

S O U T H W E S T F L O R I D A ' S

# Health & Wellness<sup>®</sup> MAGAZINE

August 2023

Lee Edition - Monthly

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# This New Hearing Treatment Technology Just Restored My Ability to Hear Well in Noise!

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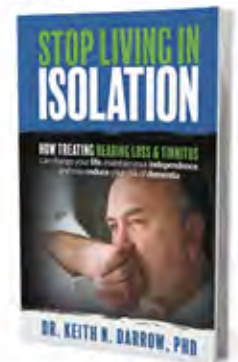
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Like you, I struggle hearing in noise, when multiple people speak,  
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# THE IMPORTANCE OF A BASELINE HEARING TEST

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

**T**he human body is a complex ecosystem, where each part plays a vital role in maintaining overall health. Among the many organs and systems that contribute to our well-being, the sense of hearing stands as a critical pillar. Often overlooked, baseline hearing tests are an indispensable tool for assessing and safeguarding our auditory health. This article delves into the significance of baseline hearing tests, shedding light on their role in preserving overall health and wellness.

## Understanding Baseline Hearing Tests

A baseline hearing test is a comprehensive evaluation of an individual's auditory abilities, typically conducted in a controlled environment by an audiologist. The test establishes a benchmark for an individual's hearing at a specific point in time, serving as a valuable reference for future assessments. It involves a series of sound-based stimuli and measures the person's ability to detect and interpret different frequencies and intensities of sound.

## Detecting Hearing Loss Early

One of the key reasons for conducting baseline hearing tests is to identify hearing loss at its earliest stages. Hearing loss can develop gradually, often going unnoticed until it reaches an advanced level. By establishing a baseline, any deviation from the norm can be detected promptly, enabling early intervention and preventing further deterioration.

## Preventing Cognitive Decline

The relationship between hearing and cognitive function has been the subject of extensive research. Studies have shown that untreated hearing loss can accelerate cognitive decline and increase the risk of conditions like dementia and Alzheimer's disease. A baseline hearing test helps catch hearing loss early on, reducing the cognitive burden and promoting brain health in the long run.

## Enhancing Communication and Social Interaction

Hearing is fundamental to effective communication, allowing us to connect with others and engage in meaningful interactions. When hearing loss goes unnoticed or unaddressed, it can lead to social isolation and decreased quality of life. By identifying hearing issues through baseline hearing tests, individuals can receive appropriate interventions like hearing aids or assistive devices, enabling them to stay socially active and connected.



## Preserving Mental and Emotional Well-Being

Living with untreated hearing loss can take a toll on mental and emotional well-being. Struggling to hear and communicate can lead to frustration, anxiety, and feelings of inadequacy. By addressing hearing issues early on, individuals can experience improved emotional stability and overall mental health, leading to a more fulfilling life.

## Preventing Occupational Hazards

For many professions, hearing plays a crucial role in ensuring workplace safety and efficiency. Baseline hearing tests are especially critical for individuals working in noisy environments, such as construction sites or factories. Identifying any hearing impairment early can help implement necessary measures to protect employees' hearing and prevent work-related hearing loss.

## Promoting Heart Health

Surprising as it may seem, research has revealed a link between cardiovascular health and hearing. A healthy cardiovascular system ensures adequate blood flow to the delicate structures of the inner ear, supporting optimal hearing function. Baseline hearing tests can alert healthcare providers to potential cardiovascular issues, prompting further evaluation and preventive measures.

## Addressing Tinnitus and Ear Conditions

Tinnitus, a condition characterized by ringing or buzzing sounds in the ears, can significantly impact an individual's quality of life. Baseline hearing tests aid in identifying the onset of tinnitus, allowing for prompt management and reducing its negative effects. Additionally, these tests can detect other ear-related conditions like infections or abnormalities, enabling timely treatment.

In the intricate symphony of human health, hearing holds a distinct and indispensable place. The significance of a baseline hearing test for overall health cannot be overstated. By detecting hearing loss and other auditory issues early on, individuals can take proactive steps to preserve their cognitive function, emotional well-being, and social connections. Let us not overlook the crucial connection between our ears and our overall health, and instead, embrace the benefits of baseline hearing tests for a healthier and more fulfilling life.

**John Nobile, HAS, BC-HIS, ACA** is a licensed hearing aid specialist and an ACA-certified audioprosthetologist who is also board-certified in hearing instrument sciences. With over 55 years of experience, he has transformed thousands of lives in Cape Coral



and Fort Myers, FL, by providing his patients with the gift of sound. He is also a former veteran committed to providing all veterans with free services.

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# CONFIDENCE CHECK

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

RALPH R. GARRAMONE, MD, FACS

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

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

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



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

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

## GREAT EXPECTATIONS

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

As for the procedure at the practice's state-of-the-art, accredited surgical facility, patients should plan on 2.5 to 4.5 hours for surgery with additional time spent in recovery. According to Dr. Garramone, recovery isn't what it used to be 20 years ago. Dr. Garramone uses a long-lasting nerve blocker to aid in patients' discomfort; patients can expect to rest for approximately 10 to 14 days before returning to normal daily life, including work or at-home activities. Most patients are back to 90% of their normal daily activities within a month.

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

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

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# Fun & Unique Activities for Older Adults

**T**oday's older adults are more active, agile, adventurous and – dare we say – more thrill-seeking than those of the past. These days, they're going beyond the book clubs, putting away the board games and puzzles, and skipping art class to try something a little more fast-paced, something more their speed.

They're in good company, too. Chances are, you've heard of the 67-year old surfer, or even the group of older adult skateboarders – and this is just the tip of the wave of older adults shredding stereotypes of what they can or can not do.

If you're looking for a unique way to stay active, test your limits and even learn some new skills, check out these fun activities for starters.

## Martial Arts

You may be thinking, "Martial arts for older adults? You mean Tai Chi, right?" Absolutely not. We mean all types of martial arts, including Kung Fu, Brazilian Jiu Jitsu, Wing Chun (which is great for self-defense!) and Karate.

Martial arts, for older adults, can be about far more than fun, too. It's also great for hand-eye coordination, balance and flexibility. With practice and dedication, who knows, you may just become a black belt – and a superhero to your grandkids!

## Competitive Races

Another fun activity for older adults includes racing. Now, this is a broad category, obviously, but as we're testing our limits and pushing ourselves, it's important to look at what kind of racing. For some, a simple marathon will do the trick while providing all the adrenaline they need. Others like a multi-sport element, like a triathlon. Some even prefer swimming, like 77-year-old Mike Stollmeyer.

For those who are really wanting to show off their skills, while testing their own personal boundaries, there's the Spartan Race. The Spartan Race consists of many different types of races and tracks, some with obstacle equipment, some that are only trails and some that are bike courses. With a multitude of race locations and types, there's something for everyone. And, of course, what could be better than your sense of accomplishment, all while your friends and family members cheer you on.

## Weight Lifting

If your goal is to build muscle, strengthen your joints or reduce symptoms of chronic conditions, try weight lifting. Not only can you have a personal trainer help you, but you can also follow online videos to get started.

## Scuba Diving

Let's be honest, this suggestion is just plain fun! Keep in mind, though, just because it involves water and swimming does not mean it doesn't require a lot of physical activity. Scuba diving requires some heavy equipment and depending on where you dive, visibility can be limited. When done safely, or with trained professionals, this can be a great activity to enjoy – and just think about all the cool stories you'll be able to tell at your next social activity.

## Tennis

Think you have what it takes to become a tennis pro? Tennis is a great activity for older adults who want to spend time with their friends, participate in a sport with low physical contact, and engage in a little friendly competition. Even better, people of all ages can have fun playing, making it a great inter-generational activity.

## Paddleboarding

Stand-up paddleboarding tests your balance, is no-impact and gets you closer to nature. Venture off into the water and see if you can find a dolphin or manatee, or, just enjoy a calm day on the water exploring with your friends. It's the ultimate way to savor the beauty of nature while staying active.

## Disc Golf

Like golf, but more active, Disc Golf tests your ability to get a disc into metal baskets in the smallest amount of throws. You may also have heard this called Frisbee Golf. Unlike golf, however, where many players use golf carts to get around, you're walking to get to each spot on the course.

This is a great form of aerobic exercise and requires very little equipment, all you need is a course, a disc or frisbee, yourself or a friend to compete with and, of course, some water to stay hydrated.

## Discover more unique activities for older adults.

At The Terraces at Bonita Springs, our community is full of fun things to do. From social events and engaging activities, to sports like tennis and opportunities to lift weights and strength train in our state-of-the-art fitness center.

Is there something not offered at our community that you'd like to participate in? Our location puts you close to many different area attractions. Either let our Valet services bring your car for you, or you can take our scheduled transportation.

What's more is that you can spend each day as you please because we take care of home maintenance, housekeeping and yard work, freeing up your time and ensuring you can pursue whatever activity inspires you.

## Experience it for yourself.

If health and wellness matters to you in retirement, look no further than The Terraces at Bonita Springs. Give us a call to learn about our Vitality Program and all that our Life Plan Community with a Type A LifeCare contract has to offer.

---

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You're invited to an immersive tour of The Terraces at Bonita Springs, where you'll sample small bites from around the world created by our executive chef. Discover the unparalleled lifestyle and peace of mind found in this Life Plan Community with a Type A LifeCare contract.

*Space is limited. Valet parking will be available.  
Please RSVP by Wednesday, August 23.*

---

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

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# LEG CARE WHILE TRAVELING:

## Mitigating the Risk of DVT During Air and Car Travel

**W**hen embarking on a journey, whether by air or car, we often focus on the excitement of the destination rather than the potential risks along the way. However, it's crucial to pay attention to our leg health while traveling, particularly in terms of Deep Vein Thrombosis (DVT). DVT occurs when a blood clot forms in a deep vein, typically in the legs, and it can be a serious condition. In this article, we will explore the risk of DVT during air and car travel and discuss essential leg care measures that can help ensure a safe and comfortable journey.

### UNDERSTANDING THE RISK OF DVT

Both air and car travel can increase the risk of developing DVT due to prolonged periods of sitting, limited leg movement, and decreased blood circulation. The reduced blood flow and extended periods of immobility can contribute to the formation of blood clots. While anyone can be at risk, certain factors such as obesity, pregnancy, smoking, age, and a history of DVT or other blood clotting disorders can further increase the susceptibility. Awareness and proactive leg care can significantly mitigate these risks.

### LEG CARE MEASURES FOR AIR TRAVEL

- 1. Stay hydrated:** Drink plenty of water to avoid dehydration, which can contribute to blood clot formation.
- 2. Regular leg exercises:** Perform simple exercises like ankle rotations, toe raises, and calf stretches to promote blood circulation.
- 3. Wear compression socks:** These specialized socks provide graduated pressure on the legs, reducing the risk of blood pooling and clotting.
- 4. Get up and move:** Take regular breaks to walk around the cabin whenever possible. If you're unable to leave your seat, perform seated leg exercises.
- 5. Choose comfortable clothing:** Wear loose, non-restrictive clothing to ensure optimal blood flow.



### LEG CARE MEASURES FOR CAR TRAVEL

- 1. Frequent stops:** Plan regular breaks during long car journeys, allowing time to stretch your legs and walk around.
- 2. Gentle stretching exercises:** Utilize rest stops to perform exercises like leg swings, squats, and lunges, helping to stimulate blood circulation.
- 3. Adjust seating position:** Maintain good posture and adjust your seat position to ensure comfort and optimal blood flow.
- 4. Avoid crossing your legs:** Crossing your legs can impede blood flow, so keep both feet on the floor or use a footrest if necessary.
- 5. Stay hydrated:** Bring an adequate supply of water and avoid excessive caffeine and alcohol, as they can contribute to dehydration.

### GENERAL LEG CARE TIPS

- 1. Maintain a healthy lifestyle:** Regular exercise, a balanced diet, and maintaining a healthy weight are all crucial for overall leg health.
- 2. Avoid tight clothing:** Wearing tight clothing can restrict blood flow, so opt for loose-fitting garments, especially during travel.

**3. Know the warning signs:** Familiarize yourself with the symptoms of DVT, such as leg pain, swelling, warmth, and redness. Seek medical attention if any of these signs occur.

Taking care of our legs while traveling is of utmost importance to minimize the risk of DVT. Whether traveling by air or car, practicing leg care measures can significantly reduce the chances of developing blood clots. By staying active, staying hydrated, and being mindful of leg exercises and proper seating positions, we can ensure a safer and more comfortable journey. Prioritizing leg health during travel allows us to focus on the excitement and enjoyment of our destination while keeping potential risks at bay.

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# PROTECTING YOUR CHILD'S VISION JUST IN TIME FOR A SUCCESSFUL BACK-TO-SCHOOL SEASON

By Bradley Middaugh, O.D. | Optometric Physician

As the back-to-school season approaches, parents and caregivers are busy ensuring that children have everything they need for a successful academic year. However, amidst the excitement of new books, backpacks, and school supplies, it's important not to overlook a crucial aspect of their well-being: their eye health. Good vision is fundamental for learning, and taking steps to safeguard children's eyes is vital. In this article, we will explore the importance of children's eye health and provide practical tips to promote optimal vision during the back-to-school period.

## Understanding the Significance of Children's Eye Health

Healthy eyes play a significant role in a child's educational journey. Clear vision enables them to absorb information, read text, and comprehend lessons effectively. Unfortunately, many vision problems go unnoticed, leading to potential academic challenges. According to the American Optometric Association, one in four children has an undiagnosed vision problem. By prioritizing regular eye exams and adopting healthy eye habits, parents can give their children a solid foundation for academic success.

## Promoting Good Eye Health Habits

**1. Schedule an Eye Exam:** Before the start of the school year, schedule a comprehensive eye exam for your child. Eye exams can detect refractive errors, eye coordination issues, and other vision problems that might hinder learning. Early detection and treatment can prevent potential difficulties.

**2. Encourage Outdoor Play:** Spending time outdoors benefits children in various ways, including their eye health. Natural light helps regulate the development of the eyes, reduces the risk of nearsightedness, and promotes overall visual well-being. Encourage outdoor activities during breaks and after school.

**3. Limit Screen Time:** Excessive screen time can strain the eyes and contribute to vision problems. Establish sensible limits on device usage, ensuring children take regular breaks and practice the 20-20-20 rule: every 20 minutes, look at an object 20 feet away for 20 seconds. This helps reduce eye strain caused by prolonged near-vision tasks.



**4. Proper Lighting:** Ensure that study areas are well-lit to minimize eye strain. Good lighting reduces glare and helps maintain comfortable reading conditions. Utilize desk lamps or overhead lighting to provide adequate illumination.

