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Health & Wellness[®] MAGAZINE

October 2023

Lee Edition - Monthly

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10/7	10 AM	Logical Insurance Solutions 2161 McGregor Blvd., Ste C, Fort Myers 33901
10/14	10 AM	Logical Insurance Solutions 2161 McGregor Blvd., Ste C, Fort Myers 33901
10/16	10 AM	Logical Insurance Solutions 2161 McGregor Blvd., Ste C, Fort Myers 33901
10/17	10 AM	Logical Insurance Solutions 2161 McGregor Blvd., Ste C, Fort Myers 33901
10/19	4 PM	Cantina Laredo 5200 Big Pine Way, Fort Myers 33907
10/21	10 AM	Logical Insurance Solutions 2161 McGregor Blvd., Ste C, Fort Myers 33901
10/23	10 AM	Logical Insurance Solutions 2161 McGregor Blvd., Ste C, Fort Myers 33901

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10/28	10 AM	Logical Insurance Solutions 2161 McGregor Blvd., Ste C, Fort Myers 33901
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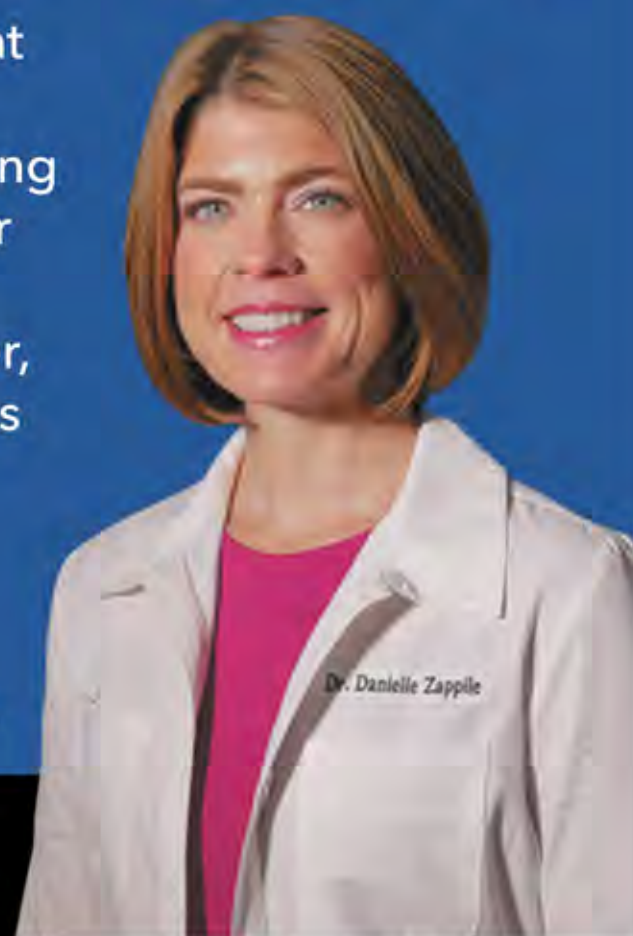
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HEARING AND MEMORY LOSS ARE CONNECTED

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



Hearing Loss Affects the Brain

Hearing loss doesn't just mean an older adult needs to turn up the TV. It's been linked to a range of health problems, including dementia. The latest aging research not only shows the two are connected but also leads scientists to believe that hearing loss may cause dementia. If you have hearing loss, you have a greater chance of developing dementia, according to a 2020 Lancet commission report that lists hearing loss as one of the top risk factors for dementia.

Brain Strain and Social Isolation

Hearing loss can make the brain work harder, forcing it to strain to hear and fill in the gaps. That comes at the expense of other thinking and memory systems. Another possibility is hearing loss causes the aging brain to shrink more quickly. A third possibility is that hearing loss makes people less socially engaged, which is hugely essential to remain intellectually stimulated. If you can't hear very well, you may not go out as much, so the brain is less engaged and active.

Quantifying Hearing Loss's Impact

Hearing loss is estimated to account for 8% of dementia cases. This means that hearing loss may be responsible for 800,000 of the nearly ten million new cases of dementia diagnosed each year.

Studies from the National Institute of Health show an association between hearing impairment and dementia while supporting the hypothesis that hearing impairment contributes to cognitive dysfunction in older adults.

Reducing the Risk of Dementia

Johns Hopkins is leading a large National Institute on Aging study to see if hearing aids can safeguard seniors' mental processes. The study has multiple locations and has recruited nearly 1,000 people ages 70-84 with hearing loss. One group is provided hearing aids, while another group receives aging education. By early 2023, the study should provide definitive results on whether treating hearing loss reduces cognitive decline risk. In essence, we'll know whether the use of hearing aids can potentially reduce brain aging and the risk of dementia.

Other Effects on Health

Hearing loss has long-term effects on health. It's believed to increase the risk for falls and depression. It also leads to higher health care costs:

People with hearing loss have, over ten years, a 47% increased hospitalization rate. Hearing loss is associated with an increased risk of institutionalization, an increased risk for dementia, and increased health care costs overall for all ages.

In Summary

Individuals with hearing loss are at an increased risk for developing cognitive decline and dementia. New research finds that treating hearing loss is the single most modifiable risk factor for reducing the risk of dementia. While your risk increases with the degree of hearing loss, it is essential to note that even mild hearing loss can increase your risk by as much as 200%! If you or a loved one struggles to hear clearly, we can help reduce your risk of dementia in Cape Coral and Fort Myers, FL., with our 5-star-rated hearing care.

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

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



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Health Insurance – Important Dates!

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

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

MEDICARE – Annual Enrollment Period October 15-December 7th, 2023, for January 1st, 2024, effective. Medicare Advantage – Part C & Part D Prescription Plans

Most of the plans in your area have made many changes and things you might not notice, especially important, are your doctors still in network, what tier are your medications and maybe the tier changed, copays, coinsurance. What extras are the plans offering? Maybe you need extra dental, vision, hearing aids. Many plans include some wonderful extra benefits, but it is also particularly important to know how to use the benefit and if they work for you. If the insurance company, you are with comes up with a better plan they will NOT switch you to it automatically. Your insurance agent should be making you aware of a better option. It is illegal for a insurance person to call you regarding Medicare, do not talk to someone you have not given permission to call. Ask them for their National Producer number and report them to Medicare for a unsolicited call.

CMS has made many rules for 2024 Medicare season. If you want to enroll or review your plan over the phone, you need to agree to be recorded and Medicare requires us to keep the recording for 10 years. In person appointments do not have that requirement, but you need to sign a scope of appointment that authorizes us to talk to you about Medicare Advantage or a Drug Plan it does not allow us to do anything but talk to you about these topics. Many plans have decreased the cost of Insulin which will be a huge savings for so many

in 2024. Part D after you, the plan and the pharmaceutical company paid \$8,000 you no longer have a cost for your medications for the rest of the year.

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

We offer Free Medicare Seminars in Lee & Collier County please e-mail info@logicalinsurance.com to register or call 239-362-0855 for dates. Medicare's website is www.Medicare.gov.

MARKETPLACE - Obama Care/Affordable Care Act – open enrollment starts November 1st- December 15th for January 1st effective. December 16th to January 15th will have February 1st, 2024, effective. The website is HealthCare.gov, your local insurance agent can help you through the maze. The government also changes each year what how much you can earn to receive subsidy to help lower your cost for insurance. Many people are not aware that they do not need to forgo having health insurance and there are affordable options for them. Insurance is not just about the price of the premium but particularly important the network of doctors, hospital, etc. that you can have access to. Be careful carriers that are selling in your area might not have a good network, so the price might be right but if your hospital and your doctors are not in their network that is a problem. So always check the network!

Understanding deductibles, out-of-pocket maximums, what applies to the deductible? Do I have to pay the deductible before the plan pays? This differs by each plan, Copays vs. coinsurance if you do not understand ask, become informed about what you are buying and how it works.

Individual/Family Health Insurance – Being young and healthy does not mean you do not need health insurance. Do you know anyone that knew when they were going to be diagnosed with cancer, or when they were going to have a heart attack or even a serious accident? I do not, it happens, and insurance is there to help you get the care you need and limit your financial exposure. What are your insurance options, and what is best for you? Employer Group Coverage, Individual Medically Underwritten Health Insurance, Medicaid, or the Government Market Place Guaranteed Issue Health Insurance. There is a lot to know about the differences, as well as the cost. The monthly premium should not be your only consideration. *You do not know what you do not know so ask the experts*, which do know about all of plans and can help educate and guide you thru the enrollment process. When it comes to medically underwritten plans, most of them you can enroll all year long, but you can also be denied based on medical underwriting.

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Working For A Nobel Prize Winner Is Among Her Career Highlights

There is a calming, confident demeanor showing as Rita Weiss reflects on her career in medical research/development and the good fortunes that she has encountered throughout her life.

Sitting in the Mediterranean-style lounge of The Terraces at Bonita Springs, this adult community's resident council president says she is extremely pleased with the decision made in 2019 to move into the resort-style upscale community.

"I needed a safety net and that's exactly what I got here," she says. "Moving to The Terraces did not disappoint, especially considering that we (she and her husband Dick) moved in just one month before the COVID shutdown. The staff and management did an excellent job in caring for our residents during COVID and then during Hurricane Ian."

But it's the path that Rita took to reach the Bonita Springs community that is inspiring.

Few people can say that they've worked with a Nobel Prize winner – especially one whose medical research in the early 1950s isolated the polio virus and paved the way for the mass production of the Salk and Sabin polio vaccines that eradicated the crippling virus.

Rita's fortuitous four-year stint with 1954 Nobel Prize winner Frederick Robbins, M.D., served as the launching pad for her successful medical research and development career.

Her turn of good fortune began years before working with Robbins when the then precocious Cleveland high school graduate received a scholarship to attend Mercyhurst University in Erie, Pa. As one of seven siblings in her household, a scholarship "was the only way I was going to get to go to school," she explains.

The scholarship would prove to be a life-changing moment for a young woman following in the collegiate footsteps of her mother and grandmother - both of whom had received their degrees from Notre Dame College in Cleveland, Ohio. Their degrees in sociology and botany were not fields of interest for Rita's educational goals, however.

At the time, she had her sights set on majoring in pre-med. "I wanted to be a doctor," she emphatically says decades after veering from a wannabe career as a medical doctor to medical research. Why the change? Early on in that quest, she realized that there were things that doctors had to do that she was not going to be comfortable doing."

