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September 2023

Manatee/Sarasota Edition - Monthly

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- Skip & Gail Sack



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# Complications of Vein Disease

By Dr. Lackey

**M**illions of people have varicose vein problems, yet only one half of 1 percent seek treatment. Vein disease goes undiagnosed and therefore undertreated. Patients tell us that their physicians have reassured them that the leg symptoms they experience are a part of aging and that it is "nothing to worry about." Ignoring daily leg swelling, pain, cramping, leg heaviness, fatigue, itching, and discoloration can lead to permanent changes. Vein disease is progressive, meaning it will worsen at a rate of 4 percent every year. This article will discuss the other complications that can lead to serious problems including bleeding, swelling, phlebitis, cellulitis, blood clots, and skin ulcers.

## Skin Changes

Chronic venous insufficiency (CVI) can cause skin changes resulting in discoloration of the lower legs, which is known as hyperpigmentation. It appears as a darkening of the skin often with a rusty-orange color. Stasis dermatitis is inflammation of the skin caused by damage to vein close to the skin's surface. This can appear as a red, violet, or brown rash between the ankle and the knee. Stasis dermatitis is a precursor for the development of cellulitis. Cellulitis is an infection of the skin caused by bacteria. Bacteria normally are present on the skin, but when injured, the bacteria can spread and grow beneath the surface which is made much worse by poor blood flow in the legs or feet. Cellulitis is treated with antibiotics.

## Phlebitis

Thrombophlebitis, a blood clot in a superficial vein, is a common complication of varicose veins. This occurs because the dilated vein makes it easier to injure but can often occur without trauma. It presents as a hot, tender, thickened area along the length of the vein. It is very painful and associated

## Stages of Vein Disease



with fever and fatigue. If phlebitis extends far enough up the leg it can cause a clot in the deep veins, which is a risk for pulmonary embolism, which can be fatal.

## Bleeding

Bleeding from large varicosities is typically from a bump or scrape to the area. Many elderly people with thin-walled veins are at increased risk and may be completely unaware of a vein rupture until they see blood running down their legs or feel faint from blood loss. Bleeding can be life-threatening if unrecognized. If caught early, it can be controlled with leg elevation and compression. Repeated bleeding can occur in the same area until proper treatment of vein disease is performed.

## Swelling

Vein disease causes swelling in the ankles and lower legs which appears worse after a day of standing. In advanced disease the swelling can be present all the time. Typically, just above the ankle is where the swelling begins. If left untreated, this can worsen to lymphedema which is more difficult to manage and treat.

## Skin Ulcers

One of the most challenging vein complications is a skin ulcer. This is an open sore resulting from trauma to the skin. Trauma and chronic vein disease results in skin breakdown where the area around the open sore becomes red, swollen, tender, and painful.

These ulcers typically occur on the inner side of the ankle. Patients are often frustrated by these ulcers as they are frequently sent for lifelong wound care with multiple dressing changes for a wound that never seems to heal. Unless the root cause of the ulcer, vein disease, is treated, the ulcers will recur in under 2 years. Vein treatment involving ablation and sclerotherapy can help these chronic ulcers to heal.

## Blood Clots

A study published by the Journal of American Medical Association suggests that the presence of varicose veins may significantly increase the risk of deep vein thrombosis (DVT), which is better known as blood clots. These can be life-threatening if they travel to the lungs or hearts. Some DVTs may not have any symptoms, but most cause dramatic pain, swelling, and warmth of the leg. Left untreated, people with extensive DVTs are at a higher risk of developing pulmonary embolism where a clot can break away and travel to the lungs where, it can be deadly.

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# AFTER HYSTERECTOMY, BRADENTON RESIDENT FEELING HERSELF AGAIN

**C**orinna Decker, 61, of Bradenton, is a very grateful person. She is not only thankful for the skills of her own gynecologist, but to Manatee Physician Alliance Gynecologic Oncologist Stacey South, MD, who recently treated her for a precancerous condition.



Decker never went through menopause, and her uterus wall was thicker than normal. She was referred by her gynecologist to Dr. South for a consultation.

"I did some research and found that Dr. South had very positive online reviews," said Decker. "I felt comfortable with my choice of an oncologist and knew I would be well taken care of."

Once an initial test was performed, it was determined that Decker had precancerous cells in her uterus and a hysterectomy was recommended.

The hysterectomy was done robotically, and she had five small incisions. It was a same-day surgery, so she did not need to stay in the hospital overnight.

"Dr. South spoke with me before the surgery that day, and I did not have any fears or worries," added Decker. "I knew that I was in good hands."

The recovery period was quick. As soon as Decker got home from surgery, she was up and walking. The only pain she experienced was from getting up and sitting down, but for the most part she went right back to her day-to-day routine. She will go to Dr. South's clinic every 90 days initially for follow-up appointments.

"Dr. South was so kind, and most importantly, she listened. I never felt rushed," explained Decker. "It was a beautiful experience from the moment I walked in the office door."

Although it was a stressful time for Decker, everyone at the office was attentive and made her feel like they knew exactly what they were doing.



*Dr. Stacey South uses her skills to operate the da Vinci Xi surgical system.*

"The nurse practitioner, Heather Huddy, was great as well," she said. "The whole process at the hospital was also wonderful. They got me right in and got anything I needed. I felt relaxed, calm and comfortable."

Without hesitation, Decker would recommend Dr. South to any female who is having health challenges.

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# Understanding Arthritis and Its Impact:

## Arthritis Awareness Month

**T**his month we come together to raise awareness about a condition that affects millions of lives worldwide - arthritis. Arthritis Awareness Month is a time to shed light on this often misunderstood and underestimated condition, highlighting the challenges faced by those living with arthritis and promoting understanding, early detection, and management strategies.

### What is Arthritis?

Arthritis refers to a group of more than 100 different types of joint diseases that cause inflammation, pain, stiffness, and decreased range of motion in the affected joints. The most common types of arthritis are osteoarthritis and rheumatoid arthritis, but there are many other forms, such as psoriatic arthritis, ankylosing spondylitis, and juvenile idiopathic arthritis.

### The Impact on Individuals and Society

Arthritis can affect people of all ages, genders, and backgrounds. Contrary to popular belief, it is not limited to the elderly; many young adults and even children can develop various forms of arthritis. This condition can significantly impact an individual's quality of life, making everyday tasks like walking, climbing stairs, or even holding a cup of coffee painful and challenging.

The physical pain caused by arthritis is just one aspect of its impact. It can also lead to emotional distress, mental health issues, and social isolation. The chronic nature of arthritis means that those affected often have to adapt their lifestyles to accommodate the limitations it imposes, leading to frustration and a sense of helplessness.

From an economic standpoint, arthritis has a substantial societal impact. The costs associated with medical treatments, medications, lost productivity, and disability support place a significant burden on healthcare systems and economies around the world.

### Promoting Awareness and Education

Arthritis Awareness Month serves as a platform to educate the public about the different types of arthritis, their symptoms, risk factors, and available

treatment options. It also emphasizes the importance of early diagnosis and timely intervention. Knowledge is a powerful tool in combating the stigma and misconceptions that surround arthritis, helping individuals recognize symptoms and seek medical attention sooner.

### Advancements in Treatment

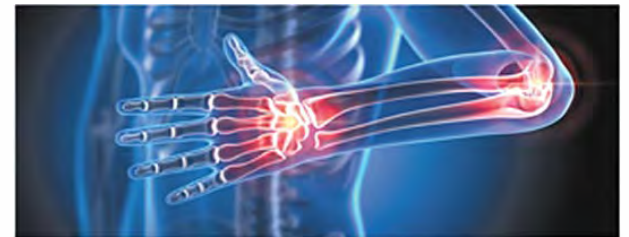
While there is currently no cure for most types of arthritis, there have been remarkable advancements in treatment options that can help manage symptoms and improve the quality of life for those affected. These include:

- **Medications:** Pain relievers, anti-inflammatory drugs, and disease-modifying antirheumatic drugs (DMARDs) can help manage pain and slow down the progression of the disease.
- **Physical Therapy:** Customized exercise and physical therapy regimens can improve joint function and mobility.
- **Lifestyle Changes:** Maintaining a healthy weight, staying physically active, and adopting joint-friendly habits can help reduce the impact of arthritis.
- **Surgery:** In severe cases, joint replacement surgery might be recommended to alleviate pain and restore functionality.