**5. Healthy Diet:** A balanced diet rich in nutrients, especially those beneficial for eye health like omega-3 fatty acids, vitamin C, and vitamin E, supports optimal vision. Include foods such as leafy greens, citrus fruits, nuts, and fish in your child's diet.

**6. Protective Eyewear:** Encourage your child to wear appropriate protective eyewear during sports or recreational activities. This reduces the risk of eye injuries that can have long-lasting consequences.

As parents and caregivers prepare their children for the upcoming school year, it is crucial to prioritize their eye health. By understanding the significance of good vision and implementing practical tips, we can ensure that children have the best chance at success in their academic pursuits. Regular eye exams, healthy habits, and a supportive environment all contribute to safeguarding their eyes and setting the stage for a productive and enjoyable back-to-school experience. Let's make children's eye health a top priority as we embark on this exciting educational journey!

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**BRADLEY MIDDAGH, O.D.**  
Optometric Physician

Dr. Bradley Middaugh is a board-certified optometric physician committed to providing his patients the highest level of care through innovative technology and a focus on providing an excellent patient experience. Dr. Middaugh has extensive training in ocular disease, vision testing, eyewear prescriptions, specialty contact lenses and the diagnosis and treatment of eye disorders for patients of all ages, from pediatric to geriatric.

Dr. Middaugh graduated from Wake Forest University and earned his doctorate at The University of Alabama at Birmingham. He has been in private practice since 1988 and founded The Fort Myers Eye Center in 1993. In 2020, he joined the Center For Sight team to offer his patients direct access to the some of the finest cataract, LASIK, glaucoma, cornea, retina, and oculo-plastics specialists in Southwest Florida.

Dr. Middaugh has served on the Lee County School Board as a member of the Health Care Advisory Panel and the Early Intervention Health Care Panel. He is also an active member of the Southwest Florida Optometric Association, the Florida Optometric Association, and the American Optometric Association, and Above Board Chamber. In addition, he enjoys leading Medical Mission teams annually to El Salvador.

Dr. Middaugh and his wife, Meg, enjoy raising their two boys. The family is very active in their church, Walk to Emmaus, Kairos Prison Ministry, and enjoy serving on medical mission teams.





# KEEPING TWO FEET ON THE FLOOR

By Joe Altepeter, DPM

**F**alls among older Americans are responsible for a significant amount of injuries landing elders in the urgent care clinics and emergency departments across the United States, especially in southwest Florida, home to a handful of retirees. Taking steps to avoid these incidents is paramount and takes a well rounded approach with all medical specialties involved with each individual's care.

From the foot and ankle perspective there are a number of things that can be considered to improve balance and decrease the chances of falls. First and foremost being the use of appropriate shoe gear. With "appropriate" being an important descriptor for the length, width, comfort, and stability of the shoes. Over the course of one's lifetime there are plenty of musculoskeletal changes that can take place and make last decade's sneakers obsolete. Routinely being fitted for shoes is important, and ensuring appropriate fit will help decrease soreness related to pressure points that may incite gait abnormalities. This is best done towards the end of the day after performing regular daily activities to accommodate for any swelling that may take place. For someone with baseline poor balance, stability of a shoe is key. The back of the shoe around the heel, or the heel counter, should be relatively stiff. The sole of the shoe should also be relatively stiff with enough bend along the toe box for adequate range of motion for propulsion. The middle of the shoe, or the shank, should withstand twisting and bending as well.

For those with more significant musculoskeletal issues additional stabilization may be necessary. There are a number of different types of orthoses and bracing options that could be considered to help correct biomechanical disturbances that may alter gait. Deformities and altered mechanics that primarily occur at the level of the foot may be well suited with some motion controlling over the counter or custom orthotics, while bracing options that include the foot and lower leg, and even the knee, may be necessary for more significant musculoskeletal pathology. These are options that your podiatrist could make recommendations.



Evaluation and management by the physical therapy department is also a mainstay for preserving strength and confidence with ambulation. They can help put together a game plan to tackle any musculoskeletal pathology, nerve related symptoms, or balance concerns from a therapy perspective. This would likely involve pointed muscular stretching and strengthening exercises, gait reinforcement and assistance with mobilization, balance and proprioceptive exercises, among others. Part of the rehabilitative process may involve use of an assistive device. Short or long term use of a cane, walker, scooter, or wheelchair may be necessary to assist with balance and avoid falls.

Check in with your local podiatrist for advice on the options mentioned above and to put together a game plan for keeping you on your feet.

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

## Joe Altepeter, DPM, AACFAS

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



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# Understanding Symptoms and Treatment Options for Enlarged Prostate (Benign Prostatic Hyperplasia)

**E**nlarged prostate, clinically known as benign prostatic hyperplasia (BPH), is a common condition affecting older men. As the prostate gland grows, it can exert pressure on the urethra, leading to bothersome symptoms and impacting quality of life. In this article, we will explore the symptoms associated with an enlarged prostate and discuss the various treatment options available.

## Symptoms of an Enlarged Prostate

An enlarged prostate can cause a range of symptoms, varying in severity from person to person. Some common signs to watch out for include increased urinary frequency, urgency to urinate, weak urine flow, difficulty initiating or stopping urination, and the sensation of incomplete bladder emptying. Nocturia (frequent nighttime urination) and urinary tract infections may also occur. It's important to note that these symptoms can be indicative of other conditions, so it's essential to consult a healthcare professional for an accurate diagnosis.

## Diagnosis and Evaluation

To diagnose an enlarged prostate, a healthcare provider will evaluate a patient's medical history, perform a physical examination, and may order additional tests. These tests may include a prostate-specific antigen (PSA) blood test, urine flow rate assessment, ultrasound, or cystoscopy. These diagnostic tools help determine the size of the prostate, assess urinary function, and rule out other potential causes of the symptoms.

## Treatment Options

The treatment approach for an enlarged prostate depends on the severity of symptoms, overall health, and personal preferences. In mild cases, a watchful waiting approach may be adopted, with regular monitoring and lifestyle modifications. Lifestyle changes can include avoiding caffeine and alcohol, managing fluid intake, and practicing pelvic floor exercises.



Medications can also be prescribed to alleviate symptoms. Alpha-blockers help relax the muscles around the prostate and bladder neck, improving urine flow. 5-alpha reductase inhibitors reduce the size of the prostate by blocking the conversion of testosterone to dihydrotestosterone, a hormone responsible for prostate growth.

For more severe cases, minimally invasive procedures or surgery may be recommended. Transurethral resection of the prostate (TURP) involves removing excess prostate tissue to relieve urinary obstruction. Other options include laser therapy, transurethral microwave therapy (TUMT), and prostate artery embolization (PAE).

An enlarged prostate, or benign prostatic hyper trophy, can significantly impact a man's quality of life. Recognizing the symptoms and seeking medical advice is crucial for accurate diagnosis and appropriate management. Treatment options range from lifestyle modifications and medication to minimally invasive procedures and surgery, depending on the severity of symptoms. If you or someone you know experiences symptoms associated with an enlarged prostate, consult a healthcare professional to discuss the best course of

action. With appropriate treatment and management, individuals with an enlarged prostate can improve their urinary function and enjoy a better quality of life.



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



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# EFFECTIVE TREATMENTS TO ALLEVIATE MOTION SICKNESS

By Amy Hoffmann Schenk, RN, BSN, MS Ed, Community Engagement Lead Neuropsychiatric Research Center of SW Florida

**M**otion sickness, also known as travel sickness, is a common condition that affects many individuals when exposed to certain types of motion. Whether you're traveling by car, boat, plane, or even on a roller coaster, the uneasy feeling of nausea, dizziness, and discomfort can quickly spoil your journey. According to the CDC, motion sickness happens when the movement you see is different from what your inner ear senses.

## Understanding Motion Sickness

As noted above, motion sickness occurs when there is a disconnect between the sensory inputs perceived by the eyes, inner ear, and other motion-sensing body parts. The brain receives conflicting signals about motion and balance, leading to symptoms such as nausea, vomiting, dizziness, sweating, and fatigue. While some people are more prone to motion sickness than others, it can affect anyone, regardless of age or experience. You may not experience motion sickness every time you travel. You may be fine riding in the car, but when you look at your phone or try to read, motion sickness can come back full force.

## Over-the-Counter Medications

There are several over-the-counter medications can help manage motion sickness symptoms. Antihistamines, such as dimenhydrinate (Dramamine) and meclizine (Bonine), are commonly used to alleviate nausea and dizziness. These medications work by blocking specific signals in the brain that trigger motion sickness symptoms. It's important to follow the recommended dosage instructions and always consult a healthcare professional if you have any underlying medical conditions or are taking other medications.

## Prescription Medications

For individuals with severe motion sickness or those who frequently travel long distances, prescription medications may be recommended. Scopolamine patches, applied behind the ear, deliver a steady dose of the medication to help prevent motion sickness for several days. Other prescription options include medications like promethazine and

ondansetron. It's crucial to consult a healthcare provider for a proper diagnosis and guidance on prescription medication use. And while some of these approaches may be helpful, unfortunately, not every approach is successful.

## Natural Remedies

Many natural remedies can help alleviate motion sickness symptoms. Ginger, in various forms such as capsules, tea, or ginger candy, has shown promising results in reducing nausea and vomiting. Peppermint and chamomile teas are also known for their soothing effects on the stomach. Acupressure wristbands, which apply pressure to specific points on the wrists, have gained popularity and may provide relief for some individuals. Additionally, maintaining good airflow, avoiding strong odors, and focusing on a fixed point in the distance can help reduce the sensations of motion sickness.

## Preventive Strategies

Prevention is key in managing motion sickness. Sitting in the front seat of a car or in the middle of a boat can help minimize symptoms by reducing the perception of motion. Avoiding heavy meals or spicy, greasy foods before traveling can also help prevent nausea. It's important to stay hydrated and avoid alcohol, smoking and excessive caffeine, as they can exacerbate symptoms. Proper ventilation and fresh air circulation can alleviate discomfort, especially in enclosed spaces. Taking regular breaks, focusing on the horizon, and engaging in distractions like listening to music or engaging in conversation can also divert attention from motion-related sensations.

Motion sickness can be a challenging condition to navigate, but there are effective treatments and strategies available to alleviate its symptoms. Over-the-counter and prescription medications, along with natural remedies, can provide relief for different individuals. Additionally, preventive measures such as choosing seating positions, managing diet, and employing various distraction techniques can help minimize motion sickness. By exploring these options and finding what works best for you, you can conquer motion sickness and enjoy your travels with greater comfort and confidence.

## DO YOU (OR YOUR FAMILY OR FRIENDS) DEAL WITH MOTION SICKNESS?

*You may have tried some of all of the suggested approaches and still may have some symptoms of motion sickness. Here at the Neuropsychiatric Research Center (NPRC) we are offering a new clinical trial focusing on helping people deal with motion sickness effectively.*

**Here is the link to the study**  
<https://mymotionstudy.com/>

*It is free, and all you need to do is put in your contact information and a short description of your symptoms. In a day or so, a representative will contact you and ask you a few more questions, which takes about 5 to 10 minutes. This screening call will evaluate your symptoms to see if you potentially qualify for the study. If you do qualify, one of our team at NPRC will be in touch to schedule an in person meeting.*

*The in-person meetings will likely be less than an hour and visits will continue over the course of the one-year study. There are five (5) total visits. You may be eligible for some compensation for your time and trouble as well. The study is open to individuals between the ages of 18 and 75.*

*If you have questions please contact NPRC at 239-939-7777. As a reminder, we are offering free memory screens in August. They are being conducted August 8th and 9th in our office at 14271 Metropolis Avenue.*

*To schedule your free screening you can register at <https://joinaresearchstudy.com/ftmyers-memory-screening-initiative/>.*



**You can also contact us at 239 939 7777 for assistance.**



# THE TOP 5 CANNABIS PRODUCTS TO BEAT ANXIETY IN FLORIDA

Florida has opened the doors to the medicinal potential of cannabis, inviting a new era of wellness for Floridians. Many of these products offer a fantastic solution for those who face the burden of anxiety, without the “medicated” or “high” feeling most consider when thinking of medicinal marijuana.

The market has blossomed in the sunshine state, offering innovative cannabis products tailored for various conditions, including anxiety. Today, we navigate this vibrant landscape to present you with five top-tier cannabis products in Florida designed to combat anxiety.

## 1. Cream Cake Mints at Sunnyside

The Cream Cake Mints strain available at Sunnyside is a top choice among Floridians managing anxiety.

Developed from a unique fusion of Ice Cream Cake and Animal Mints strains, Cream Cake Mints offers a sensory feast, with its minty-sweet flavor complemented by a subtle hint of diesel. Notably, this strain possesses a THC content of around 17%, making it potent for inducing relaxation and alleviating anxiety symptoms.

The three core terpenes are essential to its anxiety-combating capabilities: Limonene, Caryophyllene, and Linalool. Limonene is acclaimed for its mood-elevating properties, Caryophyllene for its anti-inflammatory and anxiety-reducing effects, and Linalool, a terpene found in lavender, for its calming and soothing properties.

For residents in Florida looking to unwind from a stressful day, Cream Cake Mints is an excellent choice that can enhance their sleep quality.

## 2. MÜV Cannabis 1:1 THC/CBD Inhaler

MÜV Cannabis 1:1 THC/CBD Inhaler presents an innovative solution for Florida's residents seeking balanced and controlled anxiety relief.

Its user-friendly design, akin to a traditional inhaler, ensures a controlled delivery of medical cannabis. Notably, the 1:1 formulation of THC and CBD synergizes their effects, which is critical in managing anxiety symptoms.

The inhaler provides 200mg each of THC and CBD, guaranteeing a metered dose with each use. This precision ensures the effective use of the medicine



and provides predictable results. The inhaler also provides discretion, a vital aspect for many users, by eliminating the traditional smells associated with cannabis usage.

Hence, Florida's residents who need consistent, anxiety-reducing effects in a user-friendly, discrete, and efficient design will find the MÜV Cannabis 1:1 THC/CBD Inhaler a top option.

## 3. Tikun Olam Midnight from Vidacann

Tikun Olam's Midnight tincture from Vidacann offers Floridians an effective solution for anxiety.

This product is derived from a high-CBD, sativa-dominant strain known for managing pain, inflammation, indigestion, sleep disorders, restlessness, and anxiety. Its balanced blend of 250mg each of THC and CBD provides the synergistic therapeutic benefits of both cannabinoids without the overpowering high usually associated with high-THC products.