Instead, she completed her collegiate career with majors in chemistry and biology. And upon graduation, she immediately found herself in a precarious position when her parents announced that they were moving the family to Maine for the summer. "I did not want to go," she recalls.



Rita Weiss of The Terraces at Bonita Springs discusses her career in medical research and development and that it included a four-year stint as the lab technician for a Nobel Prize winner.

(Photo by The Terraces)

Rita quickly found a job as a clerk typist in the pathology lab of a Cleveland hospital. Soon after, she responded to a Cleveland Metropolitan General Hospital ad and was hired to work in Robbins' research lab as his technician. "Talk about stepping in it," exclaims Rita! The work was fascinating, and it established the prestigious foundation for her future career advancements.

She would continue working in the Robbins' lab until shortly after she married when her husband Dick was transferred to New York. Even before settling in the New Jersey suburbs of New York, Rita had been offered a job at the Public Health Research Institute for the city of New York where she worked on tumor-causing viruses. "It seemed that everybody in the medical research field wanted an individual who had worked for Dr. Robbins," adds Rita.

Opportunities for her came fast and furious, such as a role managing the virus testing service lab at the New Jersey College of Medicine and Dentistry. But soon, Rita stepped into the corporate world – working as Technologist with engineers from the scientific instrument manufacturer Technicon Industries in Tarrytown, N.Y. By 1984, Rita was appointed Vice President for Program Management and tasked with the development process for all new products.

She and Dick ultimately moved to Stamford, Conn., a place they would call home for the next 40 years. Dick worked for the Helmsley-Spear company. And by the year 2000, the couple became snowbirds – wintering at Pelican Bay in Naples.

Twelve years later, the couple moved permanently to Southwest Florida. And by 2016, Dick was having some health issues prompting Rita to begin researching a move into a continuing care retirement community (CCRC). "We needed a safety net and in 2019 selected The Terraces because we thought the community best met our needs and lifestyle," Rita explained.

Little did Rita realize that she would soon be stepping into a new career – this time as a retired volunteer. Although she had previously volunteered with the duplicate bridge club at Pelican Bay, The Terrace's brought her volunteering to a new level.

A year after moving to The Terraces, she expressed interest in joining the resident wellness committee. The committee's overview was as though it was written for an individual with Rita's credentials and medical knowledge. That committee work gave her the experience and confidence to seek election to Resident Council.

Rita was elected to the resident council board. And in January 2022, she stepped into the role of president of the council – a position she calls emotionally and mentally rewarding.

The Terraces community is a relatively small boutique Life Plan community that has opened another chapter in her adventuresome and interesting path. The challenges of medical research and medical instrument development are now long past.

But now, she enjoys the new challenges of her council role and that of resident ambassador.

About The Terraces at Bonita Springs

The Terraces at Bonita Springs—a not-for-profit organization that opened in 2013— is a boutique adult living LifeCare community (formerly known as a continuing care retirement community). Featuring a full complement of luxury residence options (Independent living, assisted living, skilled nursing, memory care assisted living, and rehabilitative care), The Terraces offers quality, worry-free living. Learn more about our active, wellness-focused lifestyle and our Type A LifeCare contract today.

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The Lullaby of Broadway Wednesday, October 11 | 3 p.m.

Life at The Terraces, a luxury Life Plan Community with a Type A LifeCare contract, is full of awe-inspiring experiences and cultural events. Join us for our next one to hear Whitney Grace deliver a lively musical tribute to the city that never sleeps!

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

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Unmasking the Truth About Spider Veins:

A GUIDE TO VEIN HEALTH

As the seasons transition and the air gains a refreshing chill, it's an opportune time to shed light on a common but often misunderstood issue – spider veins. These delicate, web-like networks of red and purple veins that appear on our legs and sometimes other parts of our bodies can be a source of concern for many. In this article, we will explore the world of spider veins, discovering their causes, prevention, and treatment options.

The Web of Spider Veins

Spider veins are small, dilated blood vessels close to the skin's surface. They often present as fine, twisted lines, reminiscent of spider webs but without the spooky connotations. While they might not be as intimidating as Halloween's haunted houses, understanding them is essential for maintaining both vein health and overall well-being.

The Role of Genetics

Genetics often plays a significant role in the development of spider veins. If you have a family history of these visible veins, you may be genetically predisposed to experiencing them as well. However, it's crucial to remember that genetics is just one factor among many, and there are steps you can take to minimize their occurrence.

Preventive Measures

There are several effective ways to prevent or reduce the appearance of spider veins, and it doesn't involve any magical spells or Halloween-themed potions. Regular exercise is a key component, as it helps improve blood circulation throughout your body. Maintaining a healthy weight also reduces the strain on your veins, which can help prevent spider veins from forming.

Incorporating simple lifestyle changes, such as elevating your legs when resting and avoiding prolonged periods of standing or sitting, can further reduce the risk. Additionally, wearing compression stockings can provide support and help minimize the development of spider veins.



Exploring Treatment Options

If spider veins have already made an appearance, various treatments are available to address them. One common procedure is sclerotherapy, in which a solution is injected into the affected veins to gradually fade and eliminate them. This process doesn't require any magic wands or incantations; it's simply a medical solution to a common issue.

Another option is laser therapy, which employs the power of light to break down the pigmentation in spider veins, causing them to fade over time. It's a safe and effective method for improving the appearance of your skin.

Embrace a Vein-Healthy Lifestyle

Spider veins might not be the stuff of Halloween nightmares, but they can still affect your self-esteem and overall health. As we embrace the changing seasons, let's also take the time to embrace a vein-healthy lifestyle. By staying active, eating a healthy diet, and maintaining a balanced weight, you can lessen the risk of spider veins, varicose veins, and other vascular conditions.

In conclusion, spider veins are a common concern, and understanding them is key to addressing this issue. While they may not have a direct connection to Halloween, taking care of your vein health is a year-round endeavor that can lead to a healthier and more confident you.

A complimentary virtual vein screening at gulfcoastsurgeons.com makes it possible for you to get a preliminary vein evaluation from the comfort of home.

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CONTACT LENS SAFETY: DO'S AND DON'TS

By Bradley Middaugh, O.D. | Optometric Physician

When it comes to vision correction, contact lenses offer a convenient and effective solution. They provide clear vision without the frames of glasses, but it's essential to prioritize safety while wearing them, especially during occasions like Halloween. In this article, we'll explore the do's and don'ts of contact lens safety, and why costume contacts should be a definite "no" during the spooky season.

DO'S FOR CONTACT LENS SAFETY

1. Consult an Eye Care Professional

Before you start wearing contact lenses, schedule a comprehensive eye exam with an eye care professional. They will assess your eye health, prescribe the right type of lenses, and teach you how to wear and care for them properly.

2. Wash Your Hands Thoroughly

Always wash your hands with soap and water before handling contact lenses. This simple step can prevent the transfer of dirt, oils, and bacteria to your eyes, reducing the risk of infection.

3. Follow the Recommended Wearing Schedule

Different types of contact lenses have varying wearing schedules. It's crucial to follow the guidelines provided by your eye care professional or the lens manufacturer. Overwearing lenses can lead to discomfort and eye problems.

4. Clean and Disinfect Your Lenses

Clean and disinfect your contact lenses as instructed. Use the recommended solutions and avoid using tap water, saliva, or homemade cleaning solutions, as they can lead to infections.

5. Replace Lenses as Directed

Don't exceed the recommended replacement schedule for your lenses. Using old or damaged lenses can harm your eyes and decrease vision quality.

6. Store Lenses Properly

Store your contact lenses in a clean, sterile case with fresh disinfecting solution. Replace your lens case regularly, typically every three months.

7. Remove Lenses if Irritated

If you experience discomfort, redness, or any unusual symptoms while wearing contact lenses, remove them immediately and consult your eye care professional.

DON'TS FOR CONTACT LENS SAFETY

1. Don't Share Lenses

Sharing contact lenses can transfer bacteria and increase the risk of eye infections. Always use your own prescribed lenses.

2. Don't Sleep in Lenses

Unless prescribed for extended wear, avoid sleeping in your contact lenses. Overnight wear can reduce oxygen flow to your corneas, increasing the risk of complications.

3. Don't Wear Lenses While Swimming

Water, whether in a pool, hot tub, or the ocean, can introduce harmful bacteria to your eyes. Remove your lenses before swimming.

4. Don't Use Costume Contacts

Halloween is a time for fun and creativity when people often seek to enhance their costumes with unique accessories. Costume contacts might seem like a fun idea, but they can pose significant risks to your eye health. These non-prescription decorative lenses are not regulated like regular contact lenses and can be of questionable quality.

Costume contacts are often purchased without a prescription or proper fitting, which can lead to discomfort and damage to your eyes. They may not allow your eyes to breathe properly and could potentially scratch the cornea or cause infections. In worst-case scenarios, using costume contacts irresponsibly can lead to permanent vision impairment.

To enjoy a safe and spooky Halloween, prioritize your eye health by avoiding costume contacts. If you want to incorporate special effects into your costume, consider using makeup or other accessories that don't compromise your vision or well-being.

In conclusion, contact lenses offer a convenient way to correct your vision, but it's crucial to follow the do's and don'ts of contact lens safety. Prioritize consultation with an eye care professional, proper hygiene, and adherence to recommended wearing and cleaning routines. This Halloween, remember that costume contacts are a definite "no" if you want to ensure your eyes stay healthy and happy while you celebrate the season.



BRADLEY MIDDAGH, O.D.
Optometric Physician

Dr. Bradley Middaugh is a board-certified optometric physician committed to providing his patients the highest level of

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

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

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

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

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FOOT AND ANKLE PHYSICAL THERAPY

By Joe Altepeter, DPM

Physical therapy is an important part of the healing process for many if not all of the injuries and issues seen in a podiatry clinic. The basic goals of any physical therapy program would involve relief of pain, restoration of function, and return to normal or baseline activity levels. Benefits of physical therapy include quicker healing, better management of pain levels, decreasing injury recurrence rates while increasing flexibility, mobility, and balance, and to minimize the development of scar tissue.

