve a seat at an upcoming free seminar (given monthly) please call Dr. Walter's office in Sarasota at (941) 955-4325, text the Stem Cell Hotline at (941) 376-2100 or visit us at [regenortho.com](http://regenortho.com).



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# UPPER CERVICAL CHIROPRACTIC

## A Promising Approach for Migraine Relief

By Dr. Drew Hall

**M**igraines are debilitating headaches that affect millions of people worldwide, causing significant pain, discomfort, and disruptions in daily life. While various treatment options exist, one alternative approach that has gained attention is upper cervical chiropractic. This specialized branch of chiropractic care focuses on the alignment of the upper cervical spine, emphasizing the crucial role it plays in overall health and well-being. In this article, we explore how upper cervical chiropractic can offer relief and potential benefits for individuals suffering from migraines.

### Understanding Migraines

Migraines are neurological disorders characterized by severe and recurring headaches. The exact causes of migraines are multifactorial and can include genetic factors, hormonal imbalances, environmental triggers, and lifestyle factors. Common symptoms include throbbing head pain, nausea, sensitivity to light and sound, and visual disturbances. Migraines can significantly impact quality of life, leading individuals to seek various treatments to manage their condition effectively.

### Upper Cervical Chiropractic Approach

Upper cervical chiropractic focuses on the relationship between the upper cervical spine (the uppermost part of the neck) and the nervous system. It recognizes that misalignments or subluxations in this area can disrupt nerve function and contribute to a range of health issues, including migraines. Upper cervical chiropractors use gentle and precise adjustments to correct misalignments, aiming to restore proper nerve communication and spinal function.

### Addressing Underlying Causes

Unlike conventional treatments that often focus solely on symptom management, upper cervical chiropractic aims to address the underlying causes of migraines. By restoring alignment in the upper cervical spine, this approach can alleviate nerve irritation, reduce inflammation, and enhance blood flow to the brain. Additionally, improved spinal alignment can positively influence the central nervous system's functioning, promoting overall health and well-being.



### Research and Evidence

While research on upper cervical chiropractic specifically targeting migraines is ongoing, preliminary studies and anecdotal evidence have shown promising results. Patients receiving upper cervical chiropractic care have reported reduced migraine frequency, intensity, and duration. Some studies have also observed improvements in related symptoms such as neck pain and muscle tension. Although more extensive research is necessary to establish definitive conclusions, many individuals have experienced positive outcomes with this alternative approach.

### Collaborative Care

It's important to note that upper cervical chiropractic should be integrated into a comprehensive and multidisciplinary treatment plan. Collaborating with healthcare professionals, such as primary care physicians or neurologists, can ensure a holistic approach to migraine management. This may include lifestyle modifications, stress management techniques, and other therapies alongside upper cervical chiropractic care.

Upper cervical chiropractic shows promise as an alternative approach for individuals seeking relief from migraines. By addressing the underlying causes and restoring proper spinal alignment, this specialized form of chiropractic care offers a potential avenue for reducing the frequency and intensity of migraines, ultimately improving overall quality of life.



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## BOOST YOUR IMMUNE SYSTEM NATURALLY!

Presented by Dr. Drew Hall and Eric, the holistic pharmacist. This information might just change your life!

Thursday, June 22 - 6 - 7pm EDT

Location: Natural Apothecary Shoppe  
6608 Gateway Ave., Sarasota, FL 34231

*This seminar will present information from two experts in the natural health field, Dr. Drew Hall, Blair Upper Cervical Chiropractor and Eric, the holistic pharmacist.*

### Eric the Holistic Pharmacist:

In 1988, Eric opened a conventional pharmacy in Bayville, NJ. Becoming increasingly discouraged by the lack of wellness his clients experienced with allopathic prescriptions, Eric felt he was not contributing enough to the well-being of his clients. Stumbling upon a fax for a course in homeopathy, Eric was intrigued and decided to pursue a career in naturopathy. In 1999 Eric opened The Natural Pharmacy in Ocean, NJ and continued his education in naturopathy. His accreditations include a Comprehensive Certification Program, Enzyme Therapy, Homeopathy Certification, Homotoxicology, and a Certification in Clinical Nutrition. In 2008 Eric was the recipient of the 2008 Award Accolade presented by the World Organization of Natural Medicine Practitioners at the 5th Annual Conference in Houston TX. Only 50 recipients per year from 80 countries are awarded this prestigious recognition for service to humanity.

### Dr. Drew Hall - Blair Upper Cervical Chiropractor

Dr. Drew Hall will present information that illuminates the intimate connection between the nervous system and the immune system. Structural misalignments at the base of the skull can interfere with the bodies ability to function normally and lower the bodies immunity and overall health potential. Dr. Hall recently relocated from Los Angeles Ca, after practicing there for 21 years seeing in excess of 12,000 patients. Come listen to some of the latest research on neuro-immunology and how when applied can help you recover from a host of different health issues.





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# STEM CELL ORTHOPEDICS

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**Mark Walter MD, CCFP**

- McGill trained and worked with the top regenerative teachers in the world.
- Pioneered the field for the last 22 years; treated over 10,000 patients
- Considered one of the top specialists in Florida and author of the new book *Stem Cell Orthopedics* (see page 14 for details)

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# THE POWER OF UNDERSTANDING YOURSELF AND OTHERS

By Dr. Thomas Hofmann, PhD, LCSW, LMFT

**W**hy are people the way they are? How does understanding people help you personally and professionally?

Having a deeper understanding about yourself – your behavior patterns and thoughts – gives you the ability to better understand others. Ultimately, it means being more self-aware. Reaching a higher level of self-awareness is a journey you can take while also training for a meaningful career.

Our bachelor's degree in applied psychology accomplishes that. Each class is designed to help you grow personally, which in turn helps you grow professionally. You'll gain a dynamic skill set that can be applied in a variety of career paths. These paths include child and family services, human resources, sales, case management, community agencies and as counselor aides in hospitals. The people you work, depending on your chosen path, can range from children and adolescents to adults, the elderly, and veterans.

In addition to understanding what motivates people and influences their behaviors, you'll learn the scientific methodology behind psychology, along with gaining stronger oral, written, and critical thinking skills. The degree is online, but you'll participate in live-chat discussions and other shared experiences in a virtual environment designed to encourage and challenge your thinking.

Each class you take is an immersion into the subject, and you'll learn from practicing experts in the field. Some of the classes include general, experimental and educational psychology, organizational psychology, cognitive and social psychology, plus the principles of analytic techniques and the psychology of conflict management.