The tincture form adds flexibility in consumption, allowing it to be ingested or taken sublingually. Additionally, precise dosing is facilitated by the graduated syringe included with the purchase.

The natural avocado oil base improves absorption while offering further health benefits. Therefore, Tikun Olam's Midnight tincture is an excellent option for Florida's elderly population and those new to cannabis, making it a versatile solution for managing anxiety.

## 4. Frutful™ Mint And Lime Cartridge at GrowHealthy

The Frutful™ Mint And Lime Cartridge at GrowHealthy redefines the medical marijuana experience for residents in Florida with its mojito-inspired distillate.

A standout feature of this cartridge is its balanced 1:1 ratio of THC to CBD, which potentiates anxiety symptoms. The distillate's substantial CBD content (49.7%) and THC content (31.7%) induce relaxation and reduce stress without causing a high. Its minty, tangy taste also creates an uplifting experience that's as enjoyable as sipping a refreshing mojito.

The balance of cannabinoids and the delightful flavoring make this distillate a pleasure to consume and a powerful tool for managing anxiety symptoms. Consequently, the Frutful™ Mint And Lime Cartridge emerges as an exceptional choice for Floridians seeking a potent, refreshing, and balanced solution for their anxiety management.

## 5. Sweet Talk Gels Pomegranate - 5:1 (THC: CBN) at Trulieve

Finally, the Sweet Talk Gels Pomegranate available at Trulieve brings a novel approach to managing anxiety with its unique 5:1 THC to CBN ratio.

Recognized for potent relaxation properties, CBN combined with THC can enhance sleep, relieve pain, and significantly reduce anxiety symptoms. These gummies pack a flavorful punch, blending tart and sweet flavors while delivering potent therapeutic effects.

Notably, the gummies' creation involves a solventless process, ensuring a clean, chemical-free product that lets Florida's residents consume confidently. The potent combination of THC and CBN promotes enhanced relaxation, making it easier to manage anxiety symptoms, especially at night.

Therefore, Sweet Talk Gels Pomegranate is a top choice for Floridians dealing with anxiety, providing a safe, high-quality product that combines delightful flavors and powerful therapeutic properties.

## Taking the Next Step with A Florida Medical Card

From potent strains to innovative inhalers and delicious gummies, these five cannabis products offer Floridians struggling with anxiety various options.

Each product leverages the power of cannabinoids and terpenes to help users manage anxiety symptoms. By procuring a Medical Marijuana Card, Florida residents can start their journey towards an anxiety-free life with the help of these cannabis products.



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# DON'T LET PSORIASIS TAKE OVER YOUR SKIN

By Joseph Onorato, MD, FAAD

**P**soriasis is an immune-mediated disease (a disease with an unclear cause that is characterized by inflammation caused by dysfunction of the immune system) that causes inflammation in the body. There may be visible signs of the inflammation such as raised plaques (plaques may look different for different skin types) and scales on the skin.

This occurs because the overactive immune system speeds up skin cell growth. Normal skin cells completely grow and shed (fall off) in a month. With psoriasis, skin cells do this in only three or four days. Instead of shedding, the skin cells pile up on the surface of the skin. Some people report that psoriasis plaques itch, burn and sting. Plaques and scales may appear on any part of the body, although they are commonly found on the elbows, knees, and scalp.

Inflammation caused by psoriasis can impact other organs and tissues in the body. People with psoriasis may also experience other health conditions. One in three people with psoriasis may also develop psoriatic arthritis. Signs of PsA include swelling, stiffness and pain in the joints and areas surrounding the joints. PsA often goes undiagnosed, particularly in its milder forms. However, it's important to treat PsA early on to help avoid permanent joint damage.

Symptoms often start between ages 15 and 25 but can start at any age. Men, women, and children of all skin colors can get psoriasis. Psoriasis can appear anywhere on the body, even on the eyelids, ears, lips, skin folds, hands, feet, and nails. Plaques can be a few small patches or can affect large areas. It's possible to have psoriasis plaques and scales in more than one location on the body at a time.

There are five types of psoriasis. It's possible to have more than one type of psoriasis at one time and more than one type in a lifetime. Treatments may vary depending on the type and location of the psoriasis. While scientists do not know what exactly causes psoriasis, we do know that the immune system and genetics play major roles in its development. One thing we do know: psoriasis is not contagious. You cannot catch psoriasis from another person. Usually, something triggers psoriasis, causing symptoms to appear or worsen. Triggers vary from person to person.



Psoriasis triggers vary from person to person. What may worsen your psoriasis might not have any impact on someone else. Common psoriasis triggers include:

- **Stress:** Stress is one of the most common psoriasis triggers. At the same time, a psoriasis flare can cause stress. This may seem like an endless loop. However, relaxation techniques and stress management may help prevent stress from impacting psoriasis.
- **Injury to Skin:** Psoriasis can appear in areas of the skin that have been injured or harmed. This is a result of the Koebner phenomenon, which states scratches, sunburns, bug bites and vaccinations can all trigger a psoriasis flare.
- **Illness:** Anything that can affect the immune system can trigger psoriasis. That is why you may experience a flare following an ear infection, bronchitis, tonsillitis or a respiratory infection. There is a connection between streptococcus infection (strep throat) and guttate psoriasis, as it often triggers the first onset of guttate psoriasis in children. It is possible to have strep throat without showing symptoms. If you have had strep throat in the past, talk with your health care provider about getting a strep throat test if your psoriasis flares.
- **Weather:** The weather may trigger a flare. Cold weather can often cause psoriasis flares due to less sunlight and humidity, heated and drier indoor air, as well as stress and illness. Warm weather can often improve psoriasis because of natural sunlight and higher humidity.
- **Other Possible Triggers:** Although it is less common, some people with psoriasis suspect that allergies, certain foods, alcohol, or environmental factors trigger their psoriasis. A great way to learn about your unique set of triggers is to track them over time. Keeping records of your symptoms and triggers can help you anticipate and treat your flares.

As with other chronic diseases, psoriasis may affect areas of your life other than your physical health. Psoriasis may affect your emotional health, your relationships, and how you handle stress. It could even affect areas of your life that you wouldn't expect, such as the clothes that you choose to wear. For some people, living with psoriasis can be a challenge. However, there are ways to handle those challenges so you can thrive with psoriasis.

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

## What's on YOUR Skin?

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



### Founder & Owner

**Joseph Onorato, MD, FAAD**

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

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# Exploring the Remarkable Benefits of Umbilical Stem Cell Therapy Injections and Intravenous Infusions

By Dr. Doreen DeStefano, NHD, APRN, DNP

In recent years, medical research has made significant strides in harnessing the potential of stem cells for therapeutic purposes. One particularly promising avenue of exploration is umbilical stem cell therapy, which utilizes stem cells derived from umbilical cord tissue. This innovative approach offers a range of potential benefits, with applications spanning various medical fields. In this article, we will explore the advantages of umbilical stem cell therapy, both through injection and intravenous (IV) administration methods.

## Enhanced Tissue Repair and Regeneration:

Umbilical stem cells possess unique properties that make them highly effective in promoting tissue repair and regeneration. These cells are characterized by their ability to differentiate into various cell types, including muscle, bone, cartilage, and nerve cells. When administered through injections or IV infusions, they have been shown to stimulate the regeneration of damaged tissues, facilitating the healing process.

A study published in the *Journal of Orthopaedic Research* (Koh et al., 2013) demonstrated that umbilical cord-derived stem cells injected into the injured joints of rats effectively promoted cartilage repair. Another study published in *Stem Cells Translational Medicine* (Sampaioles et al., 2006) found that umbilical cord stem cells injected into damaged skeletal muscle led to muscle regeneration and improved functional recovery in mice. These findings highlight the potential of umbilical stem cell therapy for tissue repair.

## Immunomodulation and Anti-inflammatory Effects:

Umbilical stem cells possess immunomodulatory properties, meaning they can regulate and modulate the immune system's response. This ability makes them a promising therapeutic tool for conditions characterized by excessive inflammation, such as autoimmune disorders and chronic inflammatory diseases.

Research published in the *Journal of Autoimmunity* (Sundin et al., 2014) demonstrated that umbilical cord-derived mesenchymal stem cells (MSCs) were effective in suppressing the immune response in a model of multiple sclerosis, resulting in reduced disease severity. Similarly, a study published in the journal *Stem Cells* (Zhang et al., 2004) showed that umbilical cord MSCs reduced inflammation and

improved the survival rate in a mouse model of acute lung injury. These studies indicate the potential of umbilical stem cell therapy in modulating immune responses and alleviating inflammatory conditions.

## Neuroprotective and Neuroregenerative Effects:

The ability of umbilical stem cells to differentiate into various cell types, including neural cells, makes them an attractive option for neurological disorders and injuries. Research has shown promising results in utilizing umbilical stem cell therapy for neuroprotection and neuroregeneration.

A study published in the *Journal Cell Transplantation* (Lu et al., 2013) demonstrated that umbilical cord blood-derived stem cells improved functional recovery and promoted nerve regeneration in a rat model of spinal cord injury. Another study published in *Stem Cells and Development* (Kim et al., 2017) highlighted the neuroprotective effects of umbilical cord MSCs in a mouse model of ischemic stroke.

## Safe and Ethical Source of Stem Cells:

One significant advantage of umbilical stem cell therapy is the ethical and non-controversial nature of its source. Umbilical cord tissue, which is typically discarded after childbirth, serves as a rich source of stem cells. Utilizing these cells bypasses the ethical concerns associated with other sources, such as embryonic stem cells.

Umbilical stem cell therapy, whether administered through injections or intravenous infusions, holds immense promise in the field of regenerative medicine. The ability of these cells to promote tissue repair, modulate the immune response, and facilitate

neuroregeneration offers exciting prospects for treating a wide range of medical conditions. Furthermore, the ethical and non-controversial nature of umbilical cord tissue as a source of stem cells adds to its appeal. However, further research is necessary to optimize treatment protocols and expand our understanding of the therapy's potential. With ongoing scientific advancements, umbilical stem cell therapy may revolutionize medical practice and provide new avenues of hope for patients worldwide.

## Doreen DeStefano, NHD, APRN, DNP

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

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

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

Contact Root Causes to find out more about these and other Alzheimer's treatments.



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# Psoriasis Awareness Month: Advancing Treatment with Infusible Therapies

**P**soriasis is a chronic autoimmune skin condition affecting millions worldwide. As we observe Psoriasis Awareness Month, it's essential to shed light on the challenges faced by psoriatic patients and the innovative treatment options that are transforming their lives. In recent years, infusible therapies have emerged as a promising approach to managing psoriasis, offering hope for those seeking effective, long-term relief from the physical and emotional burdens of this condition.

## Understanding Psoriasis

Psoriasis is characterized by the rapid buildup of skin cells, leading to red, scaly patches that often cause itching, pain, and discomfort. It can manifest in various forms, including plaque psoriasis, guttate psoriasis, pustular psoriasis, and more. Beyond the physical symptoms, the psychological impact of psoriasis, such as reduced self-esteem and social isolation, can significantly affect a patient's overall well-being.

## The Need for Awareness

Psoriasis Awareness Month, observed annually in August, serves as an opportunity to raise awareness about this chronic condition and educate the public about the challenges faced by those living with psoriasis. By fostering understanding and empathy, we can reduce the stigma surrounding psoriasis and promote early diagnosis and effective treatment.

## Infusible Therapies: A Game-Changer

In recent years, advancements in medical science have led to the development of infusible therapies, transforming the landscape of psoriasis treatment. These therapies are biologic drugs administered intravenously, targeting specific molecules in the immune system responsible for triggering the inflammatory response seen in psoriasis.

## How Infusible Therapies Work

Infusible therapies work by neutralizing specific cytokines like TNF-alpha, IL-17, and IL-23, which play pivotal roles in the immune response involved



in psoriasis. By inhibiting these inflammatory molecules, infusible therapies help to control the excessive cell growth and inflammation associated with psoriasis, effectively managing the symptoms and preventing disease progression.

## Benefits of Infusible Therapies

- 1. Efficacy:** Clinical trials have shown that infusible therapies provide significant improvement in psoriasis symptoms, achieving high rates of skin clearance and long-lasting remission.
- 2. Long-term Control:** Unlike traditional treatments, which may lose effectiveness over time, infusible therapies can maintain disease control for extended periods, enhancing the patient's quality of life.
- 3. Targeted Treatment:** Infusible therapies target specific molecules, minimizing the impact on healthy cells and reducing the risk of systemic side effects.
- 4. Convenience:** Many infusible therapies require less frequent administration, allowing patients to resume their daily routines with minimal disruption.

## Challenges and Considerations

While infusible therapies offer promising results, they are not without challenges. Access to these treatments, cost considerations, and potential side effects require thoughtful discussion between healthcare providers and patients to determine the best course of action.

## Empowering Patients with Knowledge

During Psoriasis Awareness Month, it is crucial to empower patients with information about the available treatment options, including infusible therapies. An informed decision, made in collaboration with healthcare professionals, can lead to better outcomes and improved management of the condition.

Psoriasis Awareness Month serves as a reminder of the millions of individuals living with psoriasis, enduring its physical and emotional impact every day. Thanks to advancements in medical science, infusible therapies offer new hope and improved outcomes for patients seeking relief. By raising awareness and promoting education about psoriasis and its treatment options, we can support those affected and foster a more compassionate and understanding society. Together, let us continue striving for better solutions to enhance the lives of psoriatic patients worldwide.

At Paragon Healthcare, we support the Psoriasis and Psoriatic Arthritis community through infusible therapies such as Avsola, Cimzia, Ilumya, Inflectra, Infliximab, Orencia, Remicade, Renflexis, Simponi Aria, Spevigo and Stelara. Nationally, our infusion centers have treated nearly 1.5k psoriasis and psoriatic arthritis patients year-to-date. This puts us in a place to serve more psoriasis and psoriatic arthritis patients this year compared to the 2,000+ patients we supported in 2022.



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# Harnessing Resilience: Weathering the Hurricane Season in Southwest Florida

By Dr. Danielle Zappile

Life in Southwest Florida can often feel like a permanent vacation, with its perpetual sun and surf painting a picturesque tropical landscape. However, the beautiful facade of endless summer is punctuated by the arrival of hurricane season, casting a formidable specter that looms large over our blissful paradise. The scars left by last year's Hurricane Ian are a stark reminder of the damage wrought by such storms. The hurricane caused widespread destruction that was not just physical but took a toll on the emotional and spiritual well-being of our resilient community. Echoing the words of Benjamin Franklin, who famously stated, "By failing to prepare, you are preparing to fail," the importance of preparing for the hurricane season is illuminated. It is in these trials that we realize the power of preparedness and resilience. They are not just virtues to be admired but are lifelines that form the backbone of our survival strategy.