### How Can You Get Involved?

Arthritis Awareness Month provides a great opportunity for individuals and communities to make a difference. Here are a few ways you can get involved:

- **Spread Awareness:** Use social media, community events, and conversations to share accurate information about arthritis and its impact.
- **Support Research:** Donate to organizations that fund research for better treatment options and, eventually, a cure.
- **Support Those Affected:** Reach out to friends, family members, or colleagues who have arthritis. Your empathy and understanding can go a long way in providing emotional support.
- **Stay Informed:** Keep yourself informed about the latest developments in arthritis research and treatment. The more you know, the better you can support those who are affected.



Arthritis is more than just aches and pains; it's a complex and often life-altering condition that deserves our attention and empathy. As we observe Arthritis Awareness Month, let's come together to raise our voices, challenge misconceptions, and pave the way for a brighter future for all those living with arthritis.

### Paragon Healthcare

Our story began in 2002 with a heart to serve people. We strive to make the healthcare process easier for patients and physicians just like you. Our compassionate team of nurses, dietitians, pharmacists, and customer service representatives are dedicated to serving each person who joins our family. Each patient receives exceptional and customized care focused on maximizing their quality of life. We specialize in providing life-saving and life-giving infusible and injectable drug therapies through our specialty pharmacies, our infusion centers, and the home setting.

Last year, we treated more than 4k arthritis patients companywide with Actemra, Avsola, Benlysta, Cimzia, Ilumya, Inflectra, Infiximab, IVIG, Orencia, Remicade, Renflexis, Rituxan, Rituximab, Ruxience, Simponi Aria, Solu Medrol and Truxima. Year-to-date we have treated nearly 3k patients with the same diagnosis and therapies, putting us on track to service more arthritis patients nationally.



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# AVOIDING NAIL FUNGUS

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

It's September, but Thanksgiving and Christmas are just around the corner. The holidays will provide some good time and food with your coworker, friends, and family. So, when you slide your feet into your new pair of heels, are you going to be mortified to see your toenails are thick and discolored?

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

You may have been exposed to the fungi when walking around damp areas barefoot like swimming pools, locker rooms, and showers. Injury to the nail bed, even pressure from shoes, will make it more susceptible to the fungi. Anyone can be affected but people with chronic diseases, such as diabetes, circulatory problems, or immune-deficiency conditions, are especially prone to developing a fungal nail infection.

Other contributing factors may be a history of athlete's foot and excessive perspiration. Treatment can take months to a year to completely clear the fungus. Your healthcare provider will discuss treatment options with you to determine what the best option is for you. Unfortunately, recurrence is common. For these reasons, prevention is key. Proper hygiene and performing daily foot exams including your toes are the first line of defense. Clean and dry feet can better resist infection by the fungus.

## Tips to help you avoid nail fungus.

- Never go barefoot.
- Wear flip flops or shower shoes in public areas. For example, at public showers at the pool or gym. Walking around a public pool.



- Wash your feet with soap and water daily. Make sure to thoroughly dry your feet after washing, including between your toes. You may even want to wash your feet after the gym or going to a public pool.
- Disinfect your shoes with an Over-The-Counter antifungal sprays or powders.
- Wear moisture wicking and breathable socks. Socks made of synthetic fibers that wick moisture away from your feet are recommended. If your feet perspire, then you should change your socks throughout the day. Don't share shoes or socks with others. Change your socks after exercise. You may also alternate gym shoes to allow the material to dry completely.
- Don't share clippers or foot products with other people. Disinfect instruments use to cut your nails and other pedicure tools.
- Treat athletes' foot if present.
- Avoid tight fitting shoes and use shoes made with breathable material.
- If signs of nail fungus are present, avoid nail polish.
- Keep nails trimmed and clean. Nails should be at the same length as the tip of the toe.

- Wash your shoes, this includes hiking boots to sandals. Shoes that haven't been cleaned are a great place for fungus to thrive.

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

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

## Isin Mustafa, DPM, MSHS, DABPM, FACPM

Isin Mustafa, DPM, is a Podiatrist at Family Foot & Leg Centers in Sarasota, FL. She is a Fellow of the American College of Foot & Ankle Surgeons. Call 239-430-3668 or visit

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# Alcohol & Its Implications on Mental Health

By Steven Stein, MD - Board-certified Psychiatrist

**T**he use of alcohol is engrained in American culture and is one of the most socially acceptable drugs used, but unfortunately often abused. While opinions may vary as to the amount considered safe for human consumption, regular and excessive use can quickly transform from a source of relaxation to a far worse overall stressor. Prolonged and excessive alcohol use can be a serious and life-threatening problem that can lead to many physical, psychological and social dangers, that affect all ages, ethnicities, and socioeconomic classes. However, when alcohol consumption spirals out of control and begins to interfere with daily life, it can lead to a serious condition known as Alcohol Use Disorder (AUD). This disorder not only takes a toll on physical health but also has a profound impact on mental well-being.

**Alcohol's Physical Effects:** Physically, alcohol can damage nearly every organ in the body. Prolonged excessive drinking can lead to fatty liver, alcoholic hepatitis, liver cirrhosis (a potentially fatal condition where liver tissue is replaced by scar tissue), and liver cancer. Additionally, alcohol weakens the immune system, making the body more susceptible to infections. Our heart health can also be compromised, with alcohol contributing to high blood pressure, irregular heartbeats, and an increased risk of stroke.

## What is Alcohol Use Disorder:

Alcohol Use Disorder (AUD) is a chronic and progressive disease characterized by an inability to control alcohol intake, increased tolerance, and dependence leading to withdrawal symptoms. AUD can devastate lives, affecting not only the individual but also their loved ones. Alcohol withdrawal is one of only a few drug withdrawals that can be a medical emergency and even life threatening. Because of this, the assessment of one's severity of use and need for additional services, and possibly medication management should be completed only by a trained professional.

**Alcohol's Impact on the Brain and Mental Health:** Alcohol abuse also wreaks havoc on mental health. One of the most apparent ways that AUD affects mental health is through its impact on the brain's chemistry. Alcohol is a central nervous



system depressant, meaning it slows down brain activity. Initially, this might result in feelings of euphoria and relaxation, but prolonged and excessive alcohol use can disrupt the delicate balance of neurotransmitters and hormones in the brain. This imbalance can lead to mood disturbances such as depression and anxiety. Alcohol can lead to deepening feelings of sadness, hopelessness, and even suicidal thoughts. Anxiety, too, can intensify as the brain's ability to manage stress becomes compromised. The interplay between alcohol and mental health creates a ripple effect, as individuals might turn to alcohol to cope with emotional pain, only to find themselves sinking deeper into distress. Additionally, we can develop a tolerance to alcohol's effects causing us to drink more which contributes to the development of a physical dependence.

Depression often coexists with AUD, creating a vicious cycle. Individuals with AUD may initially turn to alcohol as a means of coping with feelings of sadness or despair. However, alcohol's depressive effects can exacerbate these emotions over time. Anxiety is another common mental health issue intertwined with AUD. While alcohol might temporarily alleviate feelings of anxiety, it actually heightens these emotions in the long run. Chronic alcohol use disrupts the brain's ability to regulate stress, making individuals more susceptible to experiencing heightened anxiety and panic attacks.

The relationship between AUD and mental health is not unidirectional. Just as alcohol abuse can worsen mental health conditions, preexisting mental health

conditions can also increase the risk of developing AUD. Individuals with conditions like depression, anxiety, or post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) might turn to alcohol as a form of self-medication, attempting to alleviate their distressing symptoms. However, this self-medication often results in an escalating cycle of alcohol use and worsened mental health symptoms and outcomes.

**Treatment for Alcohol Use Disorder** is not a one size fits all approach. Breaking the cycle requires a holistic approach that addresses both physical and mental health components, combining therapies, support groups, and possibly medication. A comprehensive assessment should be completed by a medical profession trained in identifying the disorder and the subsequent management approach under medical supervision to ensure the most comfort and best outcome. Not everyone with alcohol use disorder is required to be hospitalized or complete inpatient residential rehabilitation; some can be treated as an outpatient with therapy, support groups and pharmacological interventions. That said, some do require a more intensive approach including detoxification in a facility or hospital for their own safety. An evaluation by a professional is also key to identify and treat any underlying coexisting mood disorder such as depression, anxiety or PTSD.

If you believe you or a loved one may be experiencing some level of alcohol abuse that is impacting your mental, social or physical health please know that you are not alone. Fortunately, there are steps you can take to start feeling better and living life the way you want to live it on your terms. If you would like more information on how Tidewater Total Mind Care can help, feel free to contact us today at 941-202-1999.



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## FINDING THE BEST ORTHOPEDIC SPECIALIST FOR YOUR CHILD'S INJURY IS CRITICAL

**P**rotecting your child entails many different aspects throughout their lives, but unfortunately, you can't always control when things go wrong such as injuries and accidents. If your child has an injury, it's important to be seen by an orthopedic specialist that is board certified, with a high-level of experience, and one that is also comfortable treating children.