As you near graduation from this program, your interest in helping others may mean the desire to become a clinical mental health counselor. Our master's in clinical mental health counseling will take all that you've learned at the bachelor's level to a whole new level of expertise. This program is accredited by the Council for Accreditation of Counseling



and Related Educational Programs (CACREP). This will help you prepare for the licensing board exam to become a mental health counselor.

This master's program offers the benefit of learning online, and is enhanced further with an internship and on-campus residencies. Some of the classes you'll take include counseling in community settings, social and cultural foundations of counseling practice, group theories and practice, human growth and development, and legal, ethical and professional standards of counseling practice.

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As we know, the need for mental health counselors continue to rise. According to o'net, the demand will grow 11 percent by the year 2031. Nationally, that's over 45,000 jobs!

Ultimately, both of these degrees can offer you a better understanding of yourself. This knowledge can then take you on a career path of your choice.

To learn more, visit [Hodges.edu](https://Hodges.edu).

*Dr. Thomas Hofmann is the Clinical Mental Health Counseling master's degree program director at Hodges University. He is a Florida Approved Supervisor for Mental Health, Family Therapy, and Social Work Registered interns and a licensed social work and marriage and family therapist.*



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- Skip & Gail Sack



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# HORMONE OPTIMIZATION

## The Good and The Bad

**H**ormone optimization is a topic that has gained a lot of attention in recent years, particularly among individuals who are interested in achieving an increase in their quality of life, energy, overall health and well-being. Hormones are chemical messengers in the body that regulate most bodily functions, including growth and development, metabolism, reproduction and many more. As we age, our hormone levels naturally decline, this leads to a variety of health issues. There is a debate about whether hormone optimization is good for you. This is particularly true when it comes to the use of synthetic versus bio-identical hormones.

Synthetic hormones are created in a laboratory by altering a natural hormone or deriving it from a non-human source. These are not identical to the hormones produced by the human body. They are commonly used in hormone replacement therapy (HRT) to treat symptoms of menopause or andropause. Synthetic hormones are the most studied and have the side effects (heart disease, strokes, and certain cancers) that were discovered in the Womens Health Initiative.

Bio-identical hormones, on the other hand, are derived from natural sources, such as soy or yam plants, and are **chemically identical** to the hormones produced by the human body. This is what we use when we talk about **bio-identical hormone replacement therapy (BHRT)**, which is a natural approach to hormone optimization.

There is a great deal of misinformation and confusion surrounding hormone optimization, particularly when it comes to the use of synthetic versus bio-identical hormones. Basically synthetic hormones created by the Pharmaceutical companies have alterations to the natural (Bio-Identical) hormones. These can cause the side effects that have given hormones an undeserved bad name.

On the other hand, bio-identical hormones are a safer and more natural alternative to synthetic hormones. These are the same your body has been making and using since you were born. Bio-identical hormones are derived from natural sources and are chemically identical to the hormones produced by the human body, your body knows what to do with them.



Another common misconception is that hormone optimization is only necessary for women going through menopause. While it is true that women experience a significant decline in hormone levels during menopause or after total hysterectomy, men also experience a slow decline in testosterone levels as they age, a condition known as andropause. This can lead to a variety of symptoms, including decreased energy and libido, loss of muscle mass, increased body fat, fatigue, and demineralization of bones (Osteoporosis).

Hormone optimization is beneficial for both men and women, regardless of age, provided that it is done under the guidance of a medically trained hormone healthcare professional and tailored to the individual's specific needs.

In conclusion, hormone optimization is beneficial for individuals looking to improve their overall health and well-being. Bio-identical hormone optimization is the only rational evidence based therapy that gives the most benefit with the lowest risk. It is important to work with a qualified (Hormone Trained) healthcare professional who can help guide you through the process and monitor your hormone levels and symptoms.

Misinformation and confusion surrounding hormone optimization can be addressed by educating individuals about the pros and cons of different hormone therapies, as well as the importance of individualized treatment plans. With the right guidance and support, hormone optimization is a safe and effective way to improve your health and quality of life.

The Miley Clinic is known for its successful approach to healing from within. We curated a unique approach to diagnosing and treating symptoms. Call us today to learn more about our bio-identical hormone replacement therapy, nutrition and life style services in Sarasota, FL.



### STEPHEN MILEY, MD

Dr. Miley is a native Floridian. He received his BS in Chemistry with Honors from The University of Florida, and his Doctorate of Medicine from The University of South Florida.

He has practiced as a Board-Certified Emergency Physician for the past 42 years. He has served as the Director of the Emergency Department for several large hospitals.

Dr. Miley now sees a changing trend in medicine. Our traditional "sick care model" has many wonderful treatments if you are ill. However, the new health care model uses the best science of traditional evidence based medicine, in combination with functional medicine, to solve diseases at the root cause, rather than just treating symptoms with another prescription.

The Miley Clinic was formed to merge these two disciplines; giving people education and therapies to lose weight, regain their youthful vitalities, get off chronic medications, and live their best lives.



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At Sforzo | Dillingham | Stewart Orthopedics + Sports Medicine, they treat children from age three and up, and their specialists are fathers themselves, so they understand what an injury can mean from parent's perspective. Afterall, it's not just an injury, it is your child. Additionally, the physicians are extremely active with youth activities, therefore they very informed about competitive team dynamics.

Making sure the physician you select has the credentials and experience necessary is essential, when it comes to healing your child's injury, and improving range of motion and functionality, finding the best orthopedic surgeon is critical.

You have a choice when deciding on an orthopedic surgeon. It is essential for patients to do their research, look at real reviews and patient testimonials, and most importantly, to go with a physician or group that has the experience level and training necessary to improve your child's condition and keep them active now – and for their future.

Board certification and fellowship trained doctors are the elite in the orthopedic industry. Their training, skills, and experience are without exception; it is an important factor to consider when choosing an orthopedic surgeon.

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Providing advanced meticulous orthopedic care is what Dr. Christopher Sforzo envisioned when he opened the doors to Sforzo | Dillingham | Stewart Orthopedics + Sports Medicine in 2006. And that is just what you can expect today when you choose the practice for your orthopedic and sports medicine needs.

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Dr. Sforzo, Dr. Christopher Dillingham, Dr. Charles Stewart, and Dr. Philip Meinhardt specialize in both

non-surgical and surgical treatment for the shoulders, hand, wrists, elbows, hips, knees, ankles, spine and neck. This includes unparalleled

expertise in fracture care, sports injuries, tendonitis, arthritis, bursitis, joint replacement, rotator cuff repair, carpal tunnel syndrome, reverse shoulder replacement, ACL reconstruction, reconstruction of spinal deformities, fusion procedures, knee replacement, total hip replacement both traditional and anterior approach. Additionally, the doctors offer the latest in regenerative treatments helping many patients eliminate the need for surgery.