Wellness is a concept that we often equate with healthy living - a state of being where our body is nurtured and allowed to tap into its inherent healing abilities. Much like we prepare ourselves for wellness, we also need to prepare for the hurricane season. Wellness is a holistic regimen, which includes adequate hydration, consuming nutritious foods, regular stretching exercises, observing sun safety, receiving chiropractic care, and fostering strong ties within the community. These pillars of wellness prove to be our steadfast allies during the capricious hurricane season.

Emergencies test the human spirit, and it is imperative to keep our bodies in the best possible condition. A fit and healthy body is better equipped to cope with the exigencies of nature's fury. For residents grappling with conditions like back pain, sciatica, or neuropathy, continued treatment with a health center like the Straight To Health Center in Fort Myers is crucial for sustaining their health during these testing times.

When it comes to hurricanes, your home is your fortress. A proactive approach to home preparedness is the most potent defense against the force of a hurricane. Picture this - you wouldn't want your backyard trampoline to audition for NASA's next



space launch, would you? So, make sure you're securing your home well ahead of time. Use hurricane-proofing measures like shutters or plywood for your windows and don't forget to fasten down loose items around your property. After all, while flying trampolines might sound exciting, it's a spectacle best avoided during a storm!

As important as physical health and home preparedness are, creating an emergency kit is an indispensable part of hurricane preparedness. It should be stocked with drinking water, non-perishable foods, essential medications, hygiene items, flashlights, extra batteries, and a battery-powered radio. It is important to note that this kit should cater to the needs of all family members, including our furry friends.

During a hurricane, staying calm is as important as staying indoors. Remember to steer clear from windows and glass doors. Keep an eye on local weather updates and follow officials' instructions. In the event of an evacuation order, act promptly, taking your emergency kit and essential documents with you.

In the face of adversity, our community has always proven its mettle. By establishing a network of neighbors to share supplies, information, and provide assistance, we strengthen our collective resilience. The lessons we learned from Hurricane Ian remind us of the critical role of community during such trying times.

Once the storm has passed, be cautious when venturing outside. Potential hazards such as downed

power lines and debris can pose significant dangers. Rely on your community network for assistance and resources.

Resilience isn't just about physical readiness; mental strength also plays an integral role in hurricane preparedness. Hurricanes, while physically destructive, can have a profound impact on mental health. It is essential to have mental health resources and indulge in self-care activities as an integral part of hurricane preparedness.



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Living in Southwest Florida is a dual journey of wellness and hurricane preparedness. While basking in the Florida sun and enjoying a wellness-focused lifestyle, it's also essential to prepare for the unpredictable hurricane season. Dr. Danielle Zappile and the team at Straight To Health Center stands by you through all weather, ensuring your health and preparedness remain a priority. As we navigate life in our sun-soaked paradise, let's also remember to stand firm against the elements. After all, living in Southwest Florida is not just about surviving; it's about thriving amidst all odds.



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

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As the creators of Lasene, our primary objective is to integrate the finest technologies and treatment strategies to alleviate the challenges faced by individuals with neurodegenerative and neuromusculoskeletal disorders. Our goal is to empower our patients, enabling them to regain an active and productive lifestyle.

### What Does Lasene Do?

Loss of normal nerve function can arise from various factors such as trauma, malnutrition, vascular compromise, aging, toxicity, diseases, and, to a lesser extent, genetics. These compromises in neurological function can affect different areas of the nervous system, including peripheral, spinal, and cranial neurology.

**LASENE Programs offer a powerful solution** for addressing neural deficits associated with specific

conditions such as Parkinson's disease, traumatic brain injury (TBI), and sleep dysfunction. These programs target not only the conditions themselves but also the symptoms related to them, such as chronic pain, tremors, digestion issues, balance problems, gait abnormalities, mood disturbances, anxiety, memory impairments, and more.

The implementation of LASENE Programs has the potential to reduce long-term suffering by improving quality-of-life metrics for individuals with compromised neurology. This approach offers significant benefits without the side effects, adverse events, contraindications, or modifications to traditional treatment methods.

The utilization of LASENE Programs opens up expanded treatment capabilities and new opportunities to help patients with neurological conditions. These programs can be integrated into a healthcare practice, allowing staff members to deliver care while doctors oversee the treatment of other patients. The ease of integration and compatibility with current practices and staff, including comprehensive training, makes it a convenient option.

Our LASENE Programs support both the clinical and business aspects of addressing patients' neurological needs. They facilitate an efficient workflow, provide necessary equipment, offer training, enable the creation of individualized and dynamic patient treatment plans, ensure HIPAA compliance in patient processing and records, and encompass other essential aspects required for successful treatment.

### Brand Partnership Benefits

The brand partnership opportunity for Lasene offers numerous benefits that set it apart from other options in the market. It provides advanced solutions that are not available anywhere else, delivering life-changing results to patients. The brand partnership package includes a turnkey solution with all the necessary equipment, systems, and training, ensuring a smooth implementation process. Brand partnership can expect a fast and significant return on investment (ROI) due to the high demand for the unique Lasene treatments. Furthermore, there is a vast untapped market share, allowing the brand partners to leverage their current patient base and attract new clients easily. The high patient referral rate further contributes to the potential for success and growth. Additionally, the brand partnership is easily expandable, allowing partners to scale their operations as desired.

The Lasene Proprietary System is a comprehensive management tool that guides the patient's journey from intake to treatment completion. Implementing this system is straightforward and efficient. It dynamically generates individual treatment maps and progress graphs, ensuring personalized care for each patient. The treatment sessions are delivered by trained staff members, optimizing the efficient use of staff and clinicians' time. This approach also simplifies the delivery of treatment for the providers themselves. Importantly, all patients purchase and commit to full treatment programs, eliminating the need for billing, insurance, or collections processes.

Lasene stands out from the competition for several reasons. It has a strong foundation in data-driven patient outcomes, with predictability, dependability, and reproducibility rates of 95%. This reliability instills confidence in both franchisees and patients. Moreover, Lasene has broader applications beyond traditional healthcare approaches, offering noninvasive and non-pharmaceutical solutions. This positions Lasene as a low-risk option for patients seeking alternative treatment methods, further enhancing its appeal and market potential.

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# The Relationship Between Inflammation and Sugar Consumption

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

Inflammation is a natural component of the immune system that aids the body through its healing process. However, certain foods, such as sugar, can cause inflammation in the body. While this is normal, overconsumption of sugar can lead to chronic low-grade inflammation, which can contribute to many different health problems.

Let's further explore the relationship between sugar consumption and inflammation and what you can do to protect your health.

## The Connection Between Sugar and Inflammation

When the body senses an injury or infection, it reacts by releasing chemicals that fight off the harmful antigens while also protecting it. This results in inflammation, which can cause warmth, redness, and swelling.

Like a virus or bacteria, sugar can also cause inflammation in the body. Scientists believe that this is because sugar stimulates the production of free fatty acids in the liver. The compounds that result as the body digests these free fatty acids can then trigger inflammatory processes.

In 2018, a systematic review found several studies that linked the consumption of more dietary sugar, primarily due to sugary drinks, with chronic inflammation. The studies found that those who had a higher sugar diet possessed more inflammatory markers in the blood, especially a marker called C-reactive protein.

Additionally, a 2014 study found that those who reduce their sugary drink intake experienced a decrease in inflammatory markers in the blood.

Findings such as this not only show that sugar can cause inflammation, but that the inflammation caused by sugar can be undone by decreasing sugar consumption. However, it is important to do this sooner than later since, while you can lower inflammatory markers, it is not possible to undo the damage already caused by chronic inflammation.

## The Dangers of Chronic Inflammation

Some of the signs of chronic inflammation can include:

- body pain
- anxiety, depression, and other mood disorders
- weight gain
- insomnia and constant fatigue
- frequent infections
- diarrhea, constipation, and acid reflux

Chronic inflammation can also increase the risk of certain health conditions, including depression, diabetes, heart disease, cancer, and dementia.

## Detecting Chronic Inflammation

Chronic inflammation can be gauged based on the presence of inflammatory markers, some of which include C-reactive protein (CRP), plasma viscosity (PV), and erythrocyte sedimentation rate (ESR). These markers are measured through blood tests, and they serve an important role in helping doctors diagnose and monitor inflammatory conditions.

Research has shown that sugar not only increases inflammatory markers but also increases LDL cholesterol and insulin resistance. A study on 29 healthy individuals saw these increases after the participants drank just one can of soda each day, consuming an additional 40 grams of added sugar.

Not only does sugar cause inflammatory markers to spike, but this effect lasts even after the food is consumed. For example, a study on fructose consumption found that a 50 g dose of fructose caused a spike in CRP 30 minutes later, and it remained high for more than two hours.

## How Does Sugar Cause Inflammation?

We've seen the studies showing that eating sugar causes an increase in inflammatory markers, but why is it that this occurs?

There are many ways that sugar may affect the body and cause inflammation, such as:

### Increased Gut Permeability

Consuming too much sugar can increase the risk of obesity and type 2 diabetes, two conditions that can increase gut permeability.

The gut is a central part of the body, playing a significant role in the immune system. However, when gut permeability increases, toxins, bacteria, and undigested food can more easily move out of the gut and into the bloodstream. Your body then reacts to these foreign components with inflammation.

With high sugar consumption, the gut is continually "leaky," leading to chronic low-grade inflammation.

### Excess AGE Production

Advanced glycation end products (AGEs) are harmful compounds that can form when fat or protein combines with sugar in the bloodstream. The more sugar you consume, the more sugar in the bloodstream, and the greater chance of this happening.

When there are too many AGEs in the body, oxidative stress and inflammation can occur.

### Weight Gain

One of the complications of excess sugar consumption is weight gain, which can lead to inflammation in two ways: excess fat can increase inflammatory markers and may lead to insulin resistance, increasing sugar levels in the bloodstream.

### Higher LDL Cholesterol

There are two types of cholesterol in the body, low-density lipoprotein (LDL) cholesterol and high-density lipoprotein (HDL) cholesterol. Despite there being two types of cholesterol, one is often referred to as "bad" cholesterol (LDL), while the other is referred to as "good" (HDL).

This is because LDL cholesterol contributes to the build-up of fatty deposits in the arteries. This then narrows the arteries and increases the risk of stroke, heart attack, or other cardiovascular health concerns.

Excess LDL cholesterol has also been associated with higher levels of the inflammatory marker C-reactive protein (CRP).

Sugar can increase LDL cholesterol, which then increases inflammation.



### Risks of Chronic Inflammation

While sugar is not the only cause of inflammation in the body, it is a contributor, and many health conditions can result from excess sugar consumption and the resultant chronic low-grade inflammation.

### Diabetes

One effect that a diet high in added sugar can cause to the body is insulin resistance. Insulin is a hormone responsible for turning blood sugar into energy for cells. However, with insulin resistance, the body is unable to use the sugar circulating in the blood, and this sugar can end up building up.

Over time, this insulin resistance can lead to diabetes, a comorbidity factor for many other health concerns.

### Heart Disease

Multiple studies have reported a strong link between sugary drink consumption and heart disease risk. There are many ways in which sugar can lead to this increased risk, including the increase in LDL cholesterol, increased blood pressure, increased inflammatory markers, insulin resistance, and obesity.

The relationship between sugar and heart disease can be significant, with one study on more than 75,000 women finding that a diet high in sugar and refined carbohydrates resulted in a 98% greater risk of heart disease.

### Cancer

Multiple studies have shown a relationship between sugar consumption and increased cancer risk.

More research is needed to further examine this relationship, but scientists suspect that the inflammatory nature of sugar is what causes the increased risk of cancer. This is because chronic inflammation may damage the cells of the body and their DNA.

Other scientists believe that chronically high insulin levels play a role in cancer development, something to which excess sugar consumption also contributes.

### How to Reduce Inflammation Naturally

You can reduce inflammation in many ways, with one of the biggest being a reduction in sugar consumption. Multiple studies have shown that eating less sugar can decrease inflammation, so this should be a top priority.

As a guide, the World Health Organization (WHO) recommends that your sugar intake not exceed 10% of your daily energy intake, but aiming for a lower percentage may offer greater health benefits.

Another way to naturally reduce inflammation is by getting enough sleep. Studies have shown that inflammatory markers rise when you don't get enough sleep. So, to help with your inflammation, make sure that you are spending enough time asleep each night.

To lower inflammation, it is also helpful to avoid other foods that commonly cause inflammation. While sugar can cause inflammation in the body, it is not the only food to be a culprit of this, with some other inflammatory foods including:

- trans fats (fried foods, fast food, donuts, cookies)
- saturated fats (red meat, decadent desserts, full-fat dairy products)
- alcohol
- excess omega-6 fatty acids (sunflower oil, corn oil, vegetable oil)
- MSG (soy sauce, prepared soups, deli meats)
- refined carbohydrates (white rice, bread, white potatoes)

Managing your weight is another important way to reduce the risk of inflammation since obesity is a risk factor for chronic inflammation. This is because excess fat in the body can increase inflammatory factors, so weight loss is the most effective strategy for reducing chronic inflammation.

A final way to address inflammation is by correcting any hormonal balances. The sex hormones of testosterone and estrogen can slow the production of inflammatory factors. So, if estrogen or testosterone levels are low, which can occur with age and certain life stages (i.e., menopause), the production of inflammatory factors may increase.

By working with a doctor to test your hormone levels and address any imbalances, you could reduce chronic inflammation.

### Sugar and Inflammation

While sugar is a component of many tasty drinks and beverages, consuming it in excess can cause chronic inflammation in the body, which can increase the risk of health conditions such as obesity, heart disease, diabetes, and cancer.

Sugar is not the only thing to blame for chronic inflammation, but it does play a key role and limiting sugar consumption has shown significant improvements in inflammation levels.

Other ways to address inflammation and lower it include getting enough sleep and correcting hormonal imbalances. If you are concerned about inflammation in your body, reach out to your doctor to check your inflammatory markers and discuss how to lower them and protect your health.

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# Understanding Polycystic Kidney Disease

By Neetu Malhotra, MD

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

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

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

## The primary symptoms of PKD are as follows:

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

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

## PKD Treatment

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

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

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

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

## Associates in Nephrology

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

## Chronic Kidney Disease Program

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

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

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

## Services Provided

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

- All forms of Dialysis – Hemodialysis and Peritoneal
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- Electrolyte Disorders
- Fluid Overload, Edema (swelling)
- Glomerulonephritis
- Hypertension
- Kidney Transplant Services: Patient and Donor Evaluations, Post-Transplant Follow-up Care
- Lupus Nephritis
- Nephrotic Syndrome
- Pyelonephritis
- Polycystic Kidney Disease
- Recurring kidney stones
- Renal Failure
- Renal Insufficiency

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

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# The Best Non-Surgical Treatment for Arthritis YOUR OWN STEM CELLS!