Whether the deficit is acute and sudden in onset, or an issue that has gradually developed over time, physical therapy will undoubtedly be important. Some of the most common issues addressed by a foot and ankle physical therapist include:

- Sprains, strains, fractures of the foot and ankle, and other sports related injuries
- Tendon issues, namely the achilles tendon, posterior tibial tendon, peroneal tendons, among others
- Heel pain or plantar fasciitis
- Arthritis and other joint issues
- Tarsal tunnel syndrome and other nerve related entrapments
- Gait disturbances and proprioceptive abnormalities

These programs may be initiated after surgery to expedite the return to a more active and healthy lifestyle, including:

- Bunionectomy or correction of other toe deformities
- Repair and reinforcement of fractures and tendons
- Joint replacements and fusions
- Reconstructive surgery such as correction of a flat or high arched foot

A well rounded foot and ankle conditioning program is not only going to focus on the primary issue at hand, but will entail a more global approach to address the biomechanical and compensatory factors that can be associated with the primary issue. Modalities that are often employed include:



- Manual therapy with passive mobilization and manipulation
- Flexibility and stretching regimen
- Strength training
- Electrical stimulation, ultrasound, dry needling, and desensitization techniques
- Proprioception and gait training

It is important that these exercises are employed under the guidance of a physical therapist as appropriate form with and gradual progression through these exercises is imperative for a good outcome. Oftentimes the expected course of treatment is about four to six weeks in length with two or three sessions scheduled per week. The completion of an individually designed treatment program should not end at the last scheduled session, but continuation of specific home exercises is necessary to avoid recurrence.



At Family Foot & Leg Center we are blessed to have **Dr. Ketul Shah** on staff to provide care in our physical therapy department here in Lee County at our 6846 International Center Boulevard location. Dr. Shah has been practicing since 2017 after graduating cum laude from The College of New Jersey (Ewing Township, NJ) with a B.S. of Health and Exercise Science in 2013,

and completing physical therapy school at MGH Institute of Health Professions (Boston, MA) in 2017. He is board certified as a Sports Clinical Specialist, and as a Certified Strength and Conditioning Specialist. He is a proud member of the Florida Physical Therapy Association and was elected Director of Public Relations this year. Despite working alongside a group of foot and ankle specialists, his scope is not limited to the lower extremities and treats the whole patient from head to toe.

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

Joe Altepeter, DPM, AACFAS

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



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What You Need to Know About Kidney Stones

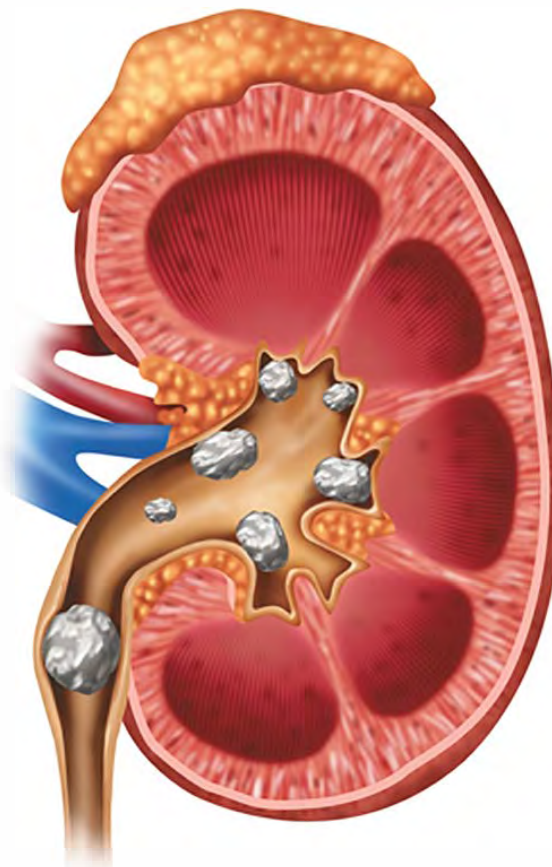
Kidney stones, though small in size, can cause enormous pain and discomfort. These tiny mineral deposits that form within the kidneys have a notorious reputation for bringing grown adults to their knees in excruciating pain. While some may think they can ride out the agony at home, seeking prompt medical attention from a urologist is crucial for various reasons.

Kidney stones are more common than you might think, affecting around 1 in 11 people in the United States during their lifetime. Despite their prevalence, there is a common misconception that these stones will eventually pass on their own. In reality, not addressing kidney stones properly can lead to severe complications, making it essential to consult a urologist as soon as symptoms arise.

First and foremost, urologists are specialists in the urinary system, which includes the kidneys. They have extensive knowledge and expertise in diagnosing and treating kidney stones, ensuring that patients receive the most accurate and effective care. This expertise can be invaluable in identifying the type and cause of the stones, which is essential for developing a targeted treatment plan.

One of the primary reasons to consult a urologist is the pain associated with kidney stones. The pain is often described as one of the most intense and agonizing experiences a person can endure. It typically begins as a sharp, stabbing pain in the lower back or side, and it can radiate to the abdomen and groin. A urologist can offer immediate relief through various methods, including pain medication and minimally invasive procedures to remove or break down the stones.

Additionally, a urologist can help prevent kidney stone recurrence. After the initial stone is treated, it's crucial to determine the underlying causes to reduce the risk of future stones. Urologists can conduct a thorough evaluation to identify dietary and lifestyle factors that contribute to stone formation. With personalized guidance, patients can make necessary changes to their habits to minimize the chances of developing more kidney stones.



One often overlooked aspect of kidney stones is their potential to cause long-term damage to the kidneys. When stones block the urinary tract, they can lead to infection or kidney damage if left untreated. Urologists can perform imaging studies and use their expertise to assess the risk to your kidney health and take appropriate measures to protect your renal function.

Moreover, kidney stones can lead to complications such as urinary tract infections (UTIs) and hydronephrosis (swelling of the kidney due to blocked urine flow). These complications can be serious and even life-threatening if not managed promptly. A urologist can diagnose and treat these conditions effectively, preventing them from progressing to more severe stages.

In some cases, kidney stones may be too large or too stubborn to pass naturally. Urologists have a range of advanced techniques at their disposal to remove or break down large stones. These minimally invasive procedures, such as shock wave lithotripsy and ureteroscopy, can prevent the need for more invasive surgeries and significantly reduce recovery times.

Furthermore, urologists can provide valuable advice on dietary modifications and hydration to prevent future stone formation. They can perform metabolic evaluations to identify specific risk factors and tailor preventive strategies accordingly. By working closely with a urologist, individuals can take proactive steps to avoid the pain and discomfort of recurrent kidney stones.

In conclusion, kidney stones are not to be taken lightly. The pain they cause and the potential for complications make it essential to consult a urologist when symptoms arise. These specialized medical professionals can offer immediate relief, prevent long-term damage, and provide guidance to minimize the risk of future kidney stones. Don't let kidney stones take control of your life – seek the expertise of a urologist and take the first step towards kidney stone prevention and management. Your kidneys will thank you.



Alejandro Miranda-Sousa, MD

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



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MEMORY MATTERS

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

Do you or someone you know experience times when you do not enjoy activities or interests as much as you have in the past? Have you had sleep disturbances, difficulty concentrating or feelings of low energy and fatigue?

While it is important not to assume what is happening, sometimes these can be symptoms of depression or even early memory concerns. How do you know what is causing your feelings? What are some of the signs to look for?

If you are having some of the symptoms noted, it is very important for you to see your health care provider. Take notes on when you are having these concerns. There are many things that may need to be addressed from a health perspective, and consulting with your provider is step one. Sometimes the signs of depression can look like some of the early symptoms of Alzheimer's or another dementia. Guessing about what is going on or consulting "Dr. Google" is not the most effective approaches. To learn more, let's dig into some of the facts about each condition.

October 6th is National Depression screening day. There are simple and quick tools your health care provider can use to identify if your symptoms are due to depression. As the National Institute of Aging notes, depression can impact the way you think, feel and act. While depression can occur as we age, it is not a normal part of aging. The National Council on Aging (NCOA) reports that between 1 – 5 % of adults in the general community may be depressed. The numbers rise for older adults who are hospitalized to around 11.5% and the impact is even greater for older adults who need home health care, or around 13.5%. There are a number of potential causes and risk factors for depression as we age. Chronic medical conditions, decreased mobility and functional ability, and chronic pain can all be contributing factors. Social isolation, loneliness, and stress, including caregiver stress, are also risk factors.

Here are some common signs of depression. Persistent sadness, feelings of guilt and/or worthlessness, changes in appetite and recurring thoughts of death may be signs. Additional signs include apathy, lack of interest in activities or events that

were previously enjoyed, fatigue, low energy, irritability, difficulty concentrating, and slower speech or movement. The last seven symptoms may also be early signs of Alzheimer's or another dementia.

- Use person centered, positive language such as a person living with dementia or depression instead of someone "suffering" from dementia or a "depressive" or depressed person

Here are some ways that Alzheimer's or another dementia may differ from depression:

DEPRESSION	ALZHEIMER'S AND OTHER DEMENTIAS
Decline in mental functioning is more rapid	Slower changes to mental functioning
Oriented to time and place, not confused	Disorientation and confusion common
Difficulty with concentration	Issues with short term memory which can impact concentration
More likely to notice and comment on their memory problems	May not be as aware or may be indifferent to changes in memory

There is also a condition known as pseudodementia, which is cognitive impairment that is caused by depression, and usually occurs in the elderly. Symptoms can include the same symptoms of depression, including some decline in cognitive abilities. The major difference is that when the depressive symptoms are treated successfully, the dementia-like symptoms often dissipate as well.

Can people with Alzheimer's disease or another dementia, also have depression? According to the Alzheimer's Association, it is estimated that up to 40 % of individuals with Alzheimer's disease also have depression. As you can imagine, identifying depression in someone with Alzheimer's disease can be difficult. As outlined earlier, there is some overlap in symptoms.

What are the reasons that people do not choose to get a screening for depression? According to Diana Ward, MS, Business Development Representative, Park Royal Hospital, one of the largest barriers to screening is stigma. The perceived stigma of mental health issues, as well as memory issues, can prevent people from seeking out diagnostic testing. Addressing the stigma of depression and dementia have some common approaches.

- Talk openly about the topic, be it memory loss or depression. These are medical issues not shameful conditions

- Respond to misperceptions and misunderstandings with facts and credible resources, such as The Alzheimer's Association www.alz.org and The National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) <https://www.nami.org/home>
- Choose your words carefully. Words such as senile, demented, not "all there" or crazy are negative expressions for those living with Alzheimer's or another dementia. For those living with depression, some common negative words can include, lazy, weak, crazy, unmotivated, and unkempt

If you are worried about changes in your memory, mood and/or others are noticing changes, it's essential to contact your primary care provider for a health assessment. There are simple depression screenings that can be conducted in your health care provider's office. If you are concerned about your memory, connect with the experienced team at the Neuropsychiatric Research center at 239-939-7777. We have a proven track record of helping individuals and families navigate memory related challenges. Remember, you're not alone on this journey. #MemoriesMatter.