You are more than your injury, more than your pain. And so, the true healthcare practiced at Sforzo | Dillingham | Stewart Orthopedics + Sports Medicine offers a much more personal approach.

From the sincerity of their hand-selected staff of Sarasota's elite medical and service professionals to ample time with and full attention from Drs. Sforzo, Dillingham, Stewart, and Meinhardt provide dedicated care where a doctor, not a policy, determines your best interests.

## You Have a Choice

Any physicians you choose to see are always your personal decision. It should never be mandated by policy or chosen for you without regard to your needs and best interest. When you choose Sforzo | Dillingham | Stewart Orthopedics + Sports Medicine, you can rest assured that you will be treated with respect and given the opportunity to ask questions. Your options will be explained in detail, and you will be in the hands of experienced surgeons with the utmost integrity, receiving optimal care.



*Christopher Dillingham, M.D., Charles Stewart, M.D., Philip Meinhardt, M.D., Christopher Sforzo, M.D.*

## The Physicians at Sforzo | Dillingham | Stewart Orthopedics + Sports Medicine

**Christopher R. Sforzo, M.D.** is a board-certified orthopedic surgeon and fellowship-trained in hand and upper extremity surgery. He provides expert care in the treatment of problems involving the shoulder, arm, elbow, forearm, wrist, and hand. Including, carpal tunnel syndrome, joint replacement, fracture and tendon repair.

**Christopher L. Dillingham, M.D.** is a board-certified orthopedic surgeon and fellowship-trained in hand, shoulder, and arm surgery. He is an expert in the treatment of problems with rotator cuff disorders, carpal tunnel syndrome and nerve injury, joint replacement, arthritis surgery, fracture repair, tendon repair and total reverse shoulder surgery.

**Charles E. Stewart, M.D.** is a Johns Hopkins fellowship-trained and board-certified orthopedic surgeon specializing in adult complex reconstruction of the lower extremity. His specialties include lower extremity sports injuries, meniscal injuries, ACL reconstruction, partial knee replacement, total hip and knee arthroplasty (replacement), as well as, the reconstruction of failed hip and knee arthroplasties, and complete fracture care.

**Philip A. Meinhardt, M.D.** is a board-certified orthopedic surgeon and fellowship-trained spine surgeon. He specializes in adult spinal surgeries, including reconstruction of spinal deformities, minimally invasive/microscopic spinal procedures, decompression, spinal instrumentation, fusion procedures, and microscopic cervical disc replacements.



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# Health is the New Wealth!

## (How to get the most out of your vitamins!)

By Katherine Hermes, Owner - SRQ Med Spa

"I drink lots of water."

"I take lots of vitamins."

You are doing the right things – but is all your hard work and your investment really paying off? You may have heard that taking vitamins by mouth simply creates very expensive urine. There is some truth to that saying. Generally, vitamins that are taken orally have a 10 – 20% absorption rate. So, if you think you are taking 10,000 IUs of a vitamin, you may actually only absorb 1,000 – 2,000 IUs of active vitamins.

There are lots of ways to absorb nutrition. Generally, oral administration of vitamins has the lowest active response. Your skin is your largest organ and some vitamins can be successfully absorbed through your skin. You can also absorb vitamins by placing liquid under your tongue. That is called "sublingual" administration. Skin absorption and sublingual absorption can improve your active vitamin administration by 2 – 3x. You may get as much as 40%-60% uptake.

The single best route of administration of vitamins (or any medicine) is via IV. IV administration or intravenous vitamins are virtually 100% absorbed and bio-available – often in a matter of minutes. When considering "bang for the buck", IV and IM (intra muscular administration) is definitely the most efficient way to receive vitamins.

**Health is the New Wealth!** Let's face it – everything you want to do is possible as long as you are healthy and strong enough to do it. If we all learned anything over the past few years it is that getting even a minor flu can instantly put the kabosh on your plans. Like the old saying goes, if you don't have your health then you don't have anything.

Hence the birth of an entirely new industry, the Health IV and IM infusion med spa come about as the result of a lot of people wanting to be as healthy as possible. This industry is very new and to a certain extent it is highly unregulated.

In Florida, the laws require that IV vitamins are given by injection by an RN. Depending on the types of vitamins administered, you may also need



a physician's prescription. This does a lot to maintain a high quality of health care in the burgeoning vitamin business.

And, people are getting great results from IV vitamins! One lady told me she had so much energy after getting her IV vitamins that she pulled out the refrigerator and started cleaning! Another client shared with me that the entire next week at work she felt like a brain fog had been lifted and that she slept better. Still another client shared that during her IV she felt so good that she thought she was really funny! (I thought that was really funny because she was quietly reading a book until her announcement!)

I have never heard anyone give those kinds of accolades after taking vitamins by mouth. I have heard that some people do feel better – and I am excited for anyone who is investing in their health and seeing results.

**So, what kinds of IV vitamins combinations might be best for you?** Well, that very much depends on what your vitamin goals might be. For example, if you are trying to combat the symptoms of PMS (reduce bloating, irritability, abdominal discomfort and lower back pain), then you might consider taking:

- Calcium Chloride – promotes healthy bones and normal functioning of muscles, nerves and cells in the body

- Magnesium Chloride – helps improve immunity, decrease risk of developing migraines, improve relaxation
- Vitamin B Complex (B1, B2, B3, B5, B6) – B-complex vitamins help keep skin and blood cells healthy as well as converting nutrients into energy
- B12 – promotes healthy brain function, blood cells and nerves

Perhaps your goal is to improve overall brain function and to increase memory recall and improve learning. In that case we might offer you B6 (to provide protection against memory loss and dementia), L-Taurine (to protect against environmental toxins and stimulate neuron development) and ALA – Alpha Lipoic Acid – which inspires your body to create more glutathione and thus build a stronger immune system.

There are vitamin combinations that work well for kickstarting your metabolism (B-Complex and Amino Acids), strengthening your immune system (Vitamin C and B-Complex), and for improving your skin and naturally grow collagen (Vitamin C, biotin and B complex). You can also rehydrate your body and reduce hangovers or improve your physical performance with various combinations of IV vitamins. This isn't something you will get from oral vitamins.

**So, if you are ready to invest in your health then SRQ Med Spa is here to support you in your journey.** Our qualified RNs have over 100 years (combined) of experience and I can personally attest to their skill with IVs. There is no cost to come in and have a consultation. You can book online at [www.SRQMedSpa.com](http://www.SRQMedSpa.com) or call 941-779-3004 to reserve some time to talk with our nurses. We look forward to helping you build your health and your wealth!