Dr. Sebastian Klisiewicz, D.O.

## What is Arthritis?

Osteoarthritis is a degenerative condition of the joints affecting millions of people worldwide. Those suffering from arthritis can experience joint pain, swelling and or stiffness. The most commonly affected joints are the knees, hips, and shoulders, but other areas such as the spine, feet and hands can also be affected

With osteoarthritis, the joint cartilage is broken down which can result in inflammation, pain and stiffness to that area. Reasons for this breakdown can include loose ligaments, weak muscles, as well as overuse or trauma.

## Typical Treatments for Osteoarthritis

Unfortunately, many of the standard treatments for arthritis come with significant risks and side effects. Anti-inflammatory medications such as ibuprofen and Advil can help decrease pain and inflammation, but can cause serious complications such as kidney failure, stomach ulcers and increased risk of heart attack.

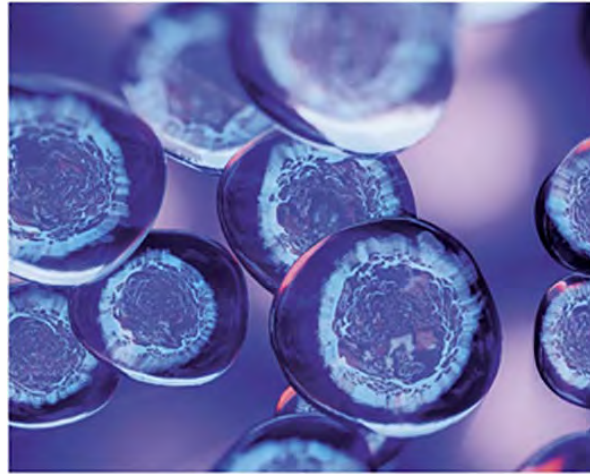
Steroid injections into arthritic are also commonly used. If repeated, steroid injections can speed up the process of joint degeneration and cartilage breakdown, accelerating the need for a joint replacement.

Joint replacement is generally the last line treatment for severe arthritis that is not adequately managed with the above therapeutic options. This is an invasive procedure that, even when done correctly, has significant risks including infection, blood clots, nerve injury, and malfunction of the prosthesis.

## Stem Cells, a New Treatment Option

Luckily for arthritis sufferers, stem cell procedures offer a natural and effective treatment for osteoarthritis.

Stem cells are the "master orchestrators" of healing and regeneration. Through the release of signaling molecules and growth factors, stem cells regulate the local immune response, decrease inflammation, and stimulate tissue healing. Stem cells can also replace injured cells, recharge old and tired cells and stimulate the production of necessary proteins. Through these mechanisms, stem cells can significantly improve the health and function of an arthritic joint.



Multiple scientific studies on knee arthritis have shown that bone marrow stem cell injections can significantly reduce pain, decrease inflammation and most importantly improve function. Best of all, in many patients, these effects were shown to last for many years.

Bone marrow stem cells are real living cells that are derived from the self, unlike many other "fake" stem cell products on the market. In 2019, Dr. Lisa Fortier from Cornell University published a study testing multiple amniotic fluid products that are sold as "stem cells". Her findings showed that there were no living cells in any of these products nor did they contain any significant amounts of growth factors.

The only place to get living stem cells that are programmed to heal your tissues is from your own body, such as the bone marrow of the pelvis.

## Maximizing Your Stem Cells Results

At Integrative Rehab Medicine we offer a comprehensive treatment program to maximize your results.

We educate our patients on specific nutritional support for optimal healing. A well-balanced diet rich in fruits, vegetables and high-quality proteins as well as specific nutritional supplement are used to prepare the body for healing.

We complement our stem cell injections with a personalized physical therapy program which can include manual therapy, muscle strengthening, balance training, and or bracing protocols. We also

incorporate state of the art energy modalities such as low-level laser and pulsed electromagnetic field therapy to improve the healing process.

The whole joint and surrounding structures need to be treated. Joint strength and stability can also be maximized through prolotherapy injections to the surrounding ligaments prior to and after the stem cell procedure.

At Integrative Rehab Medicine, we specialize in treating arthritis with bone marrow stem cells. Dr. Sebastian and our team of highly trained professionals are pioneers in non-surgical Regenerative Medicine treatments for arthritis and other musculoskeletal conditions. Our Integrative Advantage™ is the most comprehensive arthritis treatment in Southwest Florida. Arthritis patients now have a safe and effective options to eliminate symptoms, improve function and regain quality of life.

## DR. SEBASTIAN KLISIEWICZ, D.O.

Board Certified in Physical Medicine  
and Rehabilitation

*Dr. Sebastian is a leading physiotherapist in Estero, Fort Myers and Bonito Springs (Southwest Florida). He is the founder and medical director of Integrative Rehab Medicine in Estero, FL. He combines his extensive knowledge in Regenerative Medicine, Osteopathic musculoskeletal medicine, Physical Rehabilitation and Functional & Natural medicine to create personalized and integrated treatment plans for each patient.*

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



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# CRYOTHERAPY FOR ATHLETIC RECOVERY

## Enhancing Performance in Fall Sports

**A**s fall sports season approaches, athletes in disciplines such as football, volleyball, cross country, golf, and swimming gear up for intense training and competitions. With the stakes high and the competition fierce, optimizing recovery becomes paramount for achieving peak performance. Cryotherapy, a cutting-edge recovery technique, has gained popularity among athletes as an effective method for rejuvenating tired muscles and enhancing overall athletic performance. In this article, we explore the benefits of cryotherapy for fall sports athletes and how this innovative therapy can play a crucial role in their journey to success.

### The Basics of Cryotherapy

Cryotherapy involves exposing the body to extremely low temperatures for a short duration, typically around -130 to -184 degrees Fahrenheit (-90 to -120 degrees Celsius). This exposure can occur through whole-body cryotherapy (WBC) or localized cryotherapy, where specific body parts are targeted. The goal is to stimulate vasoconstriction and reduce inflammation, promoting muscle recovery and reducing soreness.

### Recovery Benefits for Fall Sports Athletes

**1. Faster Muscle Recovery:** Fall sports athletes often subject their bodies to intense training sessions and repetitive movements. Cryotherapy can help accelerate the recovery process by reducing muscle inflammation and promoting blood flow to the muscles, leading to faster healing and reduced downtime between workouts or games.

**2. Pain Management:** Soreness and injuries are common in fall sports due to the physically demanding nature of the activities. Cryotherapy can alleviate pain by releasing endorphins and reducing nerve sensitivity, providing much-needed relief to athletes.

**3. Enhanced Performance:** By reducing fatigue and inflammation, cryotherapy enables athletes to train at higher intensities and perform at their best during competitions. This advantage can make a significant difference in achieving success in their respective sports.



### Fall Sports and Cryotherapy:

**1. Football:** Football is a high-impact sport that can lead to muscle strains, joint pain, and overall fatigue. Cryotherapy can be incorporated into football players' recovery routines to minimize injuries and optimize their performance on the field.

**2. Volleyball:** The explosive movements in volleyball can take a toll on athletes' bodies, leading to muscle soreness and increased injury risk. Cryotherapy can aid in minimizing the impact of intense training, helping volleyball players stay at the top of their game.

**3. Cross Country:** Long-distance running places tremendous stress on an athlete's muscles and joints. Cryotherapy can be a valuable tool for cross country runners to enhance recovery between races and training sessions.

**4. Golf:** Despite being less physically intense than some other fall sports, golf still requires proper muscle recovery for consistent performance. Cryotherapy can be beneficial in maintaining the agility and flexibility required for a successful golf game.

**5. Swimming:** Swimmers often face muscle fatigue due to repetitive strokes. Cryotherapy can expedite the recovery process, allowing swimmers to maintain their peak performance throughout the season.

### Safety and Precautions

While cryotherapy has numerous benefits, it's essential to consider individual health conditions and consult with a healthcare professional before starting cryotherapy sessions. Cryotherapy may not be suitable for individuals with certain medical conditions, such as circulatory issues or cold allergies.

As fall sports athletes strive to achieve excellence in football, volleyball, cross country, golf, and swimming, implementing cryotherapy into their recovery routines can be a game-changer. By promoting faster muscle recovery, managing pain, and enhancing overall performance, cryotherapy offers an edge to athletes looking to outperform their competition. While the benefits of cryotherapy are promising, it's crucial for athletes to adopt a holistic approach to their well-being, combining cryotherapy with proper nutrition, hydration, and rest for optimal results.



### THE COOLEST CREW

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

All our staff go through initial in-studio training and continued education and testing to ensure they are educated. Many of our team members come from a health and wellness background, which helps them connect and relate to our clients.

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# BE A PARAMEDIC IN ONE YEAR

By Dr. Jeff Ziomek, EMS Program Director, Hodges University

**R**ain or shine. First thing in the morning or in the middle of the night. Weekends and holidays. They are there to help us when we're at our worst. When we're sick or injured. They answer the call. From the young to the young at heart, we all know their number: 9-1-1.

They are paramedics.

It all starts with a passion for helping others. For a career as a Florida paramedic, your first step is to become an Emergency Medical Technician (EMT). That's where you'll learn the foundational skills needed. As a matter of fact, you can start with us at Hodges University and graduate from our EMT training course in just seven weeks.

With your EMT skills in hand, you can graduate from our paramedic program in just one year and take the NREMT exam for your license. Our paramedic program is flexible with daytime classes two days a week, plus clinical rotations and field internships. There are also opportunities to receive financial aid. When you graduate, you'll also have 42 college credits. Someday, you may want to return and get those last 18 credits for an associate degree. If you are thinking that moving up the ranks and into administration is something you want to do, a college degree, along with your experience, will help.

Being a paramedic means you have the knowledge and skills to provide advanced life support before your patient reaches the hospital. When it comes to helping others, every second counts.

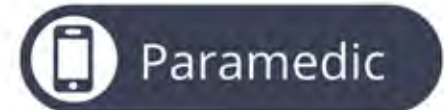


If you're wondering if being a paramedic is for you, there are a few things you can consider. You should be someone that likes to problem-solve. Your patient may not be able to communicate with you, so you'll have to figure out the best way to treat them. You must also have compassion for others and enjoy working in a team environment.

Communicating clearly with your patients, your colleagues, and the patient's family is essential. While you don't need to be the strongest person, you need a certain amount of physical fitness in order to successfully and safely move and transport patients from the scene, into the ambulance, and then from the ambulance into the hospital emergency room.

As a paramedic, the rewards are many. You'll build a special sense of family with your colleagues. The most satisfying aspect is helping people when they need you the most. You could be responding to someone who's having difficulty breathing, a mother in labor, or a car accident. You could work at a scene with other agencies, like the fire department and law enforcement.

What you do makes a difference, and your patients and their families will remember that.



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# DECODING HEPATITIS C MEDICATIONS:

## Effective Treatments and Their Costs

Hepatitis C is a viral infection affecting millions of people worldwide, causing liver inflammation and potentially leading to severe complications. Fortunately, significant advancements in medical research have brought forth groundbreaking medications that offer hope for patients diagnosed with Hepatitis C. In this article, we will explore the most notable medications available to combat this condition and delve into their costs to understand how accessible these treatments are for affected individuals.

### Direct-Acting Antivirals (DAAs)

Direct-acting antivirals have revolutionized Hepatitis C treatment, providing a highly effective and well-tolerated approach to cure the infection. These medications directly target the virus, hindering its ability to replicate and spread in the body.

- **Sofosbuvir:** Sofosbuvir was among the first DAAs approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA). It is an oral medication and is typically used in combination with other drugs like ledipasvir or velpatasvir. The total treatment duration varies based on the Hepatitis C genotype and patient's response, but it generally lasts for 8 to 12 weeks.
- **Ledipasvir/Sofosbuvir (Harvoni):** This combination drug is a one-pill-a-day regimen, making it highly convenient for patients. It effectively targets both genotypes 1 and 4 of Hepatitis C and requires 8 to 12 weeks of treatment.
- **Glecaprevir/Pibrentasvir (Mavyret):** Mavyret stands out for its broad-spectrum coverage, capable of treating all major Hepatitis C genotypes. It is taken as three pills daily for eight weeks for most patients, making it an attractive option for those seeking a shorter treatment course.

### Costs of Hepatitis C Medications

It is essential to consider the costs of these life-changing medications, as accessibility remains a critical concern for patients seeking treatment.



The prices of Hepatitis C medications have undergone significant changes over the years. Initially, the high cost of DAAs raised considerable controversy and barriers to access. However, as patents have expired and competition has increased, generic versions of some medications have become available, leading to a notable reduction in costs.

- **Brand-Name Medications:** Brand-name Hepatitis C medications like Harvoni and Epclusa can still be expensive, with treatment courses ranging from \$40,000 to \$100,000 or even higher, depending on the duration and the specific drug combination prescribed.
- **Generic Medications:** The availability of generic versions has significantly lowered the cost of Hepatitis C treatment. Generic versions of drugs like sofosbuvir and ledipasvir/sofosbuvir can now be found at a fraction of the cost of their brand-name counterparts, ranging from \$500 to \$1,500 for a full treatment course.
- **Insurance Coverage:** Most health insurance plans cover Hepatitis C medications to some extent. However, the extent of coverage varies widely, and patients should review their insurance policies to understand the out-of-pocket costs they may incur.

The advent of direct-acting antivirals has transformed the landscape of Hepatitis C treatment, offering patients a realistic chance of a cure and a healthier future. Although the costs of brand-name

medications remain a concern for many, the availability of generic alternatives and increasing insurance coverage has improved accessibility to treatment. Collaborative efforts by governments, organizations, and pharmaceutical companies are essential to ensure that these life-saving medications reach all individuals affected by Hepatitis C, regardless of their economic background. With continued research and advocacy, we can aspire to eradicate Hepatitis C and improve the lives of millions worldwide.

Retail costs of Hep C medications verses the same medication received through Prescription Hope.

Drug Name	Retail Cost	Prescription Hope	Total Savings
Mavyret	\$12,000.00	\$50.00	\$11,950.00
Harvoni	\$4,978.00	\$50.00	\$4,928.00
Sovaldi	\$28,904.00	\$50.00	\$28,854.00
Epclusa	\$3,322.00	\$50.00	\$3,272.00
Vosevi	\$25,725.00	\$50.00	\$25,675.00

Prescription Hope is a national prescription drug benefit program that offers 1,500 Brand-Name medications at \$50 per medication per month no matter the retail cost.