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

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

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

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

### **Sforzo | Dillingham | Stewart Orthopedics + Sports Medicine EVERYTHING HEALTHCARE SHOULD BE**

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

### **Treating All Generations**

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

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

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

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

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

### **You Have a Choice**

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



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

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

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

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

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

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



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# TOP INDEPENDENT LIVING SERVICES TO LOOK FOR

**S**o you're ready to look into independent living communities. Great. Now what? You may know the retirement lifestyle you want, but do you know what independent living amenities you should look for? Don't worry. You're in good company, and the following tips may help you find the perfect independent living community.

## 1. SAY GOODBYE TO YOUR TO-DO LIST

Let's not forget that this is about retirement, so your retirement community should be more than a place to live, and it should provide more than just the basic independent living amenities. Before we retired, we were tired adults. We lived our days toiling from one task to the next. We lived for others. Not anymore. We have finally arrived. The place we arrive to should feel like paradise. We should be pampered. Life should revolve around us. Look for maintenance-free communities where housekeeping is just the beginning.

## 2. PUT YOUR MONEY WHERE YOUR MOUTH IS

There's an old saying that basically goes "If your tummy is happy, you'll be happy." OK. You caught us. We made that up, but that doesn't mean it isn't true. It's important that the community you choose offers enough variety to satisfy your palette every day. Look for menus that change often, use seasonal and local ingredients and accommodate special dietary needs. How many dining venues are there? How's the food taste? Are there formal and casual options?

## 3. LIVE HOW YOU WANT

Even the best independent living amenities don't mean a thing if you don't like your housing choices. Senior living communities are often built around apartment homes. This maximizes the space for your amenities and activities. But not all apartment homes are created equal. Look beyond the square footage. Does the community offer multiple bedroom options? Can you choose a villa or a townhome? What about pets? Are yours welcome?

## 4. STAY HEALTHY

Staying active is a key element to aging well. A community's health and wellness program should be high on your list of senior living options. Look for a holistic approach that focuses on multiple aspects of your health and wellness: physical, mental, emotional, social, spiritual, intellectual, vocational and environmental. Ask about activities calendars, social groups, lifelong learning opportunities, preventive health and fitness classes.



## 5. KEEP YOUR MIND SHARP

Rocking chairs are fine, but so are art studios, workshops, classes, theater productions, woodworking shops, painting classes, tai chi, yoga and other activities designed to help us stay engaged. Not only are these (and other) hobbies fun, they're also good for your mind, body and spirit.

## 6. HAVE FUN

No matter what independent living services a community offers, don't forget to ask yourself, "Will I have fun living here?" Make friends with the activities director, explore resident interest groups, or create your own programs if they don't exist. It's your life. It's up to you to make the most of it. Have fun!

## 7. HANG OUT OUTSIDE YOUR COMFORT ZONE

For most of us, moving to an independent living community means downsizing. While an apartment home means less personal square footage, you're actually gaining acres of dining options, entertainment spaces, workshops, gathering rooms, fitness centers, walking trails and more. Take advantage of these common spaces. Not only will they make you feel like you're on a constant vacation, we guarantee you'll meet new friends.

## 8. NEVER STOP LEARNING

Retirement isn't an end. It's a beginning! Time belongs to you. Not your employer. Not your family. You decide what you're going to do every day. We suggest looking for opportunities to expand your horizons, to keep learning, and to share your knowledge and hobbies with others.

## 9. LET SOMEONE ELSE WORRY

You made it! You're officially retired. The last thing you want to think about is chore lists, maintenance tasks or other "have-to-dos." This is the time of your life to focus on "want-to-dos." Housekeeping is just the tip of the iceberg when it comes to living a maintenance-free lifestyle. Expect 24-hour security, transportation and maintenance.

## 10. ENJOY MOTHER NATURE

Vitamin D is magical. Enjoy a cup of coffee or glass of iced tea on a patio or balcony. Take advantage of an on-site walking trail. Spend time in a community garden. Watch the birds and the wildlife. Whatever it is you like to do outside, you'll find independent living amenities designed to draw you out for unique experiences.

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Sept. 21 - Intro to Resident Life



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# Empowering Lives: A Journey Into Gynecologic Oncology with Dr. Stacey South

**S**tacey South, MD specializes in gynecologic oncology and is a provider with Manatee Physician Alliance, an affiliate of Manatee Memorial Hospital. Dr. South joined the medical staff of Manatee Memorial Hospital in 2008 and was the Chief of Staff from 2021-2022. She attended medical school at Loyola University Medical Center and completed her residency at Roswell Park Cancer Center. Dr. South helped to launch the robotic surgery program at the hospital.

## **What made you initially pursue Women's Health?**

I initially thought I was interested in neurosciences, but I quickly realized that with gynecologic oncology, you get the best of both worlds. There is a component of primary care, and there is also surgery. I saw a great opportunity with this specialty to truly be involved in with a patient's life and make a difference in his or her care.

## **What are the treatments available for gynecologic oncology?**

There are the traditional treatments of chemotherapy and radiation. There is also surgery. We are starting to look at cancer in a different light and trying to identify mechanisms on a more individualized basis. Our main goal for patients is to target the cancer cells and minimize side effects. Our group follows the standard of care guidelines of the Society of GYN Oncologists and the National Cancer Comprehensive Network guidelines for after-treatment.

## **What surgeries do you perform most often?**

Robotic-assisted laparoscopic total hysterectomy, cancer debulking, exploratory laparotomy, diagnostic laparoscopy, hysteroscopy, endometrial

ablation, vulvectomy, robotic-assisted laparoscopic ovarian cystectomy are usually part of a typical day for me. Any type of procedure that can be the least invasive is what I choose with my patients long-term goals in mind.

## **Are robotic surgeries new?**

I have been doing robotic surgeries since 2005. I am very fortunate with the training that I had as I was able to learn open surgery, laparoscopic surgery, and robotics. Many procedures are not done as open surgeries anymore, and the robot is a great tool that has allowed us to perform minimally invasive surgery. We have been focusing on replacing those open surgeries where we can.

## **How have robotic-assisted procedures advanced over the years?**

Robotic surgery was started 25 years ago with a needle placement for a CT-guided brain biopsy. It has now progressed into a multitude of specialties utilizing automated technology. In 2002, the da Vinci® robot was used for the hysterectomy. The robot was found to be superior, allowing better visualization over conventional surgery and offering a high level of hand dexterity. This provides the opportunity to perform more precise removal of cancer tumors. Robotic-assisted surgeries can also lessen recovery time and bleeding.

## **What does a typical recovery time look like?**

The normal recuperation period is, on average, 3-4 weeks, but depending on the surgery, patients can have surgical restrictions for up to 6-8 weeks. Narcotics are rarely needed for pain management. A patient will feel and see the improvement each week after a robotic surgery.



Stacey South, MD

## **What does the future for obstetrical/gynecologic cancers look like?**

As time and surgery evolve, we need to be sure the changes we are making continue to provide the same quality care for cancer patients. We are constantly looking at data and research. Medicine is always changing, and we keep changing with it. There are various concepts coming to light and five years down the road, there will be even more advancements.

**To schedule an appointment with Dr. South, call 941-746-7507.**



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*Individual results may vary. There are risks associated with any surgical procedure. Talk with your doctor about these risks to find out if minimally invasive, robotic surgery is right for you. For language assistance, disability accommodations and the nondiscrimination notice, visit our website.*

*Physicians are on the medical staff of Manatee Memorial Hospital, but, with limited exceptions, are independent practitioners who are not employees or agents of Manatee Memorial Hospital. The hospital shall not be liable for actions or treatments provided by physicians.*





# POST-CONCUSSION SYNDROME

## How Upper Cervical Chiropractic Can Help

By Dr. Drew Hall

**P**ost Concussion Syndrome (PCS) is a complex and debilitating condition that can occur after a head injury. It is estimated that up to 30% of people who experience a concussion will go on to develop PCS, which can cause a range of symptoms that can last for weeks, months, or even years. As a chiropractor who practices Blair's upper cervical chiropractic technique, I have seen firsthand how this approach can help alleviate the symptoms of PCS and improve patients' quality of life.

### Symptoms of Post Concussion Syndrome

The symptoms of PCS can vary widely depending on the individual and the severity of the head injury. Some common symptoms include:

- Headaches
- Dizziness or vertigo
- Fatigue or lethargy
- Memory or concentration problems
- Sleep disturbances
- Irritability or mood swings
- Sensitivity to light or noise
- Ringing in the ears

These symptoms can be frustrating and disruptive, making it difficult to perform everyday tasks or engage in activities that were once enjoyable. While some people may recover from a concussion within a few days or weeks, others may experience symptoms for much longer, leading to a diagnosis of PCS.