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Hormonal Imbalance and Its Effect on Skin Health

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

The skin is no unsubstantial organ. In fact, it's the body's largest and a significant defender from outside contagions. Beyond the protection it offers your body, the skin also offers a unique ability for you to gauge your internal health purely by looking at it.

However, with an organ so large, many things can affect it, one of which is your hormones or, more accurately, an imbalance in them.

Hormonal Imbalance

Much as the name suggests, a hormonal imbalance occurs when your hormones are no longer balanced, either because a hormone is secreted too much or too little.

Hormonal imbalance can be disastrous for your well-being because your hormones regulate many different processes in the body, including your development, metabolism, and reproduction. So, if you're producing too much or too little hormones, it can also affect these processes.

Some of the impacts of hormonal imbalance include primary ovarian insufficiency, early menopause, and polycystic ovary syndrome (PCOS) in women, and prostate cancer in men.

Symptoms of Hormonal Imbalance

While the symptoms of hormonal imbalance can vary based on the hormone out of balance, some of the general symptoms of hormonal imbalance include:

- increased stomach issues
- sudden weight loss/gain
- weakness
- skin dryness
- fatigue
- body aches
- increased urination
- persistent thirst
- anxiety
- mood swings
- changes in appetite
- hair loss
- infertility

If you notice any of these symptoms, it's best to visit a doctor specializing in hormones to pinpoint the cause of the imbalance and correct it. Often, hormonal imbalance can be an indicator of an even bigger issue, and choosing to ignore the symptoms may cause life-threatening risks, which is why it is always recommended to address hormonal imbalances as soon as you notice them.

Luckily, hormonal imbalance can often manifest on your skin, helping you see if something is unbalanced internally. If you're aware of what to look for, and what skin conditions may be due to hormonal imbalances, you have the advantage of knowing when there is a need to look more closely into your hormone levels.

How Hormonal Imbalance Affects Your Skin

As we know, the skin is the largest organ in your body, so its health relies on many things. However, one of the most important components of your skin comes from the sebaceous glands under your skin that produce sebum, a natural oil secreted through the pores of your skin.

Sebum helps protect the skin from UV radiation, locks in moisture, and transports fat-soluble antioxidants to the surface of the skin, which can then help prevent oxidative skin damage.

However, as with all things, too much can be a problem. In fact, too much sebum production is often the cause of various skin issues like inflammation and acne. One reason for excess sebum production? An imbalance of androgen, or male sex hormones that are present in those of both genders.

Sebum is not the only important part of the skin, either. Your skin is composed of the protein collagen, which is a building block of your skin. It is collagen that helps to give your skin a youthful appearance, and when your collagen production is down, your skin may start to sag.

Estrogen, a female sex hormone, is crucial in producing collagen and helps keep your skin thick and hydrated. If your estrogen levels are low, such as the case with older women entering menopause, skin can become thinner and more sensitive.



It's not just those entering menopause who see these results of low estrogen, though. A survey found that 2 out of 5 women still getting a period each month report unusually sensitive skin before and during their menstruation, which is generally the time when estrogen levels drop. Many women also notice an increase in sebum production before and during their menstrual cycle, which can contribute to acne.

When we look at the effects of hormonal changes on the body, it's clear that hormonal imbalance can manifest in changes to your skin.

Hormonal Imbalance as Skin Manifestations

Let's take a look at the different skin imperfections that can result from hormonal imbalances.

Under Eye Dark Circles

The constant companion for college students staying up all night to study, under eye dark circles are a skin problem resulting most often from adrenal fatigue.

When you experience more stress, your body produces more of the stress hormone cortisol. However, excess cortisol production can cause poor sleep at night because it tends to make people feel restless. If you continually suffer from poor sleep, dark circles can appear around your eyes.

Furthermore, if you're suffering from low estrogen levels, the skin under your eyes can become thinner, which can make the darkness even more prominent.

Dry Skin

While common during the dry and cold winter months, dry skin can also occur to those with hormonal imbalances, specifically if hormones such as estrogen decline. This is because a reduction in estrogen can cause a decrease in sebum production. Sebum is essential for retaining moisture in your skin, so if your body is not producing enough sebum, it will not stay hydrated enough and can experience dryness, roughness, and flakiness.

In addition to estrogen, thyroid hormones also stimulate the oil glands, but instead of increasing sebum production, they reduce it. So, if you suffer from hyperthyroidism, or an overproduction of thyroid hormones, you may experience dry skin.

Acne

It can be frustrating to experience acne in your 20s and 30s, with most people assuming it is an affliction only for teenagers. However, hormones can significantly influence your body's sebum production, leading to acne, regardless of age.

For women, estrogen and progesterone, which are key players in your menstrual cycle, can increase the amount of sebum produced, clogging your skin's pores and leading to acne. As for men, an excessive amount of testosterone can also produce excess sebum.

For those experiencing acne due to hormonal imbalance, they most often appear on the chin, forehead, and nose.

Skin Tags

Skin tags are small skin-colored growths on the skin of your neck or eyelids, resulting from a compromise in your insulin and glucose hormonal balance. When these hormones start changing, estrogen can dramatically reduce, which affects your skin's elasticity and can cause overlapping in your skin layers. When these skin layers experience constant friction, skin tags can occur.

In general, skin tags are most often associated with metabolic syndrome, PCOS, and diabetes.

Pale or Yellow Skin

Hormonal imbalance can affect your blood vessels, making your skin appear pale and waxy. However, hormonal imbalance is not the only cause of this appearance, with liver failure also lending itself to pale or yellow skin. If you notice that your skin or eyes appear yellow, check in with a doctor to determine the cause.

Balancing Hormones and Regulating Skin Health

If your skin is suffering from imbalanced hormones in the form of dry, thin, sensitive, or pale skin, correcting the hormonal imbalance is the best way to address the root of the problem and see improvements in your skin as a result.

The following are some of the possibilities for correcting a hormonal imbalance:

Oral Contraceptives

Oral contraceptives can help correct hormonal imbalance in women and, in some cases, are prescribed to treat acne. Oral contraceptives help to target the hormones that peak at ovulation, which is generally when those experiencing hormonal acne may see an increase in breakouts. Oral contraceptives keep hormone levels more even, lessening breakouts.

However, oral contraceptives are not for everyone, with those with a history of breast cancer, high blood pressure, or blood clots potentially unfit for this treatment. Talk to your doctor to determine if this is an adequate treatment for your skin and hormonal needs.

Anti-Androgen Drugs

As discussed, high levels of androgens, such as testosterone, can increase sebum production in some people, increasing the odds of clogged pores and acne breakouts. Anti-androgen drugs help to keep androgens from rising too high, which can help manage skin issues.

Testosterone Replacement

On the opposite end of the spectrum are medications that help address low testosterone, including testosterone gels and patches. These therapies help to fight the decline in testosterone production seen in some in men.

Check Your Lifestyle

While medications and therapies can help with hormonal imbalance, it is also best to ensure your lifestyle reflects healthy habits aimed at keeping your hormones balanced. Some of these habits include:

- exercising regularly
- getting enough sleep each day
- having a balanced diet
- drinking enough water
- managing stress levels
- reducing alcohol consumption
- avoiding smoking

These habits help keep your hormone levels regular while also supporting healthy skin.

The Influence of Hormones on Your Skin

Hormones are chemical messengers used throughout your body, and one area they can impact is your skin. Stress hormones such as cortisol and sex hormones like estrogen, progesterone, and testosterone can all cause unwanted skin reactions if unbalanced, such as acne, dry skin, sagging skin, or increased sensitivity.

If you're noticing skin problems and can't determine their cause, it might be something more internal. Reach out to a hormone specialist to get a reading on your hormone levels, see if there is an imbalance, and devise a treatment plan to help restore the equilibrium that your entire body, including your skin, will benefit from.

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KICKING NEUROPATHY TO THE CURB: From Numb Feet to Dancing Shoes

Cindy G, interviewed by Dr. Ali Dean Sakhai, Chief Operating Officer of Straight To Health Center and advocate for truth in neuropathy treatments and clinics.

Dr. Sakhai: Hello and thank you for sitting down with me today. Many of our readers deal with health issues that impact their quality of life, and hearing firsthand experiences can be very impactful. So, to start, could you share a bit about why you came to see Dr. Zappile and what you were experiencing?

Cindy G.: Of course, Dr. Sakhai. I first noticed the symptoms of neuropathy in my feet. It began as a numbness that I brushed off, thinking it was just from standing too long. But as days turned into weeks and then months, the sensations became more disturbing—tingling, burning, even electric shocks. It wasn't just discomfort; it was disabling. I found myself avoiding events, even simple walks with my family, out of fear of pain or tripping.

Dr. Sakhai: It sounds like these symptoms profoundly affected your daily life.

Cindy G.: Absolutely. I remember missing my granddaughter's first soccer game because I was afraid of walking across the field. I felt I was not just battling with physical pain but emotional pain, too. I felt robbed of life's cherished moments.

Dr. Sakhai: That's heart-wrenching. So, what led you to Dr. Zappile's care?

Cindy G.: My primary physician recommended physical therapy, which I tried, but I wasn't getting better. A close friend of mine mentioned Dr. Zappile and how she had helped him with a similar issue. I was desperate for a solution, so I booked an appointment.

Dr. Sakhai: And how was your experience with Dr. Zappile and her team?

Cindy G.: Honestly, transformative. From the moment I walked into the center, I felt a sense of hope. Dr. Zappile was incredibly thorough, understanding, and compassionate. She explained the possible underlying causes of my neuropathy and crafted a comprehensive treatment plan tailored to my needs.



Dr. Sakhai: As you progressed with Dr. Zappile's treatment plan, when did you begin to notice changes?

Cindy G.: The change was gradual but consistent. After the first few sessions, the severity of the burning sensations started diminishing. By the end of the first month, I felt confident enough to take short walks around my neighborhood. It was exhilarating to regain the freedom I thought I'd lost forever.

Dr. Sakhai: That's truly uplifting. Now that you're on the other side, how has life transformed for you?

Cindy G.: I'm like a new person! I recently danced at my daughter's wedding, something I couldn't have imagined doing before. I've reclaimed not just my mobility, but also my joy. My family and I are beyond grateful.

Dr. Sakhai: It's wonderful to hear such positive outcomes. Lastly, any words for Dr. Zappile and her dedicated team?