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# Early Detection of Prostate Cancer Saves Lives

**P**rostate cancer is a fairly serious blip on the male health radar as the second leading cause of cancer death in American men. Chances are you know someone who has battled prostate cancer because statistically speaking; one in seven men will be diagnosed with prostate cancer during his lifetime. The average age of diagnosis is 65, in fact 60% of those diagnosed are 65 and older.

Prostate cancer – and other prostate issues – can cause considerable discomfort, pain and even death, if they are left undiagnosed and untreated. No man looks forward to the annual prostate exam; but if you're smart, you'll bite the bullet and go anyway because early detection can save your life.

***Regular screenings cannot only save you a lot of pain and discomfort – they may just save your life.***

## What is the prostate – and why does it need to be examined?

The prostate gland is a doughnut-shaped organ that is part of the male reproductive system. A healthy prostate in a younger man is only about the size of a walnut. The prostate sits just under the bladder and is wrapped around the beginning of the urethra. It is surrounded by nerves that control erections and its primary function is to produce a liquid that enriches and protects sperm.

Unfortunately, as men get older this little organ tends to act up. At times, some of the symptoms are simply a sign of aging; however, in many cases prostate trouble is an indication of a more serious problem. Prostate cancer is a primary concern, but other prostate disorders can be just as uncomfortable and a serious concern for male health.

So if you are experiencing symptoms like difficulty or discomfort while urinating, reduced ability to get an erection, blood in your urine or semen, or painful ejaculation, it's important to have your prostate checked out. Even if you aren't experiencing any symptoms, it's still wise to be screened from time to time, as you can pre-empt and prevent problems before they crop up.

Regular screenings ensure that problems are caught quickly. Catching a prostate problem right at the start, means that it can be treated and cleared up with far less difficulty.

So men, don't wait around till you run into trouble. A little momentary discomfort is a worthwhile trade for a long, happy, healthy life surrounded by your family and friends. Do yourself a favor and get your prostate checked out.

If there is concern as a result from the routine annual prostate exam, diagnostic imaging will be ordered. There are different imaging screenings available, the 3T wide bore MRI provides that best image quality in a non-invasive way.

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## What is a 3T MRI?

The term "3T" stands for "3 Tesla." Tesla is the name given to a measurement unit that expresses the strength of the electromagnetic energy field that MRI devices use for generating images. Standard MRI scanners operate in the range of about 1.5 Tesla. This means that our 3T MRI operates at approximately twice the electromagnetic energy level of a standard MRI.

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Our wide bore 3T MRI scanner combines the superb diagnostic image quality gained through a stronger electromagnetic field with the exceptional patient comfort of a wide-bore configuration—70 cm in diameter, a full 10 cm larger than standard MRI scanners. The scanner is also shorter in length than conventional MRI scanners. These factors make this scanner less confining to patients, reducing symptoms of claustrophobia. Additionally, large patients who have trouble fitting into conventional scanners can have their scans done in this machine, which can accommodate patients weighing up to 500 lbs.

The stronger magnetic field allows the machine to detect stronger signals from the patient during the imaging. This increased signal strength can be used to generate more detailed pictures or reduce the total imaging time. Often the imaging protocols are designed to generate better pictures while still saving time compared to other types of MRI scanners, giving patients the benefit of a shorter exam without sacrificing diagnostic quality.

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# New Ways to Treat Neuropathy Offered at Natural Healing Arts Medical Center

By Dr. David S. Zamikoff

**N**europathy is a condition that affects the nerves in your body which can cause a wide range of symptoms. The nerves in your body are responsible for transmitting signals from your brain to the rest of your body, so when they become damaged or diseased, they can interfere with these signals and cause various problems.

The specific symptoms of neuropathy can vary depending on the type and location of the nerves affected, but some common symptoms of neuropathy include:

- **Pain:** One of the most common neuropathy symptoms is pain, which can be sharp, stabbing, burning, or throbbing. The pain may be constant or come and go, and it may be worse at night.
- **Tingling and numbness:** Another common symptom of neuropathy is tingling and numbness, which can feel like pins and needles or a loss of sensation in the affected area. You may also experience a feeling of "electricity" or "shock" in the affected area.
- **Weakness:** Neuropathy can also cause weakness in the affected area, making it difficult to perform everyday tasks like walking, standing, or gripping objects.
- **Sensitivity to touch:** Some people with neuropathy may experience sensitivity to touch or temperature changes, making it uncomfortable or even painful to wear socks or shoes, for example.
- **Loss of balance:** In some cases, neuropathy can cause a loss of balance and coordination, increasing the risk of falls and injuries.
- **Digestive issues:** Neuropathy can also affect the nerves that control your digestive system, which can cause symptoms like nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, and constipation.

It's important to note that not everyone with neuropathy will experience all of these symptoms, and the severity of the symptoms can vary from person to person. If you're experiencing any of these symptoms, it's essential to seek medical attention to determine the underlying cause and receive appropriate treatment.



Many causes of neuropathy include diabetes, alcoholism, autoimmune disorders, infections, and exposure to toxins. It's essential to identify your neuropathy's underlying cause so we can develop an effective treatment plan. At our clinic, we take a holistic approach to treating neuropathy, meaning we look at the whole person and not just the symptoms. We may recommend chiropractic adjustments, massage therapy, and other techniques to help improve your nerve function and reduce your symptoms. We may also recommend dietary changes, exercise, and other lifestyle modifications to help address the underlying cause of your neuropathy.

Over 70% of the US population is either obese or overweight. Type 2 diabetes, heart disease, peripheral vascular disease, cancer treated with chemotherapy, and metabolic conditions are not going anywhere anytime soon. One of the main symptoms of all of these is peripheral neuropathy. Neuropathy is a condition that baby boomers and even younger adults now struggle with, and there is virtually no medical solution out there other than pain-relieving medications. Most of these medications are used off-label and are dangerous to take long-term.

At Natural Healing Arts Medical Center, our hybrid at-home/in-clinic program is designed for the patient to have the ability to treat themselves 75% at home, be educated from home, while coming into the office minimally, getting better clinical results with research-backed technologies. Combining neuropathy with other niches such as gut health, weight loss, knee pain, spinal degenerative conditions allow us to offer better clinical programs to our patients.

Patient education is an important component of the treatment of neuropathy. It's essential for patients to understand the underlying causes of their neuropathy and to be aware of the potential complications. Patients should also be informed of the available treatment options and the benefits and risks associated with each one.

In addition, patients should be encouraged to practice good self-care habits, such as checking their feet daily for sores or other signs of injury, wearing appropriate shoes, and managing blood sugar levels if they have diabetes. It's also vital for patients to report any new or worsening symptoms to their healthcare provider and to follow up with their provider regularly to monitor their progress and adjust their treatment plan as needed.