### How Upper Cervical Chiropractic Can Help

Upper cervical chiropractic is a specialized form of chiropractic care that focuses on the relationship between the upper cervical spine (the top two vertebrae of the neck) and the nervous system. When these vertebrae become misaligned, it can disrupt the flow of nerve impulses between the brain and the body, leading to a wide range of health problems, including PCS.

Blair's upper cervical chiropractic technique is a specific type of upper cervical chiropractic that uses a gentle, precise approach to identify and correct misalignments in the upper cervical spine.



By using advanced imaging techniques, such as digital x-rays, to precisely measure the misalignment, we can develop a customized treatment plan that is tailored to each patient's individual needs.

One of the ways that upper cervical chiropractic can help with PCS is by restoring proper alignment to the upper cervical spine. When the vertebrae are misaligned, it can put pressure on the surrounding nerves and blood vessels, leading to inflammation and irritation that can exacerbate the symptoms of PCS. By correcting the misalignment, we can relieve this pressure and improve the flow of nerve impulses, allowing the body to function more effectively.

Another way that upper cervical chiropractic can help with PCS is by reducing inflammation in the body. Inflammation is a natural response to injury, but when it becomes chronic, it can cause a wide range of health problems, including PCS symptoms. By using a combination of chiropractic adjustments, dietary changes, and other natural therapies, we can help reduce inflammation in the body, allowing it to heal more effectively.

Finally, upper cervical chiropractic can help improve blood flow to the brain, which is essential for optimal brain function. When the upper cervical spine is misaligned, it can disrupt the flow

of blood to the brain, leading to a range of neurological symptoms, including those associated with PCS. By correcting the misalignment and improving blood flow, we can help alleviate these symptoms and improve overall brain function.

Post Concussion Syndrome is a complex and challenging condition that can have a significant impact on a person's quality of life. While traditional medical treatments such as rest, medications, and physical therapy can be helpful, they may not always address the underlying causes of PCS. Upper cervical chiropractic, particularly Blair's technique, offers a safe, effective, and natural approach to addressing the underlying causes of PCS and improving patients' overall health and wellbeing.



Dr. Drew Hall

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# WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT E-CIGARETTES AND VAPING AS SMOKING CESSATION TOOLS

**A**re you looking to quit smoking? Have you tried to quit several times with little to no success? Are you frustrated and running out of ideas that could help you kick the habit for good? You are not alone! In fact, 7 out of 10 tobacco users want to quit and may struggle with these same questions. Some tobacco users might be tempted to turn to electronic cigarettes (e-cigarettes, vape pens, and other vaping devices) to ease the transition from traditional cigarettes to not smoking at all.<sup>1</sup> Though this may seem like a novel option for some, the question we must ask is whether using e-cigarettes or vaping is better for you than using tobacco products. According to Michael Blaha, M.D., M.P.H., director of clinical research at the Johns Hopkins Ciccarone Center for the Prevention of Heart Disease, there are several important factors to consider:



## 1. E-cigarette aerosol is NOT harmless “water vapor.”<sup>2</sup>

The aerosol used in e-cigarettes contains chemicals that can be harmful to health, including:

- Nicotine<sup>2</sup>
- Ultrafine particles that can be inhaled deep into the lungs<sup>2</sup>
- Flavorings such as diacetyl, a chemical linked to a serious lung disease<sup>2</sup>
- Volatile organic compounds<sup>2</sup>
- Cancer-causing chemicals<sup>2</sup>
- Heavy metals such as nickel, tin, and lead<sup>2</sup>

## 2. The nicotine in tobacco and vaping products is addictive.

According to Dr. Blaha, nicotine is a toxic substance that raises your blood pressure and spikes adrenaline which increases your heart rate and the likelihood of having a heart attack.<sup>1</sup> Emerging data also suggests links to chronic lung disease and asthma.<sup>1</sup>

## 3. Electronic cigarettes are just as addictive as traditional ones.<sup>1</sup>

Many e-cigarette users get even more nicotine than they would from a combustible tobacco product as many vaping devices offer extra-strength cartridges, which have a higher concentration of nicotine to get a greater hit of the substance. <sup>1</sup> This can be counterproductive to an individual’s goal to quit as higher doses of nicotine result in a stronger nicotine addiction.

## 4. E-cigarettes are not an FDA approved cessation tool.<sup>1</sup>

E-cigarettes have not received Food and Drug Administration (FDA) approval as smoking cessation devices.<sup>1</sup> There are many FDA approved products on the market that are effective for quitting nicotine including the nicotine patches, gum, and lozenges.

If you are a tobacco user looking to quit smoking, help is free! Gulfcoast South Area Health Education Center (GSAHEC), as part of the Tobacco Free Florida AHEC Cessation Program—offers free tobacco cessation sessions that are available to help someone quit all forms of tobacco. These group cessation sessions, held virtually and in-person, provide information about the effects of tobacco use, the benefits of quitting, and will assist you with developing your own customized quit plan. **Free** nicotine replacement

therapy in the form of patches, gum, or lozenges (*if medically appropriate and while supplies last*) are provided with the session. Attendees will also receive a participant workbook, quit kit materials, and follow up support from a trained tobacco treatment specialist.

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a class or learn more about the program!





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

By Dr. David S. Zamikoff

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

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

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

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



Many causes of neuropathy include diabetes, alcoholism, autoimmune disorders, infections, and exposure to toxins. It's essential to identify your neuropathy's underlying cause so we can develop an effective treatment plan. At our clinic we use a method developed by the Cancer Centers of America to eliminate your neuropathy. A protocol that has 23 published, peer reviewed white papers backing the science and technique. The current numbers reflect a 97% success rate when the protocol is followed. As a matter of fact, 80% of people are 40% improved in the first 90 days. Understand that you are almost 1/2 way back to normal in three months! This could be the biggest breakthrough in actually correcting the underlying problem of neuropathy. We do not focus on only treating the symptoms, once you correct the root cause of the problem you no longer have to deal with the symptoms.

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

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

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

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

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

## Natural Healing Arts Medical Center

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

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

By Craig S. Aderholdt, BSc, DC

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

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

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

## How does VAX-D work?

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



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

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

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

## Is VAX-D Right for Me?

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



*At Back Pain Institute of West Florida, located in Bradenton, FL, our number one concern is to help our patients with a natural approach to pain treatment. Dr. Craig Aderholdt, BSc, DC, received his undergraduate degree from Pennsylvania State University State College, and his Doctor of Chiropractic from life University School of Chiropractic in Marietta, GA. He then later graduated Cum Laude.*

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



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# Early Detection of Prostate Cancer Saves Lives

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

## ***Men travel from across the United States for advanced imaging with our Phillips 3T wide bore MRI.***

Radiology Associates of Venice and Englewood is pleased to offer 3T wide bore MRI scans for obtaining superior-quality MRI images for diagnostic accuracy and exceptional comfort in an expanded range of patient scenarios.

## What is a 3T MRI?

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

## Benefits of 3T MRI

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

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



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Englewood, FL 34223  
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Hours: 8:00am-5:00pm

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Sarasota, FL 34223  
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# Managing Arthritis Pain and Discomfort: WHY MITOCHONDRIAL HEALTH MATTERS

By Dr. Eric Pearson, Chief Medical Officer, Vetirus Pharmaceuticals

**O**steoarthritis (OA) is the most common form of arthritis, a chronic disease of aging. Effective and safe long-term treatment for most OA patients is not available, creating a large unmet medical need. It is estimated that more than 150 million people globally suffer from OA. Many of the symptoms of OA are often overlooked or shrugged off as merely "getting old". The truth is that OsteoArthritis of the knee affects roughly 12% of all people 60 years or older, and this is just the tip of the iceberg in both undiagnosed and diagnosed arthritic conditions. As the population ages, the number of people with arthritis is projected to grow substantially. The Center for Disease Control is estimating that by 2030, in the U.S. alone, more than 67 million people will have physician diagnosed arthritis. The majority of these people will have OA.

Osteoarthritis (OA) is a chronic degenerative joint disease that causes progressive pain, loss of function, and in many cases, variable levels of disability. It mainly affects individuals over 60. Notable symptoms of OA include the degradation of cartilage, formation of bone spurs and cysts, loss of joint fluid and local and systemic inflammation. The destruction of cartilage plays the most important role in the course of OA. Articular cartilage is comprised of chondrocytes and extracellular matrix. Preventing these chondrocytes from damage is a key factor to the integrity of articular cartilage. Studies have regarded inflammatory response to be the primary cause of chondrocytes injuries and there is growing evidence regarding the role of mitochondrial dysfunction in OA and rheumatoid arthritis (RA). Joint dysfunction and pain are the most common characteristics of all forms of arthritis. Mitochondria are both targets and sources of inflammation-associated injury in the synovial membrane, hence injury and death of synovocytes trigger the release of pro-inflammatory mediators and the activation of inflammatory cells.