Cindy G.: Words can't adequately express my gratitude. Dr. Zappile, with her knowledge and compassionate approach, gave me my life back. Her team is exceptional; always supportive and always cheering me on. I want everyone out there struggling with neuropathy to know that there's hope. With the right guidance and treatment, you can reclaim your life, just as I did.

Dr. Sakhai: Thank you for sharing your story. It's an inspiration for all of us and a testament to the dedication and expertise of Dr. Zappile and her team.

Cindy G.: Thank you, Dr. Sakhai, for giving me this platform. If my story can help even one person find their path to healing, it's all worth it.

Post-interview Note:

For readers intrigued by the treatments that facilitated Cindy's remarkable recovery, delve deeper by visiting SWFL-neuropathy.com. Here, you'll uncover a detailed overview of cutting-edge treatments aimed at halting or reversing neuropathy's debilitating effects. Discover the transformative power of the AngioGenics™ program and its potential to assist those grappling with Peripheral Neuropathy or chronic pain.

Let Cindy's journey serve as a beacon of hope, shining light on the game-changing potential that modern neuropathy treatments offer. For those yearning for expert guidance and a return to life's cherished moments, Dr. Zappile and her team remain unwavering in their mission: delivering individualized, compassionate, and groundbreaking care, steering patients towards a renewed path of health and happiness. Begin your journey towards an enriched quality of life. Reach out to Straight To Health Center today at 239-202-0999.



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

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CONFIDENCE CHECK

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

RALPH R. GARRAMONE, MD, FACS

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

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

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



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

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

GREAT EXPECTATIONS

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

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

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

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

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MEDICAL MARIJUANA AND DEPRESSION: A RAY OF HOPE

Depression is a common mental health disorder that affects millions of people worldwide. It can have a debilitating impact on one's life, making even daily activities seem overwhelming with little enjoyment. Traditional treatments, such as therapy and antidepressant medications, work well for many individuals, but there are cases where these approaches may be ineffective or cause unpleasant side effects. In recent years, medical marijuana has gained attention as a potential alternative treatment for depression for those who are looking for an alternative approach to traditional pharmaceuticals. This article explores the relationship between medical marijuana and depression, discussing its potential benefits and considerations for its use.

Understanding Depression

Depression is a complex mental health disorder characterized by persistent feelings of sadness, loss of interest or pleasure in activities, changes in appetite or sleep patterns, low energy, and a sense of worthlessness. It can significantly affect a person's ability to function in daily life, impacting relationships, work, and overall well-being. Depression can be triggered by various factors, including biological, genetic, environmental, and psychological elements. According to the WHO, 3.8% of the population experience depression. Depression is more common in women and adults over 60 years old.

Medical Marijuana and its Components

Medical marijuana refers to the use of cannabis or cannabinoids for medical purposes. Cannabis contains more than 100 different compounds, known as cannabinoids, with the two most studied being tetrahydrocannabinol (THC) and cannabidiol (CBD). THC is psychoactive and responsible for the "high" associated with marijuana, while CBD is non-psychoactive and has potential therapeutic effects. CBC, CBG, and CBN have also been shown in studies to reduce symptoms of depression and anxiety.

POTENTIAL BENEFITS OF MEDICAL MARIJUANA FOR DEPRESSION

Mood Regulation:

Medical marijuana, particularly CBD, has shown promise in mood regulation. CBD interacts with the endocannabinoid system in the brain, which plays a role in mood regulation. Some studies suggest that CBD may help alleviate symptoms of depression by influencing serotonin receptors.



Stress Reduction:

Chronic stress often accompanies depression. Certain strains of medical marijuana, particularly those high in CBD, may help reduce stress levels and induce a sense of relaxation. This can be beneficial for individuals struggling with anxiety and depressive symptoms.

Appetite Stimulation:

Depression can lead to a loss of appetite and subsequent weight loss. Medical marijuana, especially strains high in THC, can stimulate appetite, potentially aiding individuals in regaining lost weight and improving overall nutrition.

Sleep Improvement:

Sleep is absolutely vital to one's physical health and wellbeing. Insomnia and disrupted sleep patterns are common in individuals with depression. Certain strains of medical marijuana, particularly indica strains, may have sedative effects, helping individuals achieve better sleep and rest. This can include both falling asleep faster and staying asleep longer.

Pain Relief:

Chronic pain often coexists with depression. Medical marijuana, particularly strains with a balanced ratio of THC and CBD, can provide pain relief, enhancing the overall well-being of individuals struggling with both depression and chronic pain. Cannabinoids in medical cannabis also have strong anti-inflammatory properties that work particularly well for those whose pain may stem from inflammation, such as arthritis.

CONSIDERATIONS AND PRECAUTIONS

Consultation with a Medical Professional:

Before considering medical marijuana as a treatment for depression, it's essential to consult a healthcare professional, especially one with expertise in medical marijuana. They can provide guidance based on an individual's medical history, current medications, and specific circumstances.

Strain Selection:

The choice of marijuana strain is crucial. Strains high in CBD and low in THC are often recommended for individuals seeking therapeutic effects without the psychoactive "high" associated with THC. With 100's of licensed dispensaries in Florida, there are countless strains and product lines that have been engineered for specific symptoms and condition.

Dosage and Administration:

Determining the appropriate dosage and method of administration is essential. Starting with a low dose and gradually increasing it under medical supervision can help manage potential side effects and achieve the desired therapeutic effect.

Awareness of Potential Side Effects:

Like any medication, medical marijuana can have side effects, including dry mouth, increased heart rate, impaired memory, and altered judgment. Being aware of these potential side effects is important for informed decision-making and working with a licensed marijuana practitioner will help you properly balance the benefits vs any undesirable effects.

Conclusion

Medical marijuana holds promise as an alternative treatment for depression, offering potential mood regulation, stress reduction, appetite stimulation, improved sleep, and pain relief. However, it's crucial to consult with a medical professional and understand the appropriate strain, dosage, and administration methods. Further research and clinical trials are necessary to fully comprehend the efficacy of medical marijuana for depression, but its potential as a complementary or alternative treatment offers hope to those seeking relief from this debilitating condition.



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SKIN CANCER SCREENING

By Joseph Onorato, MD, FAAD

Cancer can occur anywhere in the body. It has many forms and many names. It sometimes presents itself by showing symptoms that are easily recognizable, at other times it can remain hidden for years. That is why it is important to visit your doctor regularly and talk to him/her about any changes you may have noticed in your body.

The most common form of cancer in America is skin cancer. Each year as many as 9,500 people are diagnosed with skin cancer of one form or another in the US. Other interesting facts include:

- 1 in 5 Americans will develop skin cancer by the age of 70.
- More than 2 people die of skin cancer in the U.S. every hour.
- Having 5 or more sunburns doubles your risk for melanoma.
- When detected early, the 5-year survival rate for melanoma is 99 percent. (1)

Who is most at risk for skin cancer?

According to the CDC, those who are at the highest risk for developing skin cancer are people who have:

- A lighter natural skin color.
- Skin that burns, freckles, reddens easily, or becomes painful in the sun.
- Blue or green eyes.
- Blond or red hair.
- Certain types and a large number of moles.
- A family history of skin cancer.
- A personal history of skin cancer.
- Older age.

How can I prevent skin cancer?

Most skin cancers are the direct result of too much exposure to ultraviolet light. UV rays come from the sun, but also from tanning beds and other types of sun lamps. These UV rays damage skin cells and should be avoided. When you are unable to avoid them, caution and protection should be used. This is true all year round, not just on sunny, summer days.

Seeking shade is a good way to reduce your exposure to UV rays. Sitting under a tree, an umbrella, or a shelter is a good plan, however, it isn't enough. Even in the shade sunscreen, protective clothing, and hats are your best defense against these harmful rays.



Using a broad-spectrum sunscreen is essential when spending time in the outdoors. Sunscreens should have a sun protection factor (SPF) of at least 15 and should be reapplied regularly. It should be applied every 2 hours and after getting wet or sweating. It is also important to remember that it has a shelf-life of no more than 3 years.

Skin cancer screening

Patients should regularly check their skin for signs of skin cancer. When looking at a spot, there are certain things to look for. The ABCDEs of melanoma is helpful.

- **A**symmetry
- **B**order
- **C**olor
- **D**iameter
- **E**volving

If you notice any of the above, a skin cancer screening with a dermatologist should be carried out. A skin cancer screening is an in-office procedure in which a doctor conducts a visual examination of a patient's skin looking for signs of cancer (ABCDE). During the examination, the areas that should receive the most attention are moles, birthmarks, and "sun spots". The size, shape, texture, and color are all important aspects to be examined closely. The goal is to detect cancer from the earliest possible moment to ensure timely treatment. If a spot is determined to be "suspicious", the doctor will use specialized tools to have a closer look and may need to take a sample to be sent to a laboratory for a biopsy.

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What's on YOUR Skin?



Founder & Owner

Joseph Onorato, MD, FAAD

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

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Ketamine Health Centers: Helping Patients Begin Their Recovery Journey One Infusion at a Time

Innovation and research continuously provide new tools and therapies to address complex medical conditions in modern medicine. Ketamine, once primarily recognized as an anesthetic agent, has recently gained recognition for its versatile applications in treating various psychiatric and chronic pain disorders. Ketamine infusions, administered under medical supervision, have emerged as a promising and transformative treatment option.

Dr. Jennifer Sandadi, medical director at Ketamine Health Centers, states, "As an anesthesiologist, I have clinically seen the effects of ketamine in the operating room. Ketamine therapy can also help to treat multiple mental health conditions like anxiety, depression, addiction, and chronic pain. As a physician, I felt my responsibility was to extend these benefits to as many people in our community as possible. We opened our center to help those in need and will continue to reach out to the community as long as possible. I am fortunate to say that we have an amazing team of individuals here to help."

Ketamine: Beyond Anesthesia

Ketamine, initially developed in the 1960s as an anesthetic, has found a new purpose in the medical world. Its unique properties make it an invaluable asset in treating previously challenging conditions to manage effectively.

- **Treatment-Resistant Depression (TRD):** Ketamine infusions have shown remarkable success in alleviating symptoms of TRD, a condition where individuals do not respond to conventional antidepressants. The fast-acting nature of ketamine can provide rapid relief, sometimes within hours of administration, offering newfound hope to those suffering from severe depression.

- **Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD):** PTSD can profoundly impact an individual's life. Ketamine infusions have demonstrated promise in reducing the severity of PTSD symptoms, including intrusive thoughts and nightmares, allowing patients to regain a sense of control and normalcy.