For the set price of \$50 per month per medication, our advocates order, manage, track, and refill your prescription medications through patient assistance programs for those who qualify. We manage your enrollment with these programs throughout the year, working with over 180 pharmaceutical manufacturers and their pharmacy. There are no other costs, fees, or charges associated with your medication or our program.



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Ricardo S. Bocanegra, D.D.S.

# Back-to-School & Oral Health: A Window to Your Overall Health

**Y**our oral health is more important than you may realize. Get the facts about how the health of your mouth, teeth and gums may affect your general health.

Did you know that your oral health can offer clues about your overall health? Or that problems in your mouth can affect the rest of your body? Understand the intimate connection between oral health and overall health and what you can do to protect yourself.

## What's the connection between oral health and overall health?

Your mouth is teeming with bacteria — most of them harmless. Normally the body's natural defenses and good oral health care, such as daily brushing and flossing, can keep these bacteria under control. However, harmful bacteria can sometimes grow out of control and cause oral infections, such as tooth decay and gum disease. In addition, dental procedures, medications, or treatments that reduce saliva flow, disrupt the normal balance of bacteria in your mouth or breach the mouth's normal protective barriers may make it easier for bacteria to enter your bloodstream.

## What conditions may be linked to oral health?

Your oral health may affect, be affected by or contribute to various diseases and conditions, including:

- **Endocarditis.** Gum disease and dental procedures that cut your gums may allow bacteria to enter your bloodstream. If you have a weak immune system or a damaged heart valve, this can cause infection in other parts of the body — such as an infection of the inner lining of the heart (endocarditis).

- **Cardiovascular disease.** Some research suggests that heart disease, clogged arteries and stroke may be linked to oral bacteria, possibly due to chronic inflammation from periodontitis — a severe form of gum disease.

- **Pregnancy and birth.** Gum disease has been linked to premature birth and low birth weight.

- **Diabetes.** Diabetes reduces the body's resistance to infection — putting the gums at risk. In addition, people who have inadequate blood sugar control may develop more-frequent and severe infections of the gums and the bone that holds teeth in place, and they may lose more teeth than do people who have good blood sugar control.

- **HIV/AIDS.** Oral problems, such as painful mucosal lesions, are common in people who have HIV/AIDS.

- **Osteoporosis.** Osteoporosis — which causes bones to become weak and brittle — may be associated with periodontal bone loss and tooth loss.

- **Alzheimer's disease.** Tooth loss before age 35 may be a risk factor for Alzheimer's disease.

- **Other conditions.** Other conditions that may be linked to oral health include Sjogren's syndrome — an immune system disorder — and eating disorders.

Be sure to tell your dentist if you're taking any medications or have had any changes in your overall health — especially if you've had any recent illnesses or you have a chronic condition.



## How can I protect my oral health?

To protect your oral health, resolve to practice good oral hygiene every day. For example:

- Brush your teeth at least twice a day.
- Replace your toothbrush every three to four months.
- Floss daily.
- Eat a healthy diet and limit between-meal snacks.
- Schedule regular dental checkups.

Also, watch for signs and symptoms of oral disease and contact your dentist as soon as a problem arises. Remember, taking care of your oral health is an investment in your overall health.

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# Health Insurance - Important Dates! Extension Due to Hurricane Ian & Nicole

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

**Travel Insurance** - Most of our USA Health plans do not include coverage when leaving the United States, including Cruises. We recommend always getting a comprehensive Medical Travel Insurance Policy. They are less than you think and can make a world of a difference.

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

**MEDICARE – Extension - applications submitted by the end of the month will be effective the 1st of the following month; extensions end 9/30 for 10/1/2023 effective.**

## Medicare Advantage – Part C & Part D Prescription Plans

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

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

in 2023 but hopefully in 2025. Many changes are happening year after year. Find an agent that will be there for you, year after year.

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

We offer Free New to Medicare Seminars, Personal Appointments & Virtual appointments. Please e-mail [info@logicalinsurance.com](mailto:info@logicalinsurance.com) to register or call 239-362-0855 for dates. Medicare's website is: [www.Medicare.gov](http://www.Medicare.gov).

**Individual/Family Health Insurance** - Being young and healthy does not mean you do not need health insurance. Do you know anyone that knew when they were going to be diagnosed with cancer, or when they were going to have a heart attack or even a serious accident? I do not, it happens, and insurance is there to help you get the care you need and limit your financial exposure. What are your insurance options, and what is best for you? Employer Group Coverage, Individual Medically Underwritten Health Insurance, Medicaid, or the Government Market Place Guaranteed Issue Health Insurance. There is a lot to know about the differences, as well as the cost. The monthly premium should not be your only consideration. *You do not know what you do not know* so ask the experts, who know about all the plans and can help educate and guide you through



the enrollment process. When it comes to medically underwritten plans, most of them you can enroll all year long, but you can also be denied based on medical underwriting.

**Life Insurance** – It is never too early to apply for Life Insurance! The younger and healthier you are the lower the premium. There are great Whole Life policies that can be paid in full in multiple years, such as a 15-year paid in full, etc. Whole Life Insurance premiums do not go up in price once you have purchased the plan and they accumulate cash value that you can use. Your options are to take the cash and repay it at a fixed rate or reduce the death benefit and not pay the policy back the cash you used. I have these for my grandchildren so I can leave behind a legacy. Many young people become uninsurable, and this guarantees they have something. How many toys can you buy them, this is a good option to invest in their future.

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# A NATURAL APPROACH TO ALLEVIATING SKIN CONDITIONS

In recent years, cannabidiol (CBD) has gained significant attention for its potential therapeutic benefits. One area where CBD has shown promise is in the realm of skincare. CBD topicals, such as creams, lotions, and balms, are increasingly being used to address various skin conditions. This article aims to explore the potential of CBD topicals as a natural and effective solution for managing common skin issues.

## Understanding CBD and its Interaction with the Skin

CBD is a non-intoxicating compound derived from the cannabis plant. When applied topically, it interacts with the endocannabinoid receptors present in the skin's outermost layer. These receptors play a crucial role in regulating various skin functions, including inflammation, pain perception, and oil production. By modulating these receptors, CBD topicals can potentially help alleviate skin conditions.

## Eczema and Psoriasis: Soothing Inflammation and Itching

Eczema and psoriasis are chronic inflammatory skin conditions that can cause discomfort and affect the quality of life. CBD topicals possess anti-inflammatory properties that may help reduce redness, itching, and irritation associated with these conditions. Moreover, CBD's potential to regulate the immune response may contribute to managing flare-ups and promoting healthier skin.

## Acne: Balancing Sebum Production and Reducing Breakouts

Acne is a common skin condition caused by excess sebum production, inflammation, and bacterial growth. CBD topicals exhibit sebostatic properties,



meaning they can help regulate sebum production, thereby reducing the likelihood of clogged pores and breakouts. Additionally, CBD's anti-inflammatory effects may alleviate acne-related inflammation, promoting a clearer complexion.

## Anti-Aging Benefits: Nourishing and Revitalizing the Skin

As we age, our skin undergoes natural changes, such as decreased collagen production and increased oxidative stress. CBD topicals are rich in antioxidants and possess moisturizing properties that can help nourish and protect the skin. Moreover, CBD's potential to modulate collagen production may promote skin elasticity and reduce the appearance of fine lines and wrinkles, making it an attractive option for those seeking a natural anti-aging solution.

## Safety and Considerations

CBD topicals are generally well-tolerated, but it's essential to choose reputable brands and check for third-party lab testing to ensure product quality and purity. It's also advisable to consult with a dermatologist, especially if you have pre-existing skin conditions or are using other medications. Additionally, CBD topicals should not be considered a sole treatment but rather as a complementary approach to skincare.

CBD topicals offer a promising avenue for individuals seeking natural solutions for managing various skin conditions. Their anti-inflammatory, antioxidant, and sebostatic properties make them suitable for addressing issues like eczema, psoriasis, acne, and signs of aging. However, it's crucial to consult with a healthcare professional and conduct thorough research before incorporating CBD topicals into your skincare routine. With proper guidance, CBD topicals can provide a natural approach to healthier, more radiant skin.

## About Hemp Joi

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

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

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

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

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# Tips for Maintaining Healthy Vision

**M**aintaining healthy vision is vital for overall well-being, as sight plays an integral role in our daily lives. As an internal medicine physician, I have witnessed the impact of visual health on my patients' quality of life. In this article, I will share essential tips for safeguarding your vision and preventing eye-related issues.

## 1. Regular Eye Exams

Schedule comprehensive eye exams with an ophthalmologist or optometrist at least once a year. These exams can detect early signs of vision problems and various eye diseases, allowing for timely intervention and management.

## 2. Balanced Diet

A well-balanced diet rich in antioxidants, vitamins, and minerals can promote good eye health. Include leafy greens, colorful fruits, fish, and nuts in your diet to supply your eyes with essential nutrients.

## 3. Eye-Friendly Supplements

Consider taking eye-friendly supplements such as lutein, zeaxanthin, omega-3 fatty acids, and vitamin C, which have been linked to improved eye health and reduced risk of age-related macular degeneration (AMD) and cataracts.

## 4. Digital Eye Strain Management

Limit screen time and follow the 20-20-20 rule – every 20 minutes, look at something 20 feet away for at least 20 seconds – to reduce digital eye strain caused by prolonged computer, smartphone, or tablet use.

## 5. UV Protection

Wearing sunglasses that offer UV protection shields your eyes from harmful ultraviolet rays, reducing the risk of cataracts, macular degeneration, and other eye conditions related to sun exposure.

## 6. Smoking Cessation

Smoking increases the risk of developing AMD, cataracts, and other eye diseases. Quitting smoking not only benefits your overall health but also helps preserve your vision.

## 7. Manage Chronic Conditions

Conditions such as diabetes and hypertension can impact your eyesight. Follow your physician's advice to manage these conditions and minimize their effects on your vision.



## 8. Eye Safety

Wear protective eyewear while engaging in activities that pose a risk of eye injury, such as playing sports, doing DIY projects, or using power tools.

## 9. Proper Contact Lens Care

If you wear contact lenses, follow the recommended cleaning and replacement schedule to reduce the risk of eye infections and other complications.

## 10. Adequate Sleep

Getting enough sleep promotes overall health, including eye health. Aim for 7-9 hours of quality sleep per night to allow your eyes to rest and rejuvenate.

## 11. Hydration

Drink plenty of water to maintain good eye hydration and prevent dry eyes.

## 12. Reduce Eye Rubbing

Avoid rubbing your eyes excessively, as it can lead to irritation, infections, and potential corneal damage.

## 13. Maintain a Healthy Weight

Being overweight or obese increases the risk of developing diabetes and other conditions that can affect eye health.

## 14. Practice Good Hygiene

Wash your hands regularly to prevent the spread of germs and reduce the risk of eye infections.

## 15. Know Your Family History

Understanding your family's eye health history can help identify potential genetic risks and allow for early detection and intervention.

By incorporating these tips into your lifestyle, you can take proactive steps to maintain healthy vision and safeguard your eyes from potential complications. Remember, prevention and early detection are key to preserving your eyesight for years to come. Always consult with your healthcare provider for personalized advice on eye care and overall well-being.



**Daniel Stanciu, MD**

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

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



**Joel Pelissier, MD**

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



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# The Vital Role of IV Vitamins and Minerals in Gastroparesis

BY Kasey Cook, RN, Owner

**G**astroparesis is a condition characterized by delayed stomach emptying, leading to various digestive symptoms. It affects millions of people worldwide, causing discomfort, nutritional deficiencies, and reduced quality of life. In an effort to raise awareness during Gastroparesis Awareness Month, it is crucial to highlight the importance of intravenous (IV) vitamins and minerals in managing this condition effectively.

## Understanding Gastroparesis

Gastroparesis disrupts the normal movement of food from the stomach to the small intestine. Common symptoms include nausea, vomiting, bloating, early satiety, and abdominal pain. The condition can result from various causes, such as diabetes, neurological disorders, and certain medications. It often leads to malnutrition due to inadequate absorption of essential nutrients.

## The Role of IV Vitamins and Minerals

For individuals with severe gastroparesis, oral intake of vitamins and minerals may be inadequate to meet their nutritional needs. In such cases, IV administration of these vital nutrients becomes crucial. IV therapy allows direct delivery of essential vitamins, such as B12, B complex, and vitamin C, as well as minerals like zinc, magnesium, and selenium, bypassing the impaired gastrointestinal system.

## Benefits of IV Therapy

**1. Enhanced Absorption:** IV vitamins and minerals are directly infused into the bloodstream, ensuring



optimal absorption and utilization by the body. This bypasses the digestive system's limitations in gastroparesis patients, allowing for better nutrient uptake.

**2. Correcting Deficiencies:** Gastroparesis often leads to deficiencies in key nutrients essential for overall health. IV therapy provides an efficient means to replenish these deficiencies promptly, addressing nutritional imbalances and promoting wellness.

**3. Symptom Relief:** Gastroparesis symptoms can be debilitating, causing pain and discomfort. IV therapy can help alleviate nausea and vomiting, improving overall quality of life for individuals with gastroparesis.

**4. Maintaining Strength and Energy:** Adequate nutrient intake is crucial for maintaining strength and energy levels. IV vitamins and minerals provide a direct and rapid source of essential nutrients, supporting overall vitality in individuals with gastroparesis.

**5. Tailored Treatment:** IV therapy can be customized to meet individual needs. Medical professionals can assess specific nutrient deficiencies and adjust the formulation accordingly, ensuring personalized treatment for each patient.

Gastroparesis poses significant challenges for individuals affected by this condition. As we observe Gastroparesis Awareness Month, it is essential to recognize the role of IV vitamins and minerals in managing this condition effectively. By raising awareness about the benefits of IV therapy, we can help individuals with gastroparesis regain their nutritional balance, alleviate symptoms, and improve their overall well-being.

## About Us

Health and Hydration began as a unique idea to bring nutritional, vitamin IV therapy to Southwest Florida at a time no one was providing IV therapy to this area. The goal was simple- to provide a natural way to make people feel better.

Health and Hydration's owner Kasey Cook is a Registered Nurse and Licensed Paramedic-Firefighter. He has over ten years experience in administering IVs. He also has a passion for health and fitness. He personally enjoys using IV therapy to re-hydrate after intense workouts. Kati Cook, Kasey's wife, assists with the scheduling and marketing. She credits IV therapy for giving her the energy to survive law school with two kids.