While OA has been viewed as a disease of increased joint stress due to heavy load bearing (excessive weight and obesity), recent scientific progress is pointing towards chronic inflammation as the driving factor in OA disease progression. As many healthy, younger patients are developing OA years after acute sports-related injuries, it became evident that more than simple overweight issues contribute to disease pathobiology.

Current treatments for OA include anti-inflammatories such as corticosteroids; non-steroidal anti-inflammatories (NSAIDs) including Celebrex, ibuprofen (Motrin), and Naproxen (Aleve); pain relievers including acetaminophen (Tylenol) and opioids (Tramadol). While short-term partial relief is achieved with steroidal treatments, diminished long-term benefits and significant adverse events prevent long term dosing. Likewise, currently available NSAIDs offer anti-inflammatory action but have

unacceptable long-term adverse side effects including risks of bleeding, gastric ulcers, liver and kidney damage and cardiovascular events. Pain relievers such as acetaminophen have risks of liver toxicity and opioids, of course, are not suitable for long term administration. Ultimately, effective treatment of OA requires a safer, multi-faceted anti-inflammatory molecule able to affect a multitude of OA-related mechanisms with minimal or no adverse effects when used over long time periods. Astaxanthin (ASTX) is that molecule.

ASTX localizes into the mitochondria significantly decreasing oxidative stress while stabilizing the mitochondrial membranes. This stabilizing effect on the mitochondrial membranes has been shown using electron microscopy. (Dr. Mason Preston of Harvard University discovered this). This leads to decreased pro-apoptotic (cell death) mediators and increased anti-apoptotic (cell death) Stabilization of mitochondria and inhibition of these pathways will prolong cell life and contribute to joint matrix maintenance. Likewise, ASTX has been shown to upregulate PGC-1 $\alpha$ , a master regulator of mitochondrial biogenesis, as well as critical metabolic regulators such as CPT-1. All this scientific evidence, in both humans and animal models, highlight the capacity of ASTX to affect important mechanisms critical to osteoarthritis in humans (oxidative stress, inflammation) and underscores the enormous ability of ASTX to slow disease progression and improve symptoms of arthritis.

Vetirus Pharmaceuticals has developed a Natural Biologic compound to bring the benefits of all of this in one easy to use single dose formula named MitoPak™. In summary, it has the below properties:

- 1. Potent Antioxidant Properties:** Mitopak is a powerful antioxidant, which helps protect joints from oxidative stress and inflammation that can lead to joint pain and degradation.
- 2. Anti-inflammatory Effects:** Mitopak has demonstrated anti-inflammatory properties, which can help reduce joint pain and improve overall joint health by decreasing the production of inflammatory mediators.
- 3. Cartilage Protection:** Mitopak has been shown to protect cartilage from degradation by inhibiting the activity of enzymes responsible for breaking down cartilage, such as matrix metalloproteinases (MMPs).
- 4. Reduction of Joint Pain Symptoms:** Studies have reported that Mitopak supplementation can help reduce joint pain symptoms, such as stiffness and discomfort, in people suffering from conditions like osteoarthritis and rheumatoid arthritis.

**5. Improved Joint Mobility:** Mitopak can improve joint mobility by reducing inflammation and promoting the health of joint tissues, making it easier for individuals to move and maintain an active lifestyle.

**6. Enhanced Synovial Fluid Production:** Mitopak has been found to enhance the production of synovial fluid, which lubricates and nourishes the joints, promoting overall joint health.

**7. Supports Collagen Synthesis:** Mitopak can support collagen synthesis, which is crucial for maintaining the integrity of joint structures such as tendons, ligaments, and cartilage.

**8. Slows Age-Related Joint Degeneration:** Mitopak's antioxidant and anti-inflammatory properties can slow down the age-related degeneration of joints, helping to maintain joint health and function in older individuals.

**9. Complementary to Conventional Treatments:** Mitopak can be used as a complementary treatment to conventional therapies for joint pain and inflammation, such as nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs) or corticosteroids, potentially enhancing their effectiveness or reducing side effects.

**10. Sports Performance and Recovery:** Athletes and active individuals can benefit from Mitopak supplementation, as it may help to reduce exercise-induced joint pain and reduces inflammation, and speeds up muscle recovery while supporting muscle strength, and improve overall sports performance.

All inflammation starts in your mitochondria. MitoPak™ stops the inflammation where it starts. Over 1200 scientific studies have concluded the safety of the active ingredients and they have a long history of use in both Humans and animals. MitoPak™ fights inflammation without harmful side effects found in NSAIDs. It supercharges your mitochondrial energy production, and its unique proprietary formula contains the most powerful known antioxidant allowing your body to function at peak performance,

MitoPAK™ is nature's most potent anti-inflammatory and is:

- 110x stronger than Vitamin E
- 800x stronger than CoQ10
- 6000x stronger than Vitamin C

and has grown in popularity as more medical evidence supports its benefits. Regardless of your age, MitoPak™ positively influences mitochondrial function and preserves membrane structure while scavenging radicals. It is a natural therapeutic that reduces inflammation and speeds up muscle recovery without compromising muscle strength.

*Vetirus Pharmaceuticals is based in Naples, Florida and London, England and ore focused on searching the world for developing Natural Biologics to advance their mission of changing the way we age in both human and veterinary medicine with purity and precision.*

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# LEUKEMIA AND ADVANCED CANCER TREATMENTS:

## A Comprehensive Guide to Different Medications

**L**eukemia, a type of blood cancer that affects the bone marrow and blood cells, has long been a formidable challenge in the field of oncology. Over the years, medical advancements have led to the development of diverse treatment options, each targeting specific types of leukemia and offering hope to patients. This article delves into the world of leukemia and cancer treatments, exploring the various medications that play a pivotal role in battling this disease.

### Understanding Leukemia and Its Types

Leukemia originates in the bone marrow, where abnormal blood cells are produced in large quantities, crowding out healthy cells and impairing the body's ability to function properly. There are several types of leukemia, including acute lymphoblastic leukemia (ALL), acute myeloid leukemia (AML), chronic lymphocytic leukemia (CLL), and chronic myeloid leukemia (CML).

### Traditional Treatments and Their Limitations

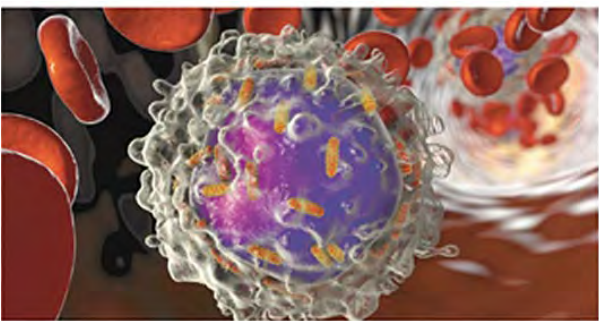
Historically, chemotherapy and radiation therapy have been the primary treatments for leukemia. While effective in many cases, these treatments often come with side effects due to their non-specific nature, impacting both healthy and cancerous cells. The pursuit of targeted therapies has led to a revolution in cancer treatment.

### Targeted Therapies: A Precision Approach

Targeted therapies are medications designed to specifically target the genetic mutations or proteins that drive cancer growth. Tyrosine kinase inhibitors (TKIs) are a class of targeted therapies commonly used in the treatment of chronic myeloid leukemia (CML) and some forms of acute lymphoblastic leukemia (ALL). These medications block the signals that promote abnormal cell growth, leading to more focused and effective treatment with fewer side effects.

### Immunotherapy: Harnessing the Immune System

Immunotherapy has emerged as a groundbreaking approach in leukemia treatment. Monoclonal antibodies, such as rituximab and alemtuzumab, are designed to attach to specific proteins on cancer cells, marking them for destruction by the immune system. Chimeric antigen receptor (CAR) T-cell therapy takes immunotherapy a step further by engineering a patient's own immune cells to recognize and attack cancer cells.



### Stem Cell Transplantation: Rebuilding the Immune System

For certain cases of leukemia, stem cell transplantation is a viable option. This procedure involves replacing the patient's diseased bone marrow with healthy stem cells from a donor. It can provide a new lease on life for those who have not responded to other treatments or who have high-risk forms of the disease.