If you're experiencing neuropathy symptoms, seeking treatment as soon as possible is essential. Left untreated, neuropathy can worsen and lead to more severe complications. Our team of chiropractic professionals is here to help you find relief from your symptoms and improve your overall health and well-being.

## Natural Healing Arts Medical Center

Dr. David Zamikoff and Natural Healing Arts Medical Center - a professional Bradenton Chiropractic and Medical office. In practice as well as online, Bradenton Florida 34209 chiropractor Dr. Zamikoff strives for excellence through superior patient treatment, education and satisfaction.

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**[www.NaturalHealingArtsMedical.com](http://www.NaturalHealingArtsMedical.com)**



# ADVANCED URINARY INCONTINENCE PROCEDURES

**A**pproximately 10 to 20 million people in the United States are suffering from urinary incontinence. If you have issues with leaking when coughing, jumping, or laughing, or if you have severe urgency to urinate day and night, you are not alone. Correct diagnosis of the type of incontinence is the first and most important step in developing an appropriate and effective treatment plan for incontinence.

## There are several types of urinary incontinence:

- Stress incontinence
- Urge incontinence
- Mixed incontinence
- Overflow incontinence
- Functional incontinence

The good news is that you are not stuck with wearing pads or pull up for the rest of your life. There are viable treatment options from medications, Botox injections, nerve stimulators and implantable slings to name a few. Two of the more advance innovative procedures that are noninvasive are sacral neuromodulation and urethral bulking.

## Sacral Neuromodulation

Sacral neuromodulation is an advanced procures that uses a tiny wire that is placed on the glut muscle with a quarter-size impulse device that sends messages to the brain to regulate urination. This procedure takes around 30 minutes to perform, and if the procedure does not work, or if a patient decides they want it removed, we can take it out quite easily. Other similar devices can also be placed on the sacral nerve to induce sacral neuromodulation to send small impulses to the bladder.

## Bulkamid—Urethral Bulking

Bulkamid is a soft, smooth hydrogel that consists of 97.5% water and 2.5% polyacrylamide. Once injected, Bulkamid provides additional volume to the urethra and acts as a scaffold for cells to grow through helping to provide long lasting relief of stress urinary incontinence symptoms. Bulkamid is noninvasive and requires to surgery. It is injected directly into the closing mechanism of the urethra. More than 70,000 patients have been treated with Bulkamid.

## What is urethral bulking?

Urethral bulking involves the injection of a soft hydrogel (the size of a pea) like Bulkamid, into 3 or 4 locations in the urethral wall using a small telescope. The total volume injected is around 2mls.

Bulkamid aims to restore the natural closing pressure of the urethra preventing urine from leaking out unintentionally during normal daily activities (e.g., when you cough, laugh, walk or exercise).

## Short procedure

Urethral bulking takes around 10 – 15 minutes and is usually done in day surgery or out-patient clinic with a local anesthetic.

## No Incisions

A series of small injections are used, you may feel a sting, however, no cuts are made.

## Quick recovery

In most cases patients can get back to their normal activities within a day.

Source: <https://bulkamid.com/us/>

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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## Center for Urogynecology and Female Pelvic Health

## John B Devine, MD

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The Center for Urogynecology and Female Pelvic Health accepts most major insurance plans.

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- Fecal Incontinence
- Interstitial Cystitis







## Boosting Men's Health: HORMONE THERAPY INCLUDING BIOTE PELLETS, PEPTIDES, AND SEXUAL REJUVENATION

By Dr. Sandra Mannon, DNP, FNP-BC, APRN, RYT, CPT-ACE

**M**en's Health Month serves as a reminder to prioritize well-being. In the realm of men's health, hormone optimization and sexual rejuvenation play crucial roles. This article explores the potential benefits of hormone therapy including the use of BioTe pellet therapy, peptides, and sexual rejuvenation and their impact on men's overall well-being, including sexual health.

### Hormone Biote Pellets: A Promising Approach

Hormone replacement can be done utilizing multiple delivery systems to improve a man's testosterone levels. The traditional approach of receiving testosterone through injection remains widely available. BioTe pellets have gained traction as an effective method for hormone optimization in men. These tiny implants slowly release bioidentical testosterone over several months. Biote pellets offer a convenient and consistent delivery system, allowing for optimal hormone levels. By balancing testosterone, estrogen, and other vital hormones, BioTe pellets can address various symptoms of hormone imbalance, such as fatigue, decreased libido, mood swings, and loss of muscle mass. Hormone therapy improves sleep and energy as well.

### Peptides: Unlocking Health Benefits

Peptides are short chains of amino acids that act as messengers within the body, triggering specific biological responses. In the realm of men's health, peptides have emerged as potential rejuvenating agents. PT-141 is a peptide that has garnered attention for its potential to enhance sexual function and treat erectile dysfunction. Also known as "the sexual rejuvenation peptide," PT-141 acts on the central nervous system to stimulate the production of melanocortin receptors involved in sexual arousal. By targeting these receptors, PT-141 can increase libido, improve erectile function, and enhance overall sexual satisfaction. Unlike traditional erectile dysfunction medications, PT-141 does not rely on vasodilation and can be effective even in individuals who do not respond well to other treatments. With its promising effects on sexual health, PT-141 offers a potential solution for men seeking to rejuvenate their intimate experiences.



CJC-1295 is a peptide known for its ability to stimulate the production of growth hormone (GH) in the body. By increasing GH levels, CJC-1295 can promote muscle growth, enhance recovery, and support overall physical performance. This peptide works by stimulating the release of GH from the pituitary gland and extending its half-life, allowing for sustained elevation of GH levels. CJC-1295 is often used in combination with a growth hormone-releasing hormone (GHRH) analog like Ipamorelin to maximize its effects. With its potential to enhance growth hormone secretion, CJC-1295 offers athletes, bodybuilders, and those seeking anti-aging benefits a valuable tool for optimizing physical performance and vitality. Additionally, peptides such as BPC-157 and TB-500 offer therapeutic benefits by aiding tissue repair and reducing inflammation. These innovative compounds show promise in boosting men's overall vitality and addressing age-related concerns.

When peptides are introduced into the body, they make the cell work properly and the body begins to treat itself. Peptides regulate gene activity stimulating protein reproduction. Peptides play an important role in regenerative medicine.

### Peptides Can Help

- Our immune systems
- Improve our skin and help it look younger
- Boost libido
- Protect our DNA
- Reduce inflammation
- Lose weight, decrease fat
- Help our brains become shaper
- Enhance sleep,
- Decrease anxiety and improve mood.

The cost varies according to which peptide is used and the length of time and frequency needed. Many of the peptides need to be injected.

When you visit with your health care provider, they will discuss with you the peptide that is best for you to achieve your goals of health and wellness.