- **Bipolar Disorder:** For individuals with bipolar depression, ketamine infusions can help stabilize mood and minimize depressive episodes. This therapy complements existing treatments and enhances overall quality of life.

- **Chronic Pain Management:** Chronic pain conditions like complex regional pain syndrome (CRPS) and fibromyalgia can be debilitating. Ketamine infusions, often in higher doses than for psychiatric conditions, can provide relief by modulating pain signals in the brain and spinal cord.

- **Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder (OCD):** OCD is characterized by distressing obsessions and compulsive behaviors. Ketamine therapy can offer relief from these symptoms, providing patients with a chance to regain control over their lives.

- **Suicidal Ideation:** Ketamine's rapid antidepressant effects make it a valuable tool in emergency situations, such as when individuals are experiencing acute suicidal ideation. Administered under careful medical supervision, ketamine can stabilize mood and prevent immediate harm.

- **Substance Use Disorders:** Ketamine is being explored as a treatment for addiction. It may help individuals gain insights into their behaviors and motivations, potentially facilitating a smoother recovery process.

The Administration of Ketamine Infusions

Ketamine infusions are administered in a controlled medical setting to ensure patient safety and optimize therapeutic outcomes. The dosage, frequency, and duration of ketamine therapy vary based on the specific condition being treated, the individual's response, and the healthcare provider's recommendations. Patients typically remain awake as they receive the medication intravenously (IV).



Ketamine infusions have transcended their role as an anesthetic agent, offering newfound hope and healing for individuals battling treatment-resistant psychiatric conditions and chronic pain disorders. Their rapid onset of action and efficacy have revolutionized treatment approaches, especially for those who have exhausted conventional therapies.

The first step is awareness, the second step is reaching out....

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In addition to ketamine infusion therapy, our centers have multiple treatment options designed to help you regain control and start living again. Considering your health, our practical and minimally invasive therapies are available for various conditions.

At **Ketamine Health Centers**, our goal is for our patients to succeed. We want to help you to improve functioning and quality of life. Our mission is to provide individualized treatment for each person, in order that they may regain balance in their lives.

With years of medical experience, knowledge, and prior ketamine application, our team of qualified medical experts can provide patients with life-changing, holistic treatments.

Check out our YouTube channel to see what we have to offer and how we can help you.

<https://www.youtube.com/@ketaminehealthcenters9672>

We invite you to stop by the Lee County Civic Center on Saturday, October 14 between 10am and 2pm, to talk with us at the LEE COUNTY SENIOR EXPO. We look forward to seeing you there!

In an effort to address the whole person, Ketamine Health Centers powered by Irwin Naturals Emergence also offers supreme quality nutraceuticals to address the mind-body connection.



Dr. Jennifer Sandadi, MD, Medical Director

Dr. Sandadi, Medical Director, Bonita Springs Ketamine Health Center

Dr. Jennifer Sandadi completed her residency in Anesthesiology at Case Western Reserve University, University Hospitals, after graduating from the University of MD and the University of Miami School of Medicine. She is

double Board Certified in Anesthesiology and Critical Care Medicine by the American Board of Anesthesiology. Dr. Sandadi completed her Fellowship Training in Cardiothoracic and Surgical Critical Care Medicine at Columbia University, NY Presbyterian Hospital. Dr. Sandadi has served as Assistant Professor of Anesthesiology at Cornell University, NY Presbyterian Hospital. She is currently an anesthesiologist in Ft. Myers, FL and serves as the medical director for an outpatient surgery center as well as the Bonita Springs Ketamine Health Center.



Dale Alice Block, LMFT

Dale Alice Block, Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist, Clinical Director of Ketamine Health Centers

After graduating from the University of Rhode Island with a masters in MFT, Ms. Block completed three years of post-graduate study in clinical supervision and management, culminating in the AAMFT Qualified Supervisor

designation. Her clinical experience and supervision of other professionals spans 30+ years. She has established and supervised multiple programs, both inpatient and outpatient, including trauma focused care programs, addiction facilities, loss and bereavement programs, neurodiverse support programming, spiritual healing programs, general counseling and currently all clinical aspects of the counseling and alternative services at Ketamine Health Centers across the state.

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Hormone Replacement Therapy & Breast Cancer: Risk or Hype?

By Dr. Doreen DeStefano, NHD, APRN, DNP

As we age, women will start to experience symptoms of hormonal imbalance, which is interconnected to perimenopause, menopause, post-menopause or reproductive conditions.

Hormone replacement therapy (HRT) has been used for decades; however, it's well known that synthetic HRT leads to blood clots, heart disorders and breast cancer in women. Unfortunately, you won't often hear about this from your primary care physician or gynecologist. In fact, it's not uncommon for many physicians to prescribe HRT to women over 50 in the form of birth control to help regulate their heavy bleeding or spotting. Along with birth control there are other oral hormones such as estrogen, progesterone and testosterone that are widely available in patches, creams and pellets that have numerous adverse effects.

A study published in JAMA, entitled, Unopposed Estrogen Therapy and the Risk of Invasive Breast Cancer, sheds light on the dangers of synthetic unopposed hormones.

They concluded that, breast cancer risk increased with duration of unopposed estrogen use among longer-term users with the highest risk seen in cancers positive for estrogen receptor (ER+) and progesterone receptor (PR+). The study population was expanded every 2 years to include women who subsequently became postmenopausal and had a hysterectomy, so that 28 835 women were included in the final follow-up period (2000-2002). Estrogen use was assessed from self-reported data on biennial questionnaires. The main outcome was invasive breast cancer.

Bio-Identical Hormones—A Safer Option

Regulating hormones to create balance is important and women need options that do not cause harm. That is why many practitioners rely on bio-identical hormones, which are safer and more widely accepted by the body.

Hormone levels can be adjusted through bio-identical hormone therapy, which alleviates or in many cases, eliminates the associated symptoms and life fluctuations surrounding hormones. There are even studies now that suggest bio-identical hormones can help reduce the risk of Alzheimer's and dementia.



In the U.S., bio-identical Hormone Replacement Therapy (BHRT) has been used since the 1930s. And based on hundreds of current medically thorough studies, the results for patient's overall quality of life and dramatic changes in their hormonal symptoms are astounding.

BHRT is equal to our body's natural hormones on a molecular level. The difference between synthetic and identical hormones is that synthetic hormones do not match human hormones on a biological level.

Bio-identical hormones are made from plant sources and are readily received by the body as natural and normal. They are much more therapeutic and effective than synthetic hormonal substances.

Measuring BHRT for Women

The typical bioidentical hormone replacement therapy for women are Estrogens (Estrinol and Estradiol), Progesterone, Testosterone, and DHEA. These precise components of each woman's therapy need to be determined upon completion of a physical examination, medical history, and laboratory testing ordered by your doctor.

Progesterone for Women

Bioidentical progesterone provides the most efficient way to integrate with the body's natural progesterone receptors. This is critical because body receptors are structure specific. A few of the benefits from bioidentical progesterone are an increase in bone health, protection against breast cancer and endometrial growth, an antidepressant effect, controlling blood clotting, and increased libido.

Source:
<https://jamanetwork.com/journals/jamainternalmedicine/fullarticle/410252>

On the contrary, Progestin (synthetic) doesn't have quite as many benefits. In fact, it has more negative effects, like, miscarriages, weight gain, decreased sex drive, increased risk of breast cancer, high risk of fractures and osteoporosis, increased blood clotting risks, anxiety, depression, migraine headaches, and other health-related disorders.

Correct ratios and customized blends are critical

With personalized medicine, Bioidentical hormones can be compounded and made specifically for each patient's needs. Bioidentical estrogen and DHEA offers similar benefits.

*Creams are thought to be a safer choice than pellets since it can be better controlled.

Dr. DeStefano, of Root Causes Holistic Health & Medicine in Ft Myers, FL, incorporates IV & Chelation therapy with hyperbaric chamber sessions to combat multiple chronic conditions and disease states.



Doreen DeStefano, NHD, APRN, DNP

Dr. Doreen DeStefano holds a doctorate in natural health, an MPA in public business, MS (ABT) in criminal psychology, and a BS in exercise physiology and nursing. She previously held an EMT certification. Dr. DeStefano has been practicing in natural health for over ten years. Her area of interest is healthy aging and prevention and resolution of chronic symptoms associated with aging. She believes that growing old should not mean breaking down.

Poor diet, chronic stress, insomnia, disease, illness, environmental stressors, and a sedentary lifestyle can all contribute to disease states and an unhealthy lifestyle. ISN'T IT TIME YOU TOOK STEPS TO LIVE YOUR BEST LIFE?

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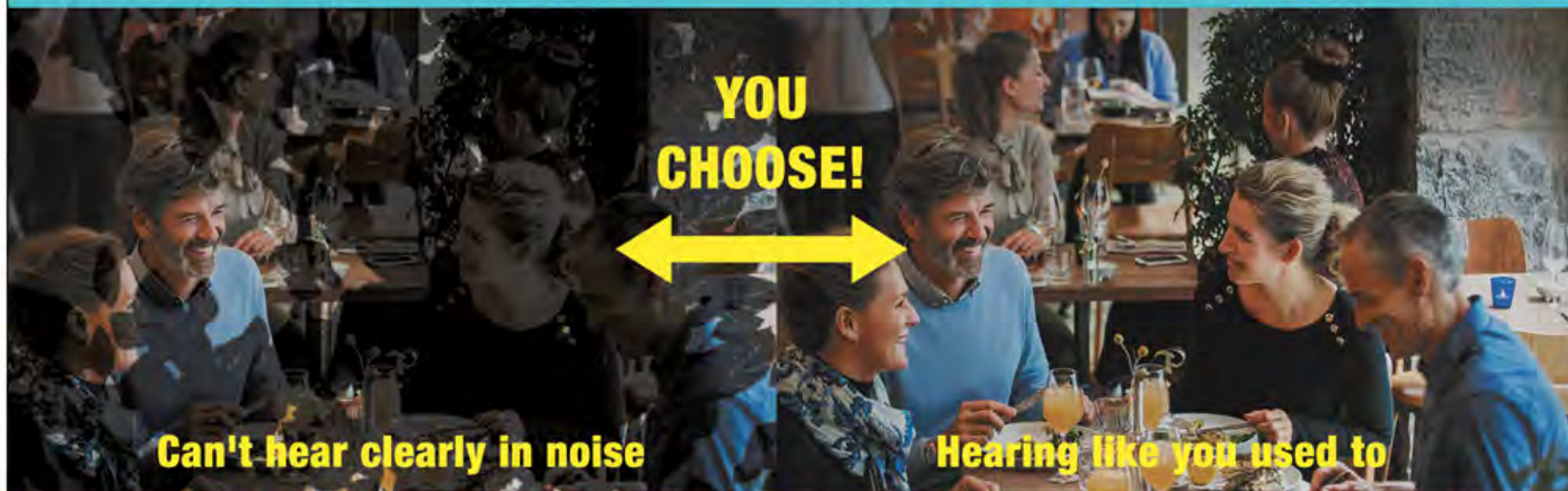
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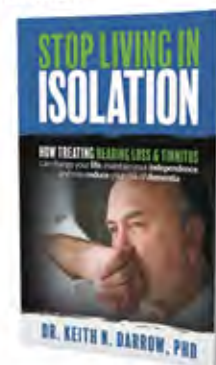
Here Are The **Top-3** Reasons I Treat My Own Hearing Loss:

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WORLD SIGHT DAY: SHINING A LIGHT ON GLOBAL VISION HEALTH

Every year on the second Thursday of October, World Sight Day is celebrated worldwide to raise awareness about vision-related issues and advocate for better eye care. This global event serves as a reminder of the importance of preserving our sight and addressing the challenges that millions of people face due to vision impairment and blindness. In this article, we will delve into the significance of World Sight Day, its goals, and the urgent need to prioritize vision health on a global scale.