### Emerging Therapies: The Promise of Novel Agents

Researchers are continually exploring new avenues for leukemia treatment. Small molecule inhibitors, epigenetic therapies, and gene-editing technologies hold promise for precise intervention at the molecular level. Clinical trials are underway to evaluate the safety and efficacy of these emerging treatments.

### Personalized Medicine: Tailoring Treatment to Individuals

Advancements in genomic sequencing have paved the way for personalized medicine, allowing oncologists to identify specific mutations driving a patient's leukemia. This information enables treatment plans to be tailored to an individual's genetic profile, increasing the likelihood of a positive outcome.

### Combination Therapies: Maximizing Effectiveness

Combinations of different medications are often used to enhance treatment efficacy while minimizing resistance. By targeting multiple pathways simultaneously, these combination therapies can disrupt cancer cell survival and growth more effectively than single-agent treatments.

### The Road Ahead: Hope and Progress

Leukemia treatment has evolved significantly, offering new possibilities and improved outcomes for patients. As researchers gain a deeper understanding of the molecular mechanisms driving leukemia, novel treatments will continue to emerge. With each breakthrough, the outlook for individuals facing this challenging disease becomes brighter.

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.

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Leukemia & Lymphoma			
Drug Name	Retail Cost	Prescription Hope	Total Savings
Arzerra	\$1,916.00	\$50.00	\$1,866.00
Bendeka	\$2,614.00	\$50.00	\$2,564.00
Besponsa	\$23,077.00	\$50.00	\$23,027.00
Bosulif	\$20,524.00	\$50.00	\$20,474.00
Calquence	\$15,721.00	\$50.00	\$15,671.00
Cyclophosphamide	\$95.75	\$50.00	\$45.75
Dasatinib	\$16,532.00	\$50.00	\$16,482.00
Gazyva	\$8,197.00	\$50.00	\$8,147.00
Iclusig	\$21,202.00	\$50.00	\$21,152.00
Idhifa	\$33,780.00	\$50.00	\$33,730.00
Imbruvica	\$11,980.00	\$50.00	\$11,930.00
Kymriah	\$475,000.00	\$50.00	\$474,950.00
Lemtrada	\$29,960.00	\$50.00	\$29,910.00
Mylotarg	\$10,125.00	\$50.00	\$10,075.00
Nilotinib	\$17,821.92	\$50.00	\$17,771.92
Kesimpta	\$8,606.00	\$50.00	\$8,556.00
Onureg	\$20,318.96	\$50.00	\$20,268.96
Rituxan	\$999.00	\$50.00	\$949.00
Hydact	\$10,356.58	\$50.00	\$10,306.58
Scemblix	\$19,308.29	\$50.00	\$19,258.29
Spryvel	\$16,532.18	\$50.00	\$16,482.18
Synribo	\$1,411.00	\$50.00	\$1,361.00
Tasigna	\$17,821.92	\$50.00	\$17,771.92
Venclexta	\$14,794.08	\$50.00	\$14,744.08



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# OBESITY & MEDICALLY ASSISTED WEIGHT MANAGEMENT

**O**besity affects millions of Americans. Over the last couple of decades, it has spread from the adult population to adolescents and children. Although it is often attributed to poor eating habits and a lack of exercise, the truth is really a bit more complicated than that. The process by which the body converts food into energy can be influenced by chemicals in the environment, over which we have little control, and by genetics, over which we have zero control. It is a complex combination of genetic susceptibility, biological pathways related to metabolism and body weight regulation, and environmental factors.<sup>1</sup>

## World Health Organization Fast Facts on Obesity

- Worldwide obesity has nearly tripled since 1975.
- In 2016, more than 1.9 billion adults, 18 years and older, were overweight. Of these over 650 million were obese.
- 39% of adults aged 18 years and over were overweight in 2016, and 13% were obese.
- Most of the world's population live in countries where overweight and obesity kills more people than underweight.
- 39 million children under the age of 5 were overweight or obese in 2020.
- Over 340 million children and adolescents aged 5-19 were overweight or obese in 2016.
- Obesity is preventable.<sup>2</sup>

## Health effects from obesity

People affected by obesity have a higher chance of developing serious health problems, including:

- Asthma
- Type 2 diabetes
- High blood pressure
- Cardiovascular disease
- Stroke
- 13 types of cancer



Together, these are among the leading causes of preventable or premature death.

## Combating obesity through medically assisted weight management

As many patients struggle (and often fail) to lose weight on their own, many physicians have developed a helpful solution to offer obese patients: medically assisted weight-loss programs. These programs are designed to help patients overcome their weight-loss challenges in a safe, healthy way that includes a customized diet plan, exercise routine, prescribed medication(s) and medical supervision to help promote healthy weight loss based on their individual needs.

Medically supervised weight-loss programs provide patients with the resources needed to lose weight and maintain it, as well as sustain a healthier lifestyle. Many patients who have taken advantage of these programs have experienced an improved quality of life and are now at a much lower risk for obesity-related illnesses — many of which can be life-threatening.

## What Does a Medically Assisted Weight-Loss Program Monitor?

The best medically assisted weight loss programs monitor things like:

- Caloric intake
- Water intake
- Exercise routine
- Blood pressure
- Sugar levels
- Heart rate
- Reactions to medication
- Psychological state of mind
- Emotional state of mind

In Southwest Florida there are obviously many options for weight loss programs. Finding a doctor who genuinely cares for his patients is important. Dr. John Devine, MD, at Center for Urogynecology and Female Pelvic Health in Venice is currently accepting new patients looking to manage their weight in a safe and effective way. Patients visit Dr. Devine's office for an initial consultation to discuss their current weight, their goal weight, current eating habits, exercise, diet and what they have tried in the past in terms of weight management. In this consultation, a diet and exercise plan is discussed. After this initial meeting, the patient is then sent for a blood work panel to assure they are healthy and able to take the medications that Dr. Devine will prescribe to aid in weight loss. The medication is a compound created in a specialty pharmacy that is tailored to meet each individual patient's needs. After beginning the medications, the patient will return after a month to see if any adjustments are necessary and discuss progress. At this time, another blood panel is done to assure that everything is going well. After this, the patient will only need to come back every 3 months for checkups.

**If you'd like more information, please visit  
Dr. Devine's website at:  
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- Fecal Incontinence
- Interstitial Cystitis





# It's 2023; Do You Know Where Your Money Is?

By Michelle Locke - Master Life and Mindset Coach

**T**he catalyst of any change is awareness. This month is great time to improve your own awareness of your personal finances, especially if you'd like to create better financial habits.

Below are 3 areas of focus to easily increase your financial awareness, and initiate the changes necessary to build better financial future.

**What's coming in.** Sure, you know your salary or hourly wage, but do you know exactly what "income" that creates? If you are self-employed, do you know your revenue vs. expenses numbers? Don't forget about additional income avenues: interest-bearing accounts, dividends, accounts receivable (including any personal loans you have made), child support, side hustles, etc. Taking the time to investigate what's coming in can give you a "big picture" outlook that is beneficial to short-term planning and long-term financial strategy.

**What's going out.** Typically we *think* we know where we are spending our money, but in reality, most people are blissfully unaware. I had a client exclaim, "Michelle, I spent \$7,000 on Door Dash in the last six months...I had NO IDEA!" Unfortunately, this isn't all that uncommon. Using a budgeting app like Mint or Rocket Money is a great way to see what's really going on. Alternatively, a good, old-fashioned spreadsheet works just fine. However you choose to track you spending, knowledge is definitely power!

**What you're thinking.** As strange as this may sound, what you think about money is just as important as what you do with your money. Why? Because what you think (and feel) is what motivates you to act. To be specific, the best way to create and stick to your new healthy money habits, is to start with your money mindset. If someone has anxiety around their money, or doubts their ability to create wealth, they will have much different results than someone who genuinely believes making money is easy for them. Why is this so?



Because each of those people will "show up" differently regarding money decisions and take different actions. As you are becoming aware of your financial income and outgo, take note of how you feel about your budget, and what your inner voice is telling you during the process. I'd wager you'll be surprised at what you find!

Now that you are more aware of your financial picture, what's next? It's time to make some quality decisions, take some quality actions, and build quality habits.

• **Step 1: Define your Goals.** Utilize the S.M.A.R.T. goals method to make both short and long-term goals. Ask pertinent questions such as: What do I want to achieve? What do I want to experience? Who do I want to help? What am I willing to do and to do without to accomplish these goals?

• **Step 2: Divide and Conquer.** For each overarching goal, you need to outline yearly, quarterly, and monthly goals. Each monthly goal can then be broken down into specific tasks and added to a calendar or weekly/daily schedule. (For example, "Pay Off Debt" may be a long-term goal. For each credit card or loan, determine how much you will pay and how often to achieve full

payoff in the designated time. Now add each payment to your monthly bill schedule and watch those balances dwindle!)