Health and Hydration's services are reviewed and approved by a Board Certified Medical Doctor and delivered by trained and experienced RNs. Services are provided around Fort Myers, Cape Coral, Naples, and Bonita Springs.



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# Understanding Trusts in Florida

By Kelly L. Fayer, P.A.

**W**hen it comes to estate planning, individuals often consider creating trusts as an alternative or supplement to a traditional will. Trusts offer a range of benefits, including convenience, asset protection, and the ability to provide for specific circumstances or individuals. In Florida, trust structures are widely utilized, especially in situations where there is a high net worth, out-of-state property ownership, minor children, financially irresponsible beneficiaries, or individuals with untrustworthy spouses. This article aims to shed light on the nature of trusts in Florida, their advantages over wills, and who can serve as a trustee. A common misconception that if you have only a will you can avoid probate.

## Trusts Versus Wills

While both trusts and wills are estate planning tools, they differ in how they operate and distribute assets. A will outlines the distribution of property after a person's death, while a trust allows for the management and distribution of assets during one's lifetime and beyond. Trusts offer greater flexibility, privacy, and control compared to wills, making them an attractive option for many individuals. Anything properly in a trust (funds) avoids probate.

## Reasons to Consider a Trust in Florida

- 1. Convenience and High Net Worth:** Trusts provide an efficient means of managing complex assets, such as multiple properties, investments, and business interests. They offer continuity of management and can minimize the need for probate, ensuring a smoother transition of assets upon the grantor's passing.
- 2. Out-of-State Property Ownership:** If you own property in multiple states, establishing a trust can help streamline the administration of these assets and avoid the need for multiple probate proceedings. Trusts can be designed to hold and manage out-of-state properties effectively.
- 3. Providing for Minor Children:** Trusts allow for precise control over the distribution of assets to minor children. A trust can designate a trustee to manage and distribute assets on behalf of the children until they reach a specified age or milestone, ensuring their financial well-being and protection.



**4. Financially Irresponsible Beneficiaries:** If you have a beneficiary who lacks financial responsibility, a trust can provide oversight and protect their inheritance. The trustee can manage the assets, ensuring they are used appropriately and in the best interests of the beneficiary.

**5. Beneficiaries with High Debts:** Trusts can shield assets from creditors and help protect the inheritance of beneficiaries burdened by significant debts, such as medical or student loans. By structuring the trust appropriately, you can ensure that the assets are used for the intended purpose rather than being consumed by debt obligations.

**6. Beneficiaries with Disabilities:** In Florida, a trust can be created to provide for beneficiaries with disabilities. This type of trust is often referred to as a special needs trust or a supplemental needs trust. The purpose of such a trust is to protect the assets intended for the beneficiary while ensuring that they can still qualify for government benefits, such as Medicaid or Supplemental Security Income (SSI). The trust assets can be used to enhance the beneficiary's quality of life by providing for additional expenses not covered by public benefits. It's important to consult with an attorney who specializes in estate planning or elder law to properly establish and administer a trust for beneficiaries with disabilities in Florida.

**7. Beneficiaries with Untrustworthy Spouses:** A trust can safeguard assets from potential claims by a beneficiary's untrustworthy spouse in the event of divorce or separation. By directing the assets into a trust, you can provide long-term protection for your beneficiaries, even in complex family dynamics.

## Who Can Serve as a Trustee?

In Florida, the law allows a wide range of individuals or entities to serve as trustees. The most common options include family members, friends, financial institutions, or professional fiduciaries. It is important to select a trustee who is trustworthy, capable of managing financial affairs, and committed to fulfilling their fiduciary duties. It is advisable to consult with an experienced estate planning attorney to ensure the trustee selection aligns with your specific needs and goals.

Trusts in Florida offer numerous advantages for individuals seeking efficient estate planning and asset management. Whether it's the convenience they provide, the ability to protect assets, or addressing unique circumstances like minor children or financially challenged beneficiaries, trusts can be a valuable tool. When establishing a trust, careful consideration should be given to selecting a trustee who will faithfully carry out their duties. By working with a knowledgeable professional, you can create a trust that aligns with your goals and provides peace of mind for the future.

At The Law Office of Kelly L. Fayer, P.A., we provide attentive, personal assistance to Florida residents who are looking to prepare for the future. Our experienced lawyer is passionate about helping our clients fully understand their options and implement tools that will accomplish their goals. No matter your circumstances, our estate planning services in Fort Myers are designed to guide you through the planning process and include assistance with a wide range of instruments, from wills and trusts, to advance directives and powers of attorney. When you need an estate planning attorney near you, contact The Law Office of Kelly L. Fayer, P.A.



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# Weathering the Storm:

## 5 Disaster Preparedness Tips for You, an Adult Child with a Senior Parent

By Cynthia Perthuis, CDP, CADDCT, CSA

### Safeguard Your Aging Loved One During Storm Season

After Hurricane Ian last year, we introduced you to Stan and Mary. Stan and Mary lived in a high-rise in Florida when the hurricane hit. Although they were in an evacuation zone, everyone thought they would be safe because the staff in their building was top-notch, plus it was built to withstand hurricane-force winds. However, what they and most people did not consider is what would happen if the power went out for long periods of time? What would happen if staff could not make it to the building due to storm damage?

As an adult child, it is essential for you to proactively prepare for potential disasters like hurricanes, heat waves, flooding, and blizzards. This is especially true if you have recently noticed a parent or loved one displaying dementia-like symptoms. Here are five real-life situations for you to consider when preparing for any natural disaster.

### Power Outages and Medical Equipment

Power outages can pose significant challenges for seniors who rely on medical equipment like scooters, lift chairs, CPAP machines, or even something simple like hearing aids, which use rechargeable batteries. Does your family member use electrical medical devices? Do they have alternative methods of using or charging their equipment? Do they actually know how to use alternative methods? Investing in a portable generator or a battery backup system is only good if they know where it is and how to use it.

### Ensuring Food and Water Supply

After Hurricane Ian, I met Joan\*, age 76, and her daughter Michelle\* on the 13th floor of an over-55

community in Naples. When I met them, they had just begun the long trek from the fourteenth floor to the first floor via the stairs because the elevator was out. It was obvious the stress of the situation had overwhelmed them both. After one flight of stairs, Joan gave up. She had a broken foot (in a boot) and was tired and wanted to go back upstairs. Michelle knew they needed to either go all the way to the first floor to get food and medical supplies or go back up one flight to wait it out. Her mom, who had undiagnosed cognitive decline, could not understand why Michelle was adamant they had to continue down more stairs.

### Temperature Control and Electric Shutters

Susan's\* home had electric storm shutters to protect her windows. They worked effectively during the storm. However, the building lost power, and the generator system was flooded. This meant there was no electricity, and she could not open any windows to get airflow into the apartment. Her lovely home with all its amenities became a hotbox, which could have easily caused heat exhaustion.

### Assess Your Loved One's Cognitive Ability

If you have ever wondered if your loved one may be experiencing cognitive decline, now is the time to assess their cognitive level. Here are some simple things for you to consider and questions you can ask to determine if they are able to remain in their home. What would you do if there was a fire? Can your loved one tell you what they would do, and is it the right thing? Would they call 911? Would they leave the house? Can your loved one hear a fire alarm, or do they know what a fire alarm means? I had a client who lived alone, but his family decided to move him into a memory care community because his cognitive ability declined to the point where he did not know what a fire alarm sounded like. Do they ever confuse the telephone and the television remote control? In times of emergency, this is a big problem.

The last thing you would want is for your mom or dad to try to call for help using the television remote. Do they rely on medication support from someone who may not be able to get to them in a storm or emergency? If they have an automatic pill dispenser or an aide that provides medical care, what will happen if the aide is unable to get to their home? Would they know the right medication to take, and would they remember to do it?

### Proactive Planning:

Proactive planning is key to ensuring your loved one's safety. Now is the time to create a comprehensive emergency plan with essential contact information for healthcare providers, emergency services, and neighbors who can offer assistance. Compile copies of important documents like medical records, insurance information, and identification papers in a secure location. Sharing them with appropriate people via Google Drive, One Drive, or Dropbox can make it much easier for everyone. Establish regular communication protocols and ensure your loved one understands the plan and their role in it.

If you do not think your loved one would know how to manage in an emergency situation, it is time for you to act. Information is always important. You can read this article to learn more about how Senior Living Providers plan for emergency situations:

<https://www.seniorcare-nyfl.com/elder-care-and-senior-living-blog/how-senior-living-communities-prepare-for-natural-disasters-1667516343701.html>

We find most families do not understand how communities prepare and all the work they do to make sure your loved one gets the best care possible. We are here to answer any questions you have and can help you create a disaster preparedness plan for you and your loved one. We can also help you after the disaster by finding short-term accommodations until things are back in order.

*\*Names have changed to protect our client's privacy.*

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# WEIGHT LOSS MAKES YOUR BONES AND JOINTS HAPPY

By Physicians Rehabilitation

**D**egenerative joint disease, also known as osteoarthritis, is a condition that affects your joints, causing them to deteriorate over time. It primarily involves the breakdown of the cartilage that cushions the ends of your bones, leading to pain, stiffness, and reduced joint mobility. This condition can affect any joint in the body but commonly occurs in weight-bearing joints like the knees, hips, and spine. To manage and overcome degenerative joint disease and minimize further wear and tear on your joints and spine, Physicians Rehab recommends the following steps:

**1. Exercise:** Engaging in low-impact exercises can help improve joint function and strengthen the supporting muscles. Activities like walking, swimming, and cycling are excellent options. Your doctor or a physical therapist can guide you on suitable exercises based on your condition and fitness level.

**2. Weight management:** Maintaining a healthy weight is crucial since excess weight stresses your joints, accelerating wear and tear. By losing weight or keeping it within a healthy range, you can reduce the strain on your joints and alleviate pain. Being overweight will exacerbate osteoarthritis and can expedite joint degeneration, especially in weight-bearing joints, like the knees, hips, and ankles. For every pound of excess weight carried, 4 pounds of extra pressure is applied to a weight-bearing joint. For example, if you are 10 pounds overweight, that equates to 40 extra pounds of pressure that is applied to the knees. Having your joints, like your knees, absorb all that extra pressure over time can cause significant and irreversible damage to the joints.

**3. Proper posture:** Pay attention to your posture while sitting, standing, and lifting heavy objects. Avoid slouching and try to keep your spine and joints properly aligned. This reduces unnecessary pressure on your joints and promotes better spinal health.

**4. Joint protection:** Be mindful of your activities and avoid repetitive movements that can strain your joints. Use joint-protective devices, such as knee braces or ergonomic tools.



**5. Balanced diet:** A nutritious diet rich in vitamins, minerals, and antioxidants can support joint health. Include foods like fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and lean proteins. Omega-3 fatty acids found in fish may also have anti-inflammatory benefits.

**6. Heat and cold therapy:** Wearing warm compresses or a hot bath can help soothe joint pain and stiffness. Conversely, cold packs can reduce inflammation when applied to the affected area.

**7. Medications:** Over-the-counter pain relievers like acetaminophen or non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs) can help manage pain and inflammation. Always consult your doctor before starting any new medication.

**8. Physical therapy:** Working with a physical therapist can provide targeted exercises and techniques to improve joint flexibility, strength, and range of motion.

**9. Assistive devices:** In some cases, assistive devices like canes or walking aids can help reduce stress on your joints during daily activities.

**10. Avoid smoking and limit alcohol intake:** Smoking and excessive alcohol consumption can contribute to inflammation and may worsen joint problems.



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Everyone's condition is unique, so working closely with your healthcare provider to develop a personalized plan for managing your degenerative joint disease is crucial. Regular check-ups and open communication will ensure you receive the best care and support for your joint health. If necessary, your doctor may recommend more advanced treatments, such as injections or surgery, but these are typically reserved for severe cases when conservative measures are no longer effective.

By taking proactive steps and making lifestyle adjustments, you can effectively manage degenerative joint disease and maintain better joint and spinal health. If you have any questions or concerns, don't hesitate to ask, and together with Physicians Rehab, we'll work towards improving your quality of life.

We, at Physicians Rehabilitation, have always taken a multi-modality approach to treating chronic joint pain and osteoarthritis by offering various types of injection therapies, physical therapy, bracing, and interventional pain management, but now we are also offering medical weight loss options to help you with your long-term health goals. We are focused on helping you gain mobility, improve your strength, and live a pain-free lifestyle, but also getting you to look and feel your best! Call us today to get more information on our weight loss program!

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# Loss of Balance is Not a Normal Part of Aging

By Dale Segal, MD

**T**here is a misconception that loss of balance is a normal part of aging. This is not true. While decreased strength and agility occurs with physiologic aging, progressive loss of balance can be a sign of a serious underlying health problem.

Loss of balance or gait instability is one of the most common symptoms of cervical myelopathy. Cervical myelopathy refers to damage to the spinal cord that is caused by neural compression or spinal stenosis. Cervical myelopathy is most commonly caused by age-related degenerative changes to the cushioning discs and supporting ligaments between the bones (i.e., vertebrae) of the cervical spine. These degenerative changes (alternatively referred to as "degenerative disc disease," "spondylosis," or "arthritis") can create bulging discs, bone spurs, ligament thickening, and even unstable motion between the vertebrae, all of which may then lead to a narrowing of the space available for the spinal cord, otherwise known as "cervical stenosis." Myelopathy occurs when the stenosis is significant enough to compromise normal spinal cord function.

Patients with cervical myelopathy commonly complain of unsteadiness when walking. Other common complaints are loss of hand dexterity; for example, difficulty buttoning shirts or opening jars and bottles. Cervical myelopathy is a common and frequently underdiagnosed medical condition which tends to occur in adults over 60 years of age. Cervical myelopathy can be difficult to diagnose because it is not always associated with neck and



arm pain. In addition, early, milder stages of myelopathy can present with subtle loss of function that may mistakenly be attributed to "getting older," when in fact it is due to spinal cord compression and resulting nerve damage.

While balance loss is one of the most common symptoms of cervical myelopathy, not all balance loss is caused by cervical myelopathy. Deconditioning and natural physiologic aging can result in loss of flexibility and agility. Having a fitness routine that includes core muscle strengthening is paramount to maintaining balance and healthy posture. Cardiovascular training and yoga are excellent for promoting balance health and well-being.

If loss of balance develops suddenly, is progressively worsening or is associated with loss of hand dexterity, neck pain, arm pain or hand numbness then it is important to seek evaluation from a spine specialist. An MRI will be ordered to ensure that there is no evidence of cervical myelopathy. If left untreated cervical myelopathy can cause permanent impairment. However, if cervical myelopathy is identified and treated in a timely manner, it can result in significant improvement in quality of life.