### Restoring Intimacy and Vitality

Sexual health is a crucial aspect of men's well-being, and hormone optimization combined with peptides can play a significant role in rejuvenating sexual function. Hormone biote pellets, by optimizing testosterone levels, can enhance libido, improve erectile function, and increase sexual satisfaction. Peptides like PT-141, known as the "sexual rejuvenation peptide," can promote sexual desire and treat erectile dysfunction. This holistic approach, combining hormone balance and peptide therapies, offers men a comprehensive solution to address sexual concerns and restore intimacy and vitality in their lives.

*Men's Health Month* reminds us of the importance of taking proactive steps towards improving overall well-being. Hormone biote pellets, peptides, and sexual rejuvenation therapies hold tremendous potential in the realm of men's health. These innovative treatments offer men the opportunity to optimize hormone levels, address age-related concerns, and revitalize their sexual health. By embracing hormone biote pellets and utilizing peptides, men can experience improved vitality, enhanced sexual function, and a higher quality of life. Men's Health Month serves as a reminder to prioritize comprehensive well-being, and with the help of these cutting-edge approaches, men can take control of their health and embrace a more fulfilling and empowered life.



For more information about our services or to schedule a consultation, contact us today at (941) 260-7804. You can also check our website at [www.aspire4wt.com](http://www.aspire4wt.com).





# ACUPUNCTURE: SAFE RELIEF FOR THOSE SUFFERING WITH PTSD

By Dr. Brandon Fuller

**W**hile commonly connected to those who have served in the military, post-traumatic stress disorder or PTSD, can impact anyone who has suffered from violence or emotional trauma. The National Institute of Mental Health defines PTSD this way, "Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) can develop after exposure to a potentially traumatic event that is beyond a typical stressor." According to the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs approximately 12 million adults in the U.S. suffer from PTSD during a given year.

Research has shown that acupuncture for PTSD reduces anxiety and stress levels. Acupuncture is also a great treatment option for those suffering from other health issues because of PTSD (i.e., insomnia, digestive issues, headaches, stress and anxiety, etc.).

## How it Works

Typically, acupuncture treatment for PTSD will focus on specific auricular points that focus on different areas of the brain. Some address the emotions, memories, or even amnesia. When the acupuncturist needles that point, the patient can find relief from symptoms.

Perhaps a surprising reason acupuncture for PTSD is so popular is that it allows the person suffering from the trauma to receive help without having to go into detail about the cause of the trauma. While a full medical health history is taken, not having to relive the trauma helps patients to feel safe and perhaps a bit more relaxed.

One of the most complicated components of dealing with the treatment of PTSD is also reigning in the symptoms that result from it including depression, anxiety, sleep disorders, chronic pain, and other mental health concerns, just to name a few. The good news is that acupuncture has a proven track record of success in treating these issues.

Each person with PTSD is different, however, depression and anxiety are often present, and both can manifest in physical and emotional symptoms. This is often an indication of an imbalance of Chi in the body. Chi is defined as the body's energy pathways flowing through channels in the body called meridians. When Chi is balanced and flowing through the meridian network, our bodies operate optimally. When Chi isn't balanced, depression, anxiety, loss of appetite, high blood pressure, and even digestive issues can be present.

Many people who suffer from PTSD also have insomnia or other sleep issues. Acupuncture has also been proven to increase serotonin levels which helps to improve sleep as well as mood. It's an effective drug-free treatment without the side effects often caused by prescription medications.

A study from 2015 found "chronic fatigue patients who were given acupuncture as a supplement to conventional treatment showed greater improvement over patients who did not receive acupuncture."



Chronic pain is often another complaint of those with PTSD and it can be debilitating for those suffering from it as it directly impacts their quality of life. People often treat chronic pain with anti-inflammatory medications (both prescription and over the counter), physical therapy, or with ice and heat, but those options don't always provide long lasting relief. According to Harvard Medical School, "acupuncture is an option with a good track record that's worth considering."

Whether you suffer from PTSD or any of the associated symptoms, acupuncture is an excellent prescription drug-free treatment option to help address a variety of health concerns. Even if you are looking to achieve better overall balance in your life, consistent acupuncture treatments just might be the solution you need. Make an appointment with your acupuncturist today. Your practitioner will do a thorough health history in order to get to the bottom of the symptoms. Call today and get your wellness journey back on track!

**Absolute Acupuncture & Stress Relief** is located in Sarasota, FL. We are licensed acupuncturists with experience treating the root cause(s) of your stress. Go online or call today to schedule your appointment today. Call **941-500-2767**!

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# PERIPHERAL NEUROPATHY: ALTERNATIVE TREATMENT OPTIONS

By Dr. Todd Strong

In the United States alone, neuropathy affects nearly 20 million people, and the mainstream medical community doesn't offer much advice on viable treatment options. The Latin word neuropathy means nerve disorder—this nerve damage happens because the small blood vessels, which supply blood and nutrients to the nerves, becomes impaired. When the nerves are no longer fed nutrients, they either die, or their signals to the brain become restricted and ineffective.

Neuropathy is commonly associated with diabetes, as its customary for nerve damage to have occurred in individuals with high glucose storage. Still, neuropathy can also be attributed to chemotherapy, injuries, autoimmune diseases, compressed spinal vertebrae, cholesterol medication side effects, a buildup of toxins, and vascular disease.

## Symptoms of Neuropathy

- Tingling
- Numbness
- Burning
- Sensations of cold/hot
- Stumbling
- Impingements
- Electrical vibrating sensations
- Falling/Loss of balance
- Lack of strength
- Decreased range-of-motion
- Muscle cramps
- Joint inflammation

## Neuropathy Causes and Treatment

One of the main causes of neuropathy is diabetes. In this case, high blood sugar damages various organs within the body and has a severe adverse effect on nerves. This nerve damage happens when the blood supply is limited. The lack of brain signaling from the nerve endings makes it difficult for a person to feel pain in their feet, legs, and arms in some cases that are affected, so often injuries and these disorders are overlooked. This syndrome is called peripheral diabetic neuropathy.

Because of this nerve damage, there is a risk of developing ulcers on the feet, ankles, and legs. A wound may not sound overly alarming to most people, but peripheral neuropathy ulcers can be



life-threatening. When they are small, they often go undetected due to the lack of feeling. If a patient delays treatment, non-healing ulcers can lead to amputation, strokes, heart attacks, and severe infections that can spread systemically throughout the entire body.

## Proactive, Groundbreaking Peripheral Neuropathy Treatment

At Atlas Health RegenX we offer cutting edge technology to reduce and alleviate neuropathic pain. We use Low Level Laser Light, Pulsed Electrical Frequencies, Ozone, Sound Waves, Regenerative Medicine (Growth Factors, and PRP), Peptides, and Nutritional Supplementation.