• **Step 3: Assess Obstacles.** Clarify what is standing in your way. Is your outgo larger than your income? Is your debt too large to pay off in the desired amount of time? Are there factors outside your control? Identify possible pitfalls and plan for how you will handle each. This is the step where it may be beneficial to get some help. A financial advisor, a life coach, or even a trusted family member or friend may be able to support you through this step. The objectivity of someone outside of your circumstances can often make or break your plan.

• **Step 4: Manage Your Mind.** This is where the rubber really meets the road. You have your plan, you know what you need to do, and perhaps you have even begun to implement. But how do you stay on track when shiny object syndrome and keeping up with the Joneses are real? You'll need more than willpower to make your goals happen. Eradicating limiting beliefs and a compelling reason to follow through with your plan are what will be needed to be successful. Again, employing some outside help here could be the winning move. Mindset coaches are skilled at fleshing out the mental gymnastics necessary to create and sustain new habits, which is the crucial step to any permanent change.

Your current money habits weren't established overnight, and neither will your new ones be. Be patient with yourself as you gain awareness, identify dreams, set goals, and achieve the financial future you desire.

## About Michelle Locke

Michelle Locke is a Master Certified Life and Mindset Coach with eight years experience. Through her coaching and training programs she helps her clients "fix what isn't working" in their lives. About her method, she says, "Life coaching is about systems, plans, and habits; mindset coaching is the 'secret sauce' that makes the latter sustainable." She lives in Ellenton with two of her five (mostly adult) children and a rescue hound named Ivy.

**Michelle Locke Coaching**

**(786) 529-5279**

michellelocke.coach

mlocke@michellelocke.coach



# PRIMER ON MEDICAID PLANNING FOR MARRIED COUPLES

By James W. Mallonee

A client recently came in for a consultation about being able to maintain her lifestyle given that her husband had recently died. The surviving spouse admitted that she was beginning to slip mentally and physically. She also expressed that her children were not able to assist in any way. The couple's funds were previously placed into separate trusts (the married couple had their own trusts as opposed to a joint trust) and pour over Wills. Although the old adage of having your assets placed into a trust sounds good, it is not always the best solution because it may cause the surviving spouse to become ineligible for Medicaid assistance and the failure to preserve a family's wealth.

You should know that the disposition of funds from a trust to that of a surviving spouse's trust may not work to preserve Medicaid eligibility should the surviving spouse need the support of a Medicaid government program. The reason for this is Medicaid's statutes specifically state that a trust constitutes a countable asset for purposes of being eligible for such program. The program specially states "if assets of the individual were used to form all or part of the corpus of a trust and if any of the following individuals established such trust other than by Will; a) the individual; or, 2) the individual's spouse..." As you can see the law specifically uses the term "other than by Will" which suggests that a trust immediately knocks out Medicaid eligibility.



Does that mean funding a trust will cause the surviving spouse to lose Medicaid eligibility? The answer is most likely. A means of avoiding this problem is to create a Will which can reference a trust (called a testamentary trust) which can provide the surviving spouse with support without causing his or her loss of Medicaid benefits (including other public benefits).

What are the possible traps? The first one is Florida's elective share which states that the surviving spouse is entitled to 30% of the deceased spouse's estate (remember - the spouses in this situation had separate trusts). If that is the case it is entirely possible that the surviving spouse will lose her eligibility for Medicaid assistance. The reason for this is that a person who is considered eligible for Medicaid will have to count any ownership interest he or she is entitled to by means of inheritance including the elective share. So why can't the surviving spouse elect to disclaim the elective share? Medicaid will view the refusal to accept the elective share as a trigger causing the invocation of a penalty and loss of such benefits. The possible outcome is the loss of benefits until such time as the total value of countable assets have been spent down below the asset eligibility threshold of \$2,000.00.

What could the couple, in this situation, have done to avoid this situation? In the deceased spouses Will they could establish a qualified special needs trust funding it with 30% of the deceased spouse's assets which would satisfy Florida's law and Medicaid's requirements (NOTE: the amount used for funding the special needs trust can be more than 30%). Surprisingly, these funds will not be considered a countable asset. You would need to have a third person (son, daughter, or other person) act as the trustee of such trust to maintain eligibility.

Suppose (like the person who visited the office) you also have a trust and you want to preserve your assets to pass on to your children or charity of choice. An option is to have the trust amended to allow the assets of the trust to pass through the probate estate and then back out to the trust. This could be done via the decedent's pour over Will should the trust be irrevocable.

In short, the simpler alternative is to have a special needs trust for the benefit of the surviving spouse. But the downside is trying to look into the future and know with certainty who is going to pass first.

If you are concerned about preserving your assets as you grow older and more vulnerable to medical needs, contact the attorney of your choice, and have a discussion about preservation of your assets including Medicaid eligibility. Even if you already have testamentary documents prepared, it may be wise to have a "What if" discussion.

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# EVERYTHING YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT TOOTH WHITENING

BY DR. AMANDA RIZNER

**D**ental whitening is one of the most popular cosmetic procedures on the market today. Whitening aims to brighten and enhance the appearance of teeth by reducing or eliminating colors and stains. There are several options available to consider and each comes with its own advantages and disadvantages.

## At-Home Whitening Kits

The most popular option on the market for teeth whitening are at-home whitening kits. These kits come with premade strips or trays pretreated with a mild bleaching solution. They often come in a variety of whitening percentages which pertain to the strength of the bleaching solution on the strips. A lower percentage may be able to whiten just as well as higher percentage whitening agents, however the patient will need to use these strips on a more consistent basis and for a longer period of time. The advantage to these kits is that they normally can be bought for a relatively low price. The patient can use these strips as much or as little as they choose. It is normally best to wear these types of whitening agents for an hour only, as the bleaching agent can decrease effectiveness with time unless otherwise stated on the instructions.

## In Office Professional Whitening

This is perhaps the most effective and quickest method of teeth whitening. Most dentists will require a full examination to make sure you are a candidate for in-office whitening. They will ensure there is no active infection or extensive decay present before starting the procedure. In-office whitening uses a much higher concentration of either hydrogen or carbamide peroxide under a controlled dental setting. This higher concentration can cause tissue irritation if not carefully contained, which is why it is placed by a highly skilled dental assistant or dentist. Immediate results can be achieved in usually one hour. There are also newer whitening products on market that target deep intrinsic tooth stain caused by antibiotics as a child. Previously, the only treatment for this was to crown or veneer the existing teeth to improve cosmetics.

Due to the higher concentration of bleaching agent used, some patients do report sensitivity after the procedure. We usually recommend patients use a



sensitive toothpaste about 3-4 weeks before starting the procedure and then continue using this toothpaste for the next few weeks until they find relief. This is also advised for take home kits, as some patients report sensitivity even with low concentrations of bleaching agents. The dentist can also prescribe either a fluoridated or non-fluoridated toothpaste that also helps decrease this post op sensitivity.

## Natural or DIY Methods

There are many "natural" or homemade whitening recipes that can be found trending throughout internet searches. Some of these include homemade toothpastes using baking soda, charcoal based products, and lemon-based products. It's important to note that most of these products lack scientific evidence and professional guidance required to ensure their safety and efficacy. Some of these products are made with a very high RDA values (Relative Dentin Abrasion) which can cause significant erosion to the enamel of tooth. Due to this high

abrasive factor, the product will initially appear to "whiten" the teeth, but in reality is only doing so by removing the protective enamel.

## Conclusion

Teeth whitening has gained significant popularity due to its ability to provide noticeable results in a short amount of time. It's important to note that teeth whitening is only effective on a natural tooth surfaces. Bleaching agents will not whiten previously placed restorations such as veneers, crowns, and fillings. Sometimes bleaching may be able to remove the stain around the edges of these restorations. It's important to speak with your dentist before whitening in order to have the proper expectations of what whitening can do for you. This way the patient can choose a method of whitening that aligns with their goals and their comfort level.



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# Bidets Gaining Popularity in the USA for Better Hygiene and Eco-Consciousness

In recent years, a quiet revolution has been underway in American bathrooms. Bidets, once considered a luxury item found mainly in upscale hotels or international homes, are now gaining significant popularity across the United States. This surge in interest can be attributed to two major factors: the pursuit of better personal hygiene and a growing eco-consciousness.

For decades, Americans have relied primarily on toilet paper for their post-bathroom hygiene routine. However, as awareness about the limitations of toilet paper has grown, many individuals are seeking more effective and gentle alternatives. Bidets, which use water to cleanse, provide a more thorough and hygienic clean compared to wiping with paper. This shift towards better hygiene practices is also supported by medical experts who highlight the potential benefits of reducing irritation, infections, and discomfort associated with toilet paper use.