## Dale Segal, MD

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

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

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# WHAT IS THE MIND DIET?

In this article we focus specifically on the impact a potentially revolutionary nutrition plan called the MIND diet can have on Alzheimer's prevention for seniors.

**T**he possibility of losing our cognitive abilities can be even scarier than the loss of physical abilities as we age. There are an estimated 5.5 million Americans with Alzheimer's, affecting millions more people caregiving for loved ones affected by the devastating disease, with no cure at the present moment. Therefore, many seniors and their families are wondering what they can do to be proactive and prevent the onset of Alzheimer's.

For the purposes of this article, we're going to focus specifically on the impact a potentially revolutionary nutrition plan called the MIND diet can have on Alzheimer's prevention for seniors.

The name MIND diet surprisingly isn't in reference to the diet's supposed ability to improve cognitive functioning. Rather, it stands for Mediterranean-DASH Intervention for Neurodegenerative Delay. The MIND diet meal plan is essentially a combination of two popular diets, the Mediterranean and DASH, with an emphasis on brain foods shown to improve cognitive functioning.

## HISTORY OF THE MIND DIET

Dr. Martha Clare Morris, an expert in nutritional epidemiology at Rush University Medical Center in Chicago, introduced the MIND diet meal plan in 2015. Her studies on the diet tested and compared the effects

of the Mediterranean, DASH, and MIND diets in adults aged 58-98 years. The study found that diligently sticking to all three diets was associated with a reduced risk for Alzheimer's disease, but only the MIND diet showed lower risk even with moderate adherence. Another study showed that participants who stuck to the MIND diet lowered their risk for Alzheimer's by 54%. In addition to the MIND diet's effect on Alzheimer's prevention, Dr. Morris and her colleagues recently studied the diet's effect on the cognitive decline of stroke survivors.

Those in the study who were highly adherent to the MIND diet had substantially slower rates of cognitive decline than people who didn't follow the diet.

Given the newness of the MIND diet meal plan and relatively few scientific studies conducted, scientists still need to do more research, but the early results are certainly very promising. Some have even coined the phrase "Alzheimer's diet" when referencing the MIND diet meal plan, and US News and World Report ranked the MIND diet #5 in its list of Best Diets in 2018.

## FOODS TO EMPHASIZE

If you choose to follow the MIND diet for yourself or integrate it into the meal plan of a senior loved one, here are the brain foods you'll want to emphasize and recommended number of servings/week:

**Leafy greens (spinach, mixed greens, kale):** aim for at least 6 servings of leafy greens per week. In addition to cognitive benefits, leafy greens are high in vitamin K and many other essential nutrients.

**Other veggies:** in addition to leafy greens, try to eat one additional serving of vegetables per day.

**Berries:** aim for two or more servings a week. Smoothies are great for seniors to get their weekly servings of berries.

**Nuts:** at least five servings per week. Nuts are also a great source of protein and healthy fats.

**Wholegrains:** three or more servings a day. Common wholegrains include brown rice and whole-wheat pasta.

**Oliveoil:** replace butter with olive oil, and use it as your primary oil for cooking. Keep in mind that when sautéing, it's better to use standard olive oil than extra virgin olive oil.

**Wine:** a glass of wine, particularly red, a day has been proven to have cognitive benefits.

**Fish:** at least one serving per week. Salmon is especially beneficial and is loaded with Omega-3 fatty acids.

## FOODS TO AVOID

Some foods to avoid include:

**Red meat:** aim for less than four servings per week, and choose leaner cuts. Think tenderloin, not rib eye.

**Butter and margarine:** less than a tablespoon daily.

**Cheese:** less than one serving per week.

**Added sugar:** avoid or limit unhealthy desserts, no more than five servings per week. Instead of pastries and ice cream, try dark chocolate.

**Fast food:** it's best to eliminate fast food altogether because it's typically loaded with sugar and sodium.









One of the big benefits of the MIND diet meal plan is that it's not a "fad diet" and doesn't require you to eliminate lots of foods from your diet. Rather, it calls for moderation of unhealthy foods and emphasizing healthy brain foods. This makes the MIND diet easier to follow for seniors than more extreme nutrition plans like the Paleo diet or Vegan diet.

*For any questions, please contact your local Chefs For Seniors Office:*

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 <b>AT LEAST ONE DARK GREEN SALAD AND ONE OTHER VEGETABLE EACH DAY</b>	 <b>BERRIES AT LEAST TWICE A WEEK</b>	
 <b>AT LEAST A ONE-OUNCE SERVING OF NUTS EACH DAY</b> 		
 <b>BEANS OR LEGUMES AT LEAST EVERY OTHER DAY</b>	 <b>POULTRY AT LEAST TWICE A WEEK</b>	 <b>FISH AT LEAST ONCE A WEEK</b> <i>If you don't drink alcohol, purple grape juice provides many of the same benefits.</i>
 <b>A FIVE-OUNCE GLASS OF RED WINE EACH DAY</b>		
 <b>NO MORE THAN ONE TABLESPOON A DAY OF BUTTER OR MARGARINE; CHOOSE OLIVE OIL INSTEAD</b>	 <b>CHEESE, FRIED FOOD AND FAST FOOD NO MORE THAN ONCE A WEEK</b>	
 <b>PASTRIES AND SWEETS LESS THAN FIVE TIMES A WEEK</b>		



# Can a High-Tech Chair Cure Incontinence?

By Joseph Gauta, MD, FACOG

**Do you wear urinary pads or diapers? Do you leak when you exercise or sneeze? Aging, childbirth, and menopause can all lead to incontinence. There are many treatments such as surgical procedures, pessary devices, and medications to help cure or reduce incontinence.**

**T**here is a new device by BTL called Emsella that makes incontinence treatment as simple as sitting in a chair! The Emsella is a unique chair that patients can simply sit and relax in (fully clothed) and have their pelvic floor significantly strengthened during a 28 minute treatment.

The Emsella chair is being touted as the Kegel throne. Each treatment provides the equivalent of doing over 10,000 kegel exercises. It produces high-frequency vibrations with thousands of contractions per session that tighten the pelvic floor muscles and the bladder. Results can often be noticed as quickly as the first treatment. Most women and men will undergo just six sessions in a full three-week program to restore their pelvic muscle strength. The best part is, 67% of treated patients totally eliminated or decreased the use of hygienic pads, and 95% of treated patients improved quality of life.

## Who Is The Right Candidate For BTL Emsella?

BTL Emsella™ is a great option for patients of any age who desire solution for urinary incontinence and improvement in their quality of life.

## How Long Is The Treatment?

## How Many Sessions Do I Need?

Your provider will tailor a treatment plan for you. A typical treatment takes 28 minutes and you will need about 6 sessions, scheduled twice a week.

## What Does The Procedure Feel Like? Is It Painful?

You will experience tingling and pelvic floor muscle contractions during the procedure. The treatment is painless and you may resume daily activities immediately after the treatment.

## The following patients should not seek Emsella treatment.

1. Subject is pregnant, planning to get pregnant or within 3 months postpartum;
2. Subject has a pacemaker;
3. Subject has an implant or IUD containing metal (e.g. copper 7);
4. Subject has piercing between the waist and knees and is not willing to remove it before each treatment

## How Fast Will I See Results?

You may observe improvement after a single session. The results will typically continue to improve over the next few weeks.<sup>1</sup>

## References:

1. Body by BTL, A Breakthrough Treatment For Incontinence And Confidence, 2019 Btl Industries Inc.

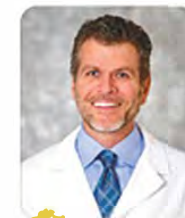


This progressive treatment is helping numerous men and women find their freedom, confidence, and get their life back without having to worry about urinary incontinence. Emsella has been featured on the Doctors and in various news and media outlets.

## Some comments from local users:

- I don't have to worry about peeing when I sneeze anymore
- My husband definitely notices the difference
- I just feel lighter down there.

To learn more about this technology please go to our website at [www.FloridaBladderInstitute.com](http://www.FloridaBladderInstitute.com). Call 239-449-7979 to schedule your Emsella consultation today.



Joseph Gauta, MD



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# Bidets and Japanese Culture: Revolutionizing Personal Hygiene

**P**ersonal hygiene is an integral part of our daily routine, and various cultures worldwide have developed unique practices to ensure cleanliness and comfort. One such practice that has gained global attention is the use of bidets. Originating in Japan, bidets have become an essential aspect of personal hygiene and offer a fascinating glimpse into Japanese culture. In this editorial, we will delve into the personal hygiene practices in Japan, explore the origins of bidets in Japanese society, analyze their popularity over time, and examine their translation into American culture.

## Personal Hygiene in Japan

Japanese culture places great emphasis on cleanliness and hygiene. From bathing rituals to meticulous hand-washing traditions, the Japanese have long recognized the importance of maintaining a high standard of personal hygiene. This cultural inclination towards cleanliness is deeply ingrained in everyday life, and it is no surprise that Japan is at the forefront of innovative hygiene practices.

## Origins of Bidets in Japan

The use of bidets in Japan can be traced back to ancient times. Historically, Japan had a strong tradition of communal bathing, with public bathhouses serving as social gathering places. Personal hygiene in these bathhouses involved using a small vessel to pour water for cleansing after using the toilet. Over time, this practice evolved into the modern bidet, offering a more efficient and hygienic solution.

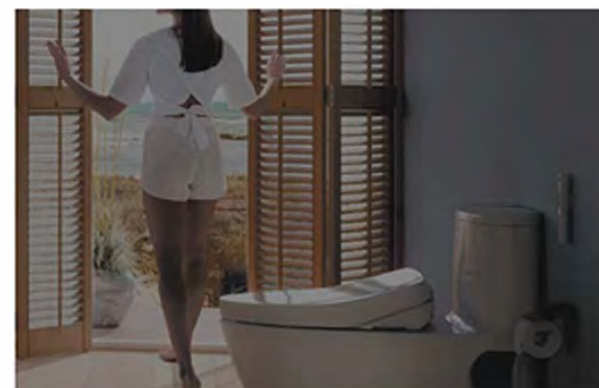
## The Popularity of Bidets in Japan Over Time

In recent decades, bidets have become ubiquitous in Japanese households and public restrooms. The rise in popularity can be attributed to several factors. Firstly, bidets provide a more thorough and comfortable cleaning experience than traditional toilet paper. Additionally, bidets are considered more environmentally friendly, as they reduce paper waste. The health benefits of bidets, such as preventing skin irritation and reducing the risk of infections, have also contributed to their widespread adoption.

## Translation to American Culture

While bidets have a long-established presence in Japan, their adoption in Western countries, particularly in America, has been relatively slower. However, in recent years, bidets have started gaining traction and popularity in American households. This can be attributed to increased awareness of the hygiene benefits, eco-consciousness, and a desire for a more comfortable and refreshing cleansing experience.

Despite initial reservations, American consumers are gradually recognizing the advantages of bidets. As a result, bidet attachments and standalone bidet fixtures are becoming more readily available in the market. Major bathroom fixture manufacturers have also started incorporating bidet features into their designs, catering to the growing demand.



The bidet revolution, deeply rooted in Japanese culture, is making global waves. Japan's emphasis on personal hygiene has led to the development and widespread adoption of bidets, transforming how individuals maintain cleanliness. Integrating bidets into American culture is a testament to their undeniable benefits. As more people recognize the advantages of bidets, they will likely become commonplace in bathrooms worldwide, improving personal hygiene standards and revolutionizing how we approach cleanliness and well-being.

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Founded in 2022, House of Bidets is a small business based in Tampa, Florida. Given the scarcity of toilet paper in recent history, we reevaluated why toilet paper is used at all in the bathroom. It is wasteful, dirty, and plain ineffective compared to the cleaning you receive from a bidet.

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## Dealing With Life's Painful Situations

By Pastor Timothy L. Neptune

**O**n Father's Day in 2005 my dad came to my office to visit and talk about how things were going. In the course of our discussion he mentioned that he experienced a terrible night's sleep because his back was causing him so much pain. I told him that it was time to go to the ER and get checked out to find out what was causing all of his pain. He did, and that started a two-year battle with pancreatic cancer. My dad fought an incredible fight with this terrible cancer but passed away in August of 2007.

Many people have faced the pain of having to bury a loved one. The question is, "How do I deal with the pain?" We may have confidence that our loved one is in a better place, but do we do with the pain that we still feel?

As you read this, maybe your pain is not in the loss associated with death, but rather you have faced the end of a relationship, or perhaps have received bad news regarding your own health. The question still remains, "what are we to do with these painful situations?"

As we turn through the pages of Scripture, we find that the thoughts and writings of the Psalmist David bring comfort and hope to those in pain. David understood painful situations for he faced many of them in his own life. He too, buried many loved ones and faced enormous family problems. How did he get through these challenges? He turned to God for help.

David tells us in the book of Psalms, <sup>18</sup> *The LORD is close to the brokenhearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit. Psalms 34:18*

You are never closer to God than when you are hurting. David knew that from personal experience. David took his pain and his problems to the Lord and asked for His help. In Psalm 142:1-2 David wrote, *"I cry aloud to the LORD; I lift up my voice to the LORD for mercy. I pour out my complaint before him; before him I tell my trouble."*

Our natural tendency is to suffer in silence. We put on a smile and pretend that everything is fine in our lives. Yet in reality, we know that ignoring our pain does not bring relief. We hope that time will heal all wounds but we know it does not. In fact, time often makes matters even worse.

Pain is our body's way of letting us know that we need to deal with something. Whether it is physical, emotional, or relational, pain should not be ignored. And yet still, we try to run from it.

It is human nature to run from painful situations. By law, all doors in public buildings swing out. When people panic, they run. They try to escape. When we face pain, loss and hurt, we look for ways to escape. We dream of running away from reality in hopes of finding peace and comfort over the next rainbow. Sometimes people try to escape by turning to alcohol, drugs, food, or even inappropriate relationships. Running from your problems never brings resolution.

David went on to say in Psalm 142:3 that <sup>3</sup> *"When my spirit grows faint within me, it is you who knows my way..."* God knows the pain we feel and He wants us to run to Him with our troubles.

As you read his Psalms, you will quickly notice that David was very open about what he was going through. And yet, through it all, he learned to trust and depend on God.

When dealing with the pressures and strains of life and the emotional challenges we face, we can learn much from David's example. Stop pretending that you can handle everything in your own strength and turn to God who loves you and cares about you. He specializes in mending broken hearts.

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