We treat stubborn neuropathy's resulting from diabetes, chemotherapy, spinal stenosis, and unknown causes. The treatment offers dramatic results that are long lasting.

This therapy helps restore blood flow, improve circulation, and reduce fluid buildup (edema) in the neuropathy-affected areas. As a result, the body's ability to regenerate is accelerated. The therapy also provides relief from nerve pain.

## Treatment Benefits

- Improved blood circulation
- Accelerated wound healing process
- Restores blood flow
- Decreases fluid buildup
- Accelerates your body's ability to heal nerve damage
- Alleviates nerve pain
- Non-Invasive No Downtime

## Atlas Health RegenX

At Atlas Health RegenX we provide natural alternative therapies to drugs and surgeries for neuropathy, autoimmune and weight loss conditions. We have a 98% success rate in addressing these issues using technology. Your health matters and it's time to get real answers that lead to real results.

## THERE ARE 4 VITAL COMPONENTS TO OUR NEUROPATHY PROTOCOL

### VITAL COMPONENT #1

#### Electromagnetic Infrared Therapy

One of the treatment technologies we use to increase blood flow and repair the nerve is our new Low-Level Light Therapy (LLLT). The light therapy signals Vasoendothelial Growth (VEGF), which signals the production of angiogenesis. Angiogenesis is the creation of the new blood vessels, which is needed to repair nerve damage. These blood vessels grow back around the peripheral nerves and provide them with the proper nutrients to heal and repair. This technology has 21 peer-reviewed studies with a 97% success rate with peripheral neuropathy.

### VITAL COMPONENT #2

#### Electrostimulation

We use state of the art digital electro therapeutic stimulation to assist in the growth of the nerves called Nerve Re-Education. This is used by the Cancer Centers of America in order to help those going through Chemotherapy rebuild the nerves. Nerve Re-Education can even be done at home, so therapy can be done daily! The results can be immediate in both pain relief and restoration of normal sensation.

### VITAL COMPONENT #3

#### Advanced Nutrition Therapy

Proper nutrition in support of our other VITAL COMPONENTS is vital for optimal tissue and nerve repair. Our Advanced Nutritional Therapies have been to designed to accelerate the healing process by affecting the complex processes of inflammation, blood flow, and bioavailable nitric oxide.

### VITAL COMPONENT #4

#### In-Clinic Visits & Online Education

In synergy with your home infrared electromagnetic & electrostimulation therapy you will visit the office 1x per week for our in-clinic protocol. Each vital component is equally important for patient results.

If you are in need of a highly experienced chiropractor, or regenerative medicine in Sarasota FL, look no further than Atlas Health RegenX. For more information or to schedule your initial consultation, call us today!



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# Lymphedema and Functional Transformation Mobile Rehab Services

By James Ferrara - Occupational Therapist and Certified Lymphedema Therapist

**L**ymphedema appears as swelling in the arms or legs and is caused by a blockage in your lymphatic system. The lymphatic system is part of your immune and circulatory systems, and lymphedema usually pops up after damage to this system or if your lymph nodes have been removed. This condition is commonly seen in post-cancer treatment patients. In addition to the swelling, lymphedema can present as pain and discomfort in swollen areas. The most common treatments for lymphedema condition include exercise, wrapping, massage, and compression.

Every day in the US, over 4 million breast cancer survivors struggle with lymphedema. Up to 50% of patients will develop it. 58% of cancer patients diagnosed with breast cancer, melanoma, or pelvic area cancers are at risk for developing limb lymphedema. Early detection of lymphedema is vital.

Using a LymphaTech device, we can detect early signs of lymphedema from breast cancer. It allows us to intervene early and possibly prevent chronic lymphedema which can cause a reduction in quality of life and higher healthcare costs. In 60 seconds, we will know, with reliable accuracy, even small changes in circumference and volume. We track changes over time and percent differences in tissue size are calculated at each visit, which allows you to know your progression instantly.

New for 2023, Functional Transformation Clinic has equipped our clinic with the Soza Medical Device. Lymphedema affects up to 10 million Americans – more than muscular dystrophy, MS, ALS, Parkinson's, and AIDS combined. Early detection of lymphedema using SOZO® with L-Dex®, combined with at-home compression treatment, reduces lymphedema progression by 95%. This device allows us to treat and prevent lymphedema. In the past, the onset of lymphedema was too difficult to detect using standard measurement techniques. Now, SOZO® with L-Dex® technology aids in detecting lymphedema at the subclinical level, or Stage 0, before visible swelling and the condition is irreversible.

An effective lymphedema prevention program, which includes timely education to the patient, effective use of technology for early surveillance, and early detection and intervention protocol has



## Mobile Rehab Services

**Our main goal at Functional Transformation Mobile Rehab is increased mobility and decreased pain. We work closely with each of our patients to develop a program that works around a pace that is reasonable for them and aims to treat their current issues. We'll help you meet your mobility goals with our successful therapy techniques.**

been proven to deliver the best clinical outcomes. But while a prevention model of care has been well established in leading cancer care guidelines, the concept of lymphedema prevention is relatively unfamiliar to patients. SOZO L-Dex® measures and assesses fluid buildup in an at-risk limb compared to a healthy limb to help detect early signs of lymphedema. It uses noninvasive bioimpedance spectroscopy (BIS), which can detect fluid changes as small as 2.4 tablespoons (36ml) and takes less than 30 seconds to complete. An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure.

At Functional Transformation Clinic, Occupational Therapist and Certified Lymphedema Therapists James Ferrara and Kanna Shepherd brings experience and a passion for healing.

**New Lymphedema Clinic in  
Sarasota Specializing in Cancer  
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**Beth Daniels, OTR, CLT-LANA, ALM**

Occupational Therapist for 30 years, Lymphedema therapist for 22 years, Pelvic Floor therapist for 2 years. Specializing in cancer treatment related lymphedema, upper extremity deficits, and pelvic floor complications and diagnoses. Bachelors degree from Texas Women's University in Occupational Therapy - May 1992 Certification in Lymphedema - Judith CasleySmith Australia - November 2000 Lymphology Association of America Certification - 2001 Advanced Lymphedema Therapy - Foldi Clinic - Germany - 2012 Advanced Lymphedema Management - Academy of Lymphatic Studies - February 2020 with emphasis on Head and Neck Lymphedema, Genital Lymphedema, and Wound Care Herman & Wallace - Pelvic Floor Therapy - March 2021 Lindsey Vestal - Pelvic Floor for Occupational Therapists - September 2022



**Kanna Shepherd, OTR/L, CLT-LANA**

Master of Occupational Therapy degree from Louisiana State University Bachelor of Science in Biology from the University of Louisiana at Monroe where she graduated Magna Cum Laude Certified as a lymphedema therapist in 2017 and has achieved the Lymphology Association of North America, CLT-LANA, certification which indicates the highest level of competency and dedication to advanced learning in the field.