The Significance of World Sight Day

World Sight Day is an annual event organized by the International Agency for the Prevention of Blindness (IAPB) in collaboration with various eye care organizations, NGOs, governments, and healthcare professionals around the world. This day serves as a platform to highlight the following key issues:

- **Raising Awareness:** World Sight Day plays a crucial role in increasing public awareness about eye health, the prevention of blindness, and the importance of regular eye check-ups.
- **Advocacy:** It provides an opportunity for individuals and organizations to advocate for better access to eye care services, particularly in underserved communities.
- **Collaboration:** World Sight Day fosters collaboration among governments, healthcare providers, and advocacy groups to address vision health disparities and implement effective strategies for prevention and treatment.
- **Education:** It promotes education about common eye conditions, the significance of early diagnosis, and the role of a healthy lifestyle in maintaining good vision.

Global Vision Challenges

While significant progress has been made in improving eye health worldwide, numerous challenges persist, affecting millions of people, particularly in low and middle-income countries:

- **Uncorrected Refractive Errors:** Refractive errors such as nearsightedness, farsightedness, and astigmatism remain a widespread issue, preventing

people from accessing proper vision correction and hindering their daily activities.

- **Cataracts:** Cataracts, a clouding of the eye's lens, are a leading cause of blindness globally. However, cataract surgery is a highly effective treatment that can restore vision.

- **Glaucoma:** Glaucoma, often referred to as the "silent thief of sight," is a progressive eye disease that can lead to irreversible blindness if not detected and treated early.

- **Diabetic Retinopathy:** As diabetes rates continue to rise, so does the prevalence of diabetic retinopathy, a condition that can lead to vision loss if not managed appropriately.

- **Access to Eye Care:** Many individuals, particularly in rural and remote areas, still lack access to essential eye care services, including eye examinations and surgeries.

The Goals of World Sight Day

World Sight Day has specific goals that are aligned with its mission to promote global vision health:

- **Raise Awareness:** The primary goal is to raise awareness about avoidable blindness and vision impairment, emphasizing the importance of regular eye examinations.
- **Advocate for Equity:** World Sight Day calls for action to reduce vision health disparities by ensuring equitable access to eye care services for all.
- **Mobilize Resources:** It aims to mobilize resources and support for eye health programs and initiatives, including research, treatment, and prevention.



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- **Promote Collaboration:** World Sight Day encourages collaboration among governments, healthcare providers, NGOs, and communities to work together in addressing vision health challenges.

What You Can Do on World Sight Day

Participating in World Sight Day can be as simple as spreading awareness and supporting eye health initiatives. Here are some ways you can get involved:

- **Schedule an Eye Examination:** If you haven't had an eye check-up recently, World Sight Day is an excellent opportunity to prioritize your vision health.
- **Educate Yourself and Others:** Learn about common eye conditions, the importance of early detection, and share this knowledge with friends and family.
- **Support Vision Charities:** Consider donating to organizations that provide eye care services and vision correction to underserved communities.
- **Advocate for Eye Health:** Use your voice to advocate for better access to eye care services in your community and beyond.

World Sight Day serves as a powerful reminder of the importance of vision health on a global scale. It highlights the progress made in eye care and the significant challenges that still need to be addressed. By coming together on this day, we can raise awareness, advocate for change, and work towards a world where preventable blindness and vision impairment are no longer barriers to living healthy, fulfilling lives. Let us commit to preserving our sight and ensuring that everyone, everywhere, has the opportunity to enjoy the gift of vision.

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Paragon Healthcare

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Mental Health and Neurological Challenges

When living with neurological deficits, mental health is often negatively impacted. Lasene offers a positive and unique approach to improving an individual's quality of life.

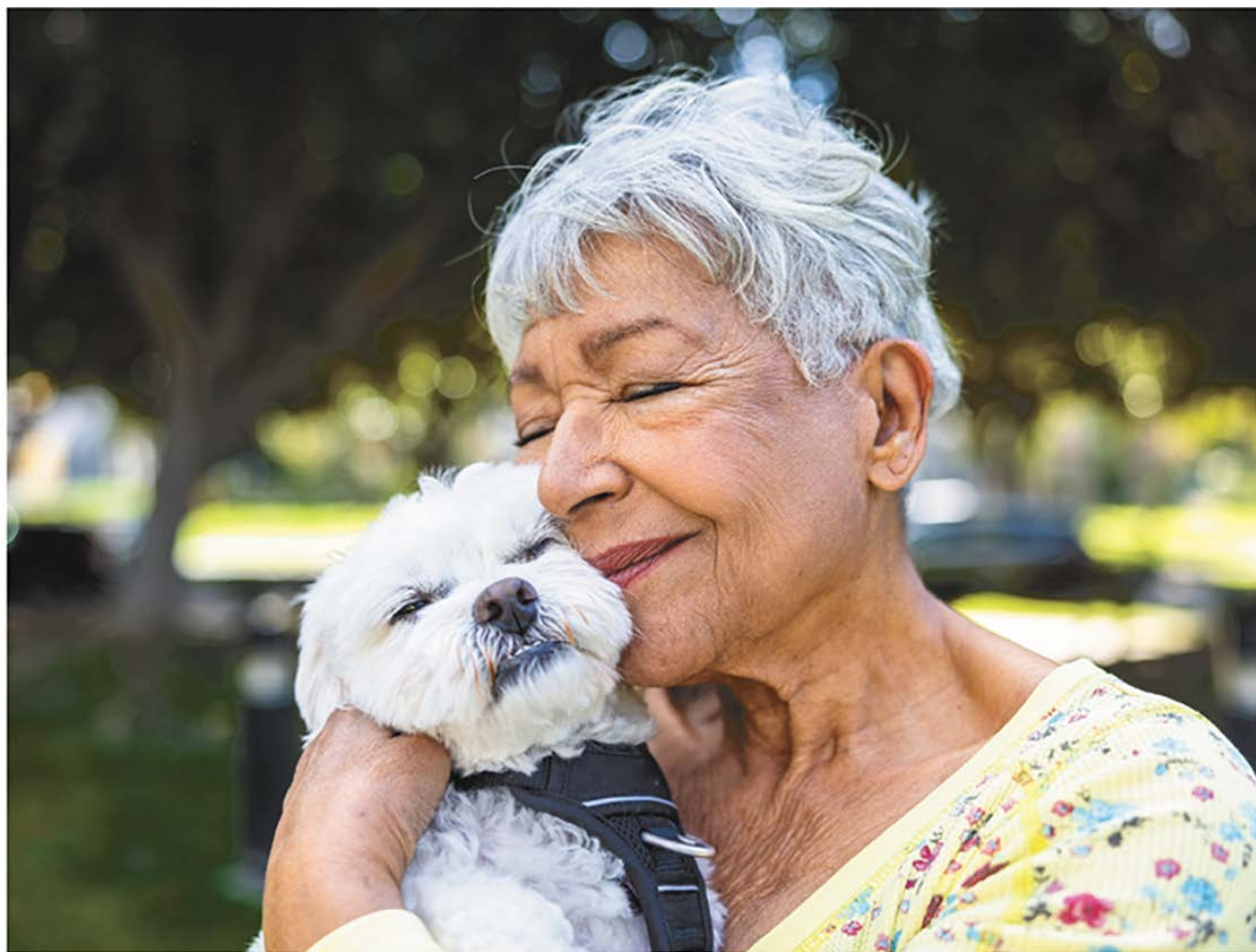
What happens when you are diagnosed with a neurological disorder? Some research indicates that 1 out of 3 individuals diagnosed with a neurological disorder will experience depression. Among individuals with neurological diseases, depression is associated with greater cognitive deficits, more significant impairments in activities of daily living, and a lower quality of life.

Lasene's goals are to reduce the complications of Parkinson's disease, brain trauma, and other neurological disorders while improving the QoL (Quality of Life) for each individual who participates in the Lasene program.

The human brain is amazing! It is truly inspiring that science and research continue to learn about the brain and how it works, as well as what causes difficulties in life. It is through recent technological advances that we can find ways to help the brain achieve much-needed functions such as sleep and memory.

Lasene is a company that provides advanced technology and treatments for fostering functional improvement for those individuals living with neurological conditions such as Parkinson's, traumatic brain injury, and other conditions. Lasene offers the chance not only to achieve a better quality of life but also to address clearer thinking to manage additional complications such as depression.

As an example, if you are feeling depressed following a diagnosis and/or living with Parkinson's, wouldn't you want to try to find help in improving your quality of life while continuing to address your neurological difficulties through treatment? Lasene does not promise a cure for degenerative complications; however, typically over a six-month program, Lasene can provide advanced technology to rehabilitate areas of the nerve, muscle, and skeletal systems that are affected by neurological ailments.



Lasene's programs have resulted in an overwhelming majority of patients treated seeing hugely positive results that resonate in all parts of their lives. Improvements in life functions from individuals who have been through the Lasene program include:

- Improved memory, thought processes, word search
- Improved posture, gait, balance
- Improved sleep, mood, digestion

Are you or someone you know living with neurological deficits, such as Parkinson's, Early Alzheimer's, or Brain Injury? Are you experiencing chronic pain or difficulty sleeping? Lasene Neural Therapeutics – Improve your Quality of Life, experience the power of restorative care in multiple areas.