Additionally, the bidet's role in supporting environmental sustainability has caught the attention of eco-conscious consumers. The environmental toll of toilet paper production is staggering, with millions of trees being felled and enormous amounts of water and energy being used in the manufacturing process. Bidets, on the other hand, significantly reduce the reliance on toilet paper, offering a more sustainable option for maintaining personal hygiene.

The bidet's water-saving feature is a particularly appealing aspect for those who are mindful of their ecological footprint. Unlike the production of toilet paper, bidets use a relatively small amount of water per use, making them a more environmentally responsible choice. Some modern bidet models even come equipped with adjustable settings, allowing users to control the water pressure and temperature, further optimizing the experience while minimizing water consumption.

Cultural factors and changing perceptions have also contributed to the bidet's growing acceptance in the US. While bidets were once regarded with skepticism or embarrassment due to their association with foreign practices, attitudes are evolving. As international travel becomes more common and global perspectives are embraced, the bidet's benefits are being recognized and embraced by a wider audience.

Manufacturers and innovators in the bathroom technology industry are capitalizing on this trend by introducing a diverse range of bidet products to cater to varying preferences and budgets. Bidet attachments, which can be easily installed on existing toilets, have made the transition convenient and cost-effective. High-tech bidet seats, boasting features like heated seats, warm water jets, and air drying functionalities, provide a luxurious and customizable experience.

In conclusion, bidets are experiencing a well-deserved renaissance in the United States driven by a dual focus on personal hygiene and environmental consciousness. As Americans seek more effective and sustainable alternatives to traditional toilet paper, bidets are stepping up to provide a solution that aligns with modern values. This surge in popularity signifies not only a change in bathroom habits but also a shift towards a more informed and responsible approach to everyday choices. Whether motivated by better hygiene practices or a commitment to preserving the planet, bidets are proving that innovation in the bathroom can lead to a cleaner, greener future.

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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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## 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.

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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# Hope and Optimism

By Pastor Timothy L. Neptune

**H**ope is confidence in God...not wishful thinking. To have hope is to trust in God to meet our needs...even in the midst of difficult times. When we do go through tough times our confidence in God can get a little rattled, as the Old Testament figure Job experienced. In the midst of his pain and heartache he cried out, "Where then is my hope? Who can see any hope for me?" (Job. 17:15)

Ultimately, hope comes from God. The Scriptures say, "May the God of hope fill you all with joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit." (Romans 15:13) Hope is an essential element of the Christian's life. In 1 Corinthians 13 the Apostle Paul included hope as one of the top three qualities of a person's life: "And now these three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love." (1 Cor. 13:13)

As followers of Christ, we are called to be dispensers of hope. We should exude a confidence and trust in God that demonstrates that we have hope. Yet I pose the question, "Can a person be filled with hope without being filled with optimism?" According to the encyclopedia, optimism is "to anticipate the best possible outcome." Can we demonstrate hope in God without anticipating the best possible outcomes of the situations we face?

I believe we can. In fact, I think hope is best exemplified when it is demonstrated in the face of negative circumstances. There are many times when hope and optimism go hand in hand. David had both when he faced Goliath. He had confidence in God and he expected the best possible outcomes...Goliath's defeat and an Israelite victory over the Philistines. And yet, there are many examples of people who had hope in God but did not anticipate the best possible outcomes.

Simon Peter is a good example. He and the disciples had been fishing all night and had caught nothing. They had worked so hard and yet still had nothing to show for their labors. And then Jesus tells them to cast out the net one more time. Simon did not expect to catch any fish. He was pessimistic. But, he had confidence in Jesus, so he cast the net. Though the circumstances did not look promising, his hope in God made up for his lack of optimism.

Esther is another good example. She had confidence that God would ultimately provide deliverance for the Jews but as she prepared to go before the King she said, "...I will go to the king, which is against the law; and if I perish, I perish!" (Esther 4:16) She demonstrated hope but not necessarily optimism.

The point is this: hope and optimism are not the same thing. You can still be hopeful even if you are not optimistic. You can still be a dispenser of hope even if you think you are going to face hard times ahead because you know that God will meet your needs.

Jesus didn't sound very optimistic when he said, "These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation (a rather pessimistic view); but be of good cheer (maintain your hope), I have overcome the world (which is the basis of our hope)." (John 16:33)

Hope doesn't mean that the best possible situations will always occur, but it does mean that in some way God will bring something good or useful out of the situation. As we look into the future, we may not always be filled with optimism, but we must always be filled with hope...God is still in control!



Tim Neptune is the lead pastor of Venture Church in Naples, Florida. Venture Church meets on the campus of FSW State College on Lely Cultural Blvd. in East Naples. For times and directions, visit [www.venturenaples.com](http://www.venturenaples.com).

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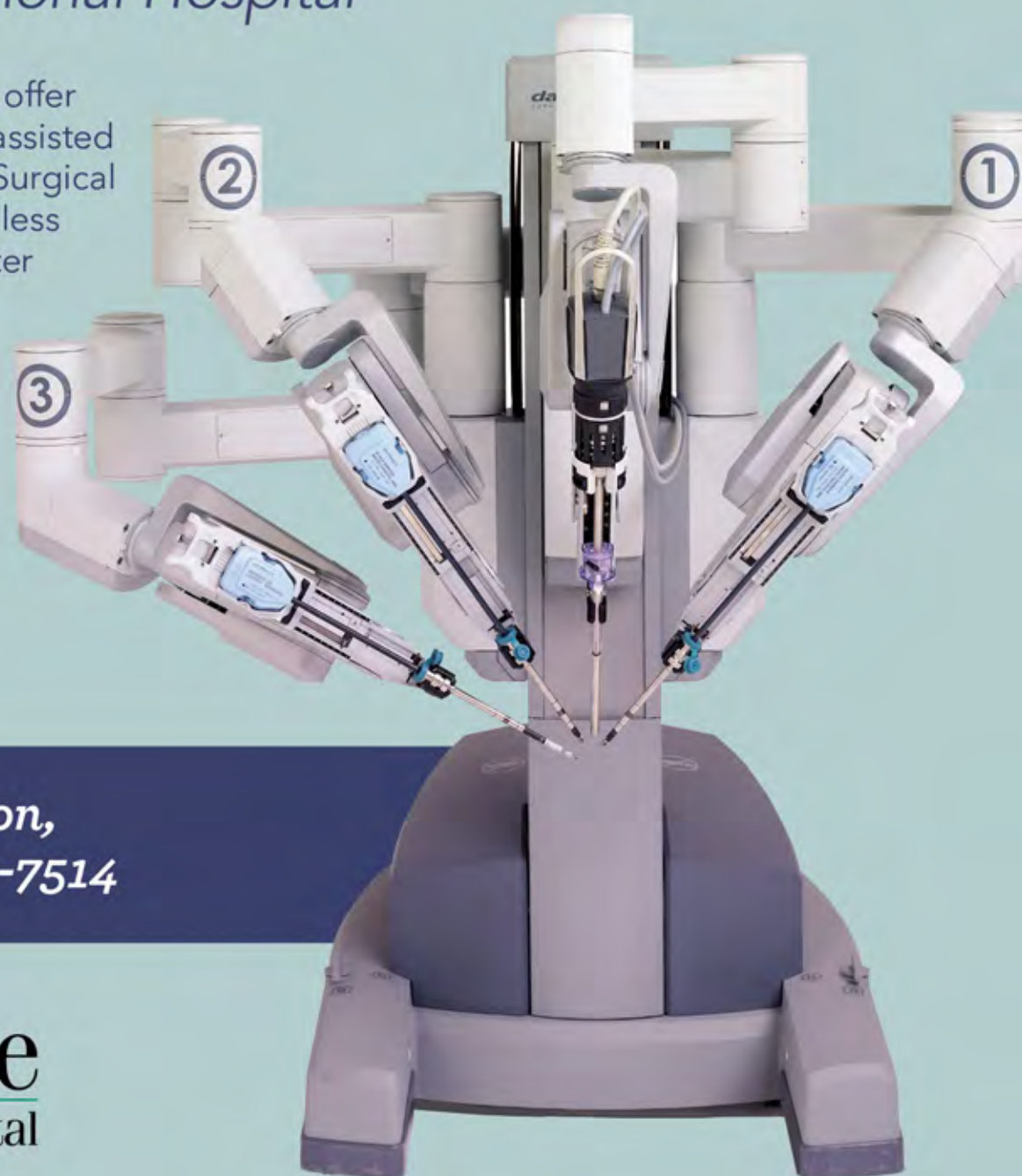
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