2201 Cantu Ct. Suite 109  
Sarasota, FL 34232



# Effective & Proven Chronic Pain Relief with VAX-D®

By Craig S. Aderholdt, BSc, DC

**V**AX-D, short for Vertebral Axial Decompression, is a patented non-surgical therapy proven to successfully treat chronic low back pain, caused by prolapsed, bulging, herniated or degenerative discs, facet syndrome, stenosis and sciatica. Even post-surgical patients and those suffering from central canal or foraminal stenosis have reported significant pain relief with VAX-D therapy. Over a series of relaxing treatment sessions, patients experience powerful pain reduction and healing. Some patients even notice relief after just one visit.

VAX-D's proven and patented technology is currently being utilized by leading physicians in orthopedic medicine, pain medicine, neurology and other specialties in hundreds of clinics around the world. Many doctors choose VAX-D over other devices because it employs the original, patented technology from which decompression therapy was born. VAX-D effectiveness is backed by clinical research. Back pain has grown to be a \$54 billion industry and has literally become a national epidemic. Due to the astounding array of varied treatment options, finding a back pain solution can be a daunting task. Knowing that a product backs its claims with clinical research makes all the difference, and that is what VAX-D offers. A recently completed 2 1/2 year study has demonstrated that VAX-D achieved a remarkable 88% success rate in the 283 chronic back pain patients studied! The patients selected for the study had been unsuccessful at finding relief with at least two previous non-surgical treatments.

VAX-D is not to be confused with traction. VAX-D lengthens and decompresses the spine, reversing high intradiscal pressure through the application of negative pressure via a patented "slow ramp-up" process. This reversal of pressure creates a vacuum inside the discs that not only takes pressure off of pinched nerves, but helps to reposition bulging discs and pull extruded disc material back into place. Simultaneously, nutrients, oxygen and fluids are drawn into the disc to create a revitalized environment conducive to healing. VAX-D stimulates the body's repair mechanism, providing the building blocks needed to actually mend injured and degenerated discs. VAX-D's process is the only patented treatment clinically proven to decrease disc pressures to the negative levels needed to facilitate healing!

## How does VAX-D work?

High intradiscal pressures cause discs to bulge out and press painfully on nerve roots. They also make for a compressed, anaerobic environment unsuitable for healing. Decompression produces and sustains negative pressures within the disc, creating a vacuum effect which draws in nutrients and fluids to promote the repair of injured discs and surrounding tissues. This vacuum has also been shown to aid in the retraction of escaped cushioning gel from herniated discs. Much like gauging the air pressure in a car tire, scientists have been able to use pressure sensors to



measure the various pressures put on spinal discs while lifting, standing, sitting, lying down, undergoing traction, and during VAX-D Therapy. Like other pressures found in the body such as blood pressure, intradiscal pressure is measured in millimeters of mercury (mmHg). While traction, physical therapy and manipulation may reduce disc pressures to as low as 40mmHg, only VAX-D has been shown to achieve negative pressures within the spine. Clinical studies have shown that, with VAX-D Therapy, negative pressures as low as -160 mmHg\* are created within the injured disc during the treatment session!

The key to the "distraction" of VAX-D is achieved through an intricately timed series of pulls, holds, and releases over the course of a treatment session. VAX-D's biofeedback system adjusts this curve of tension specifically to each patient's needs, making every session a truly individualized treatment.

VAX-D Therapy involves three phases that repeat fifteen times throughout a treatment session: the Decompression Phase, the Retraction Phase, and finally, the Rest Phase. During the Decompression Phase, tension slowly mounts, lengthening the spine; up to 99 pounds of tension may be exerted directly on the injured discs. This is where spinal pressures drop and decompression actually occurs. During the Retraction Phase, tension is slowly decreased and the spine is retracted slowly. This is followed by a short Rest Phase.

## Is VAX-D Right for Me?

**You may be a candidate for VAX-D if:**

- You have chronic and/or severe back and/or neck pain caused by bulging or herniated discs. Degenerative disc disease, sciatica, and/or facet syndrome.
- You have been diagnosed with a clinically unstable low back.
- You have failed back surgery syndrome.
- You have been told to consider surgery.

Many patients have experienced more than a 50% reduction in pain after their first treatment! For those suffering from herniated and degenerated discs, the escaped nucleus pulposus may be partially or completely retracted back into the disc after just the first session (though usually it takes longer), relieving a great deal of pain. However, pain reduction does not indicate full recovery, and a full

recovery is essential to preventing re-injury. Each treatment session lasts approximately 45 minutes. A typical VAX-D treatment regimen consists of about 20 sessions. Some conditions require fewer visits; some require more. Many patients report relief from their pain and other symptoms during the first few treatment sessions, and most experience dramatic pain relief after completion of their prescribed VAX-D Therapy program.

VAX-D therapy is a non-surgical procedure to reduce pain by decompressing your spine and reducing the stress and pressure on your discs and spinal nerves. Contact Dr. Craig Aderholdt, at 941-756-5528 for a **free consultation** to see if you are a candidate for this revolutionary procedure. We hope you enjoy the information within and share it with others.

Contact Dr. Aderholdt today to find out if you can finally relieve your pain and suffering with this proven safe and effective nonsurgical breakthrough for neck and back pain.

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## Dr. Craig S. Aderholdt, BSc, DC



*At Back Pain Institute of West Florida, located in Bradenton, FL, our number one concern is to help our patients with a natural approach to pain treatment. Dr. Craig Aderholdt, BSc, DC, received his undergraduate degree from Pennsylvania State*

*University State College, and his Doctor of Chiropractic from life University School of Chiropractic in Marietta, GA. He then later graduated Cum Laude.*

*Dr. Aderholdt also holds certification in chiropractic adjunctive physiotherapy from New York Chiropractic College and completed extensive postgraduate training in therapeutic modalities at National-Lincoln School. He is a member of the Florida Chiropractic Association and American Chiropractic Association and is a certified VAX-D consultant. He was also voted a Bradenton Herald People's Choice Awards Winner for 2008, 2022 and is the Manatee Herald-Tribune Awards winner for 2015, 2016, 2017, 2020 and 2021 and Sarasota Herald-Tribune finalist for 2016, 2017, 2018, 2020, 2021 and winner in 2019.*



**Voted #1**  
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# When You Are At Your Wits End

By Pastor Timothy Neptune - [www.venturenaples.com](http://www.venturenaples.com)

**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 'something' 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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