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About Us

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

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

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

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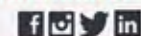
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Understanding Breast Cancer:

A Comprehensive Guide to Medications for Treatment

Breast cancer is a pervasive and potentially life-threatening disease that affects millions of individuals worldwide. While early detection through regular screenings and improved awareness has led to better outcomes, the journey of battling breast cancer often involves various treatment modalities, including medications. In this article, we will explore the different types of medications used for breast cancer treatment, shedding light on the innovative approaches that have emerged in recent years.

Chemotherapy

Chemotherapy has been a cornerstone in breast cancer treatment for decades. It involves the use of powerful drugs that target rapidly dividing cancer cells throughout the body. Although chemotherapy can have significant side effects, such as nausea and hair loss, it remains an essential part of treatment, especially for aggressive forms of breast cancer.

Hormone Therapy

Hormone therapy is primarily used for breast cancers that are hormone receptor-positive. These tumors grow in response to hormones like estrogen and progesterone. Medications like Tamoxifen and Aromatase Inhibitors are used to block the effects of these hormones, effectively slowing or stopping the growth of hormone-sensitive tumors.

Targeted Therapies

Targeted therapies are a newer class of medications that specifically target cancer cells while sparing healthy ones. Trastuzumab (Herceptin) and Pertuzumab (Perjeta) are examples used for HER2-positive breast cancers. They work by blocking the signals that encourage cancer cell growth.

Immunotherapy

Immunotherapy has gained prominence in breast cancer treatment. Drugs like Pembrolizumab and Atezolizumab enhance the body's immune system to identify and destroy cancer cells. Immunotherapy is especially promising for triple-negative breast cancers, which lack hormone receptors.

PARP Inhibitors

Poly ADP-ribose polymerase (PARP) inhibitors, such as Olaparib and Talazoparib, are used for patients with certain gene mutations like BRCA1 or BRCA2. These medications interfere with the DNA repair process in cancer cells, leading to their demise.

Radiation Sensitizers

Medications like Veliparib can enhance the effectiveness of radiation therapy. They make cancer cells more susceptible to the damaging effects of radiation, improving the chances of eradicating cancer cells.

Neoadjuvant and Adjuvant Medications

Neoadjuvant medications are administered before surgery to shrink tumors and make them easier to remove. Adjuvant medications are given after surgery to reduce the risk of cancer recurrence. The choice of medication depends on the specific characteristics of the cancer.

Combination Therapies

Often, a combination of medications is employed to maximize treatment effectiveness and minimize side effects. This may involve combining chemotherapy with targeted therapies or hormone therapy.

Clinical Trials

Breast cancer research continues to evolve, with ongoing clinical trials exploring new medications and treatment approaches. Participation in these trials offers hope for patients who have exhausted standard treatment options.

In conclusion, the landscape of breast cancer treatment has seen remarkable advancements in recent years. Medications tailored to the specific characteristics of the cancer, along with innovative therapies like immunotherapy, have provided new avenues for fighting this disease. However, it's crucial for patients and their healthcare teams to work closely together to determine the most appropriate treatment plan based on the individual's diagnosis and needs. Breast cancer treatment is not one-size-fits-all, and ongoing research is paving the way for even more effective medications and therapies in the future.

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Fareston	\$177.00	\$50.00	\$127.00
Faslodex	\$196.00	\$50.00	\$146.00
Herceptin	\$4,500.00	\$50.00	\$4,450.00
Ibrance	\$13,000.00	\$50.00	\$12,950.00
Keytruda	\$5,747.00	\$50.00	\$5,697.00
Kisqali	\$15,729.00	\$50.00	\$15,679.00
Lynparza	\$17,000.00	\$50.00	\$16,950.00
Perjeta	\$5,900.00	\$50.00	\$5,850.00
Piqray	\$19,599.00	\$50.00	\$19,549.00
Talzenna	\$18,452.00	\$50.00	\$18,402.00
Tecentriq	\$14,540.00	\$50.00	\$14,490.00
Tukysa	\$18,500.00	\$50.00	\$18,450.00
Tykerb	\$789.00	\$50.00	\$739.00
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Liver Health and Therapeutic Agents

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

Your liver health may not be top of mind, but the minute it malfunctioned there wouldn't be much else on your mind. Cirrhosis, in which liver cells are replaced with scar tissue, can prevent your liver from doing its critical jobs. So can nonalcoholic fatty liver disease, a fast-growing epidemic among the obese, which can lead to cirrhosis. If your liver stopped working, toxins would accumulate, you couldn't digest your food and medications would never leave your body.

In fact — you can't live a week without your liver.

"It's an organ you could easily trash if you don't take good care of it," says Rohit Satoskar, MD, of the MedStar Georgetown Transplant Institute. "And once you trash it, it's gone." Your liver is about the size of a football and sits under your lower ribcage on the right side. It has several important things to do. It helps clean your blood by getting rid of harmful chemicals that your body makes. It makes a liquid called bile, which helps you break down fat from food. And it also stores sugar called glucose, which gives you a quick energy boost when you need it.

There's nothing tricky about keeping your liver in good shape. It's all about a healthy lifestyle, says Ray Chung, MD, medical director of the liver transplant program at Massachusetts General Hospital. "Taking care of your liver is far more about avoiding what's bad than it is about eating or drinking things that are particularly nourishing to the liver," he says.

The liver is your body's largest internal organ, weighing between 3 and 5 pounds. Your liver is located on the right side of your upper body, below the lungs, taking up most of the space in your rib cage. The gallbladder, which stores bile made in the liver, is found tucked under your liver. Your liver is made up of two separate sections, or lobes: the larger right lobe and the smaller left lobe. These two lobes are separated by tissue which anchors your liver in place.

Unlike the lungs or heart, we cannot feel our liver working. Your liver is an incredibly hard-working organ with more than 500 different vital functions. Only your brain has more functions than the liver. Many of the liver's functions are related to your metabolism. These metabolic functions allow you to convert food to energy, break down food to basic building blocks needed by your body and eliminate waste.



The liver...

- Produces bile
- Produces proteins for blood plasma
- Produces cholesterol and special proteins to help carry fats through the body
- Converts unused glucose into glycogen for storage
- Regulates levels of amino acids in blood
- Stores iron processed from hemoglobin
- Converts poisonous ammonia, made during digestion, to urea
- Processes drugs and other poisonous substances to your body
- Regulates blood clotting (or our ability to stop bleeding)
- Fights infections by making immune factors and removing bacteria from the bloodstream
- Removes bilirubin from red blood cells

Non-alcoholic fatty liver disease (NAFLD) is one of the most common chronic liver diseases. Astaxanthin, the active ingredient in Mitopak is a carotenoid, and beneficial effects of astaxanthin, including anti-oxidative, anti-inflammatory, and anti-tumor activity, have been identified.

Studies have shown that most carotenes have anti-aging, free radical scavenging, antioxidant, and anti-cancer effects, and have been widely used in the fields of medicine, food, cosmetics, and feed. Astaxanthin is the only carotenoid to penetrate the blood-brain and retinal barriers. It is frequently used as an antioxidant to treat brain injury and cardiovascular diseases and has been extensively studied in clinical practice. In addition, astaxanthin has shown anti-cancer effects in many cancers, including liver cancer, colon cancer, bladder cancer, oral cancer, and leukemia. In addition, many animal experiments have proved that astaxanthin plays an important role in regulating sugar metabolism, improving immunity and improving motor function.

The Role of Astaxanthin in Liver Diseases

Astaxanthin has been used in the prevention and treatment of a variety of systemic diseases in vivo due to its various biological activities. In recent years, researchers have confirmed that astaxanthin plays an important role in preventing acute liver injury, alleviating insulin resistance and NAFLD, liver fibrosis and liver cancer.

Liver Fibrosis

Liver fibrosis is a key link in the deterioration of chronic liver diseases such as viral hepatitis and fatty liver. Without effective intervention, 75–80% of these diseases can develop into cirrhosis, which seriously endangers human health. The reversibility of these factors also provides an important research target for the reversal of hepatic fibrosis. The mechanism of liver fibrosis is complex, involving the regulation of histopathology, cytology, cytokines, and their molecular levels. Mitopak can potentially prevent and treat liver diseases by inhibiting inflammation and improving glycolipid metabolism at the mitochondrial level.

Vetirus Pharmaceuticals is based in Naples, Florida and London, England and are 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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COLON CANCER: Detecting, Preventing, and Surviving

Colon cancer, also referred to as colorectal cancer, is a formidable adversary in the realm of cancer. In this article, we will explore the nuances of colon cancer, from its insidious growth to strategies for prevention and survival.

Understanding Colon Cancer

Colon cancer begins when abnormal cells in the lining of the colon or rectum grow uncontrollably. Over time, these cells can form polyps, which can turn cancerous if not detected and removed.

Signs and Symptoms

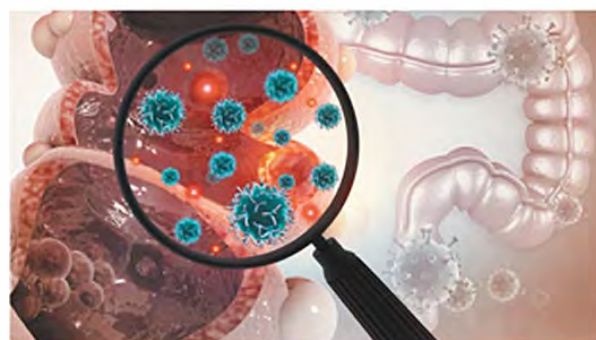
Recognizing the signs and symptoms of colon cancer is pivotal in early detection. Common indicators include:

- **Change in Bowel Habits:** Persistent diarrhea or constipation.
- **Blood in Stool:** Often appearing as dark, tarry stools or bright red blood.
- **Abdominal Discomfort:** Cramps, gas, or pain that persists.
- **Unexplained Weight Loss:** A sudden drop in weight without apparent cause.
- **Fatigue:** A feeling of constant tiredness.

Risk Factors

Certain factors can elevate your risk of developing colon cancer:

- **Age:** The risk increases with age, especially after 50.
- **Family History:** A family history of colon cancer or polyps can raise your risk.
- **Diet:** A diet high in red and processed meats and low in fiber is associated with a higher risk.
- **Lifestyle:** Smoking, excessive alcohol consumption, and physical inactivity are detrimental.
- **Inflammatory Bowel Diseases:** Conditions like Crohn's disease or ulcerative colitis can increase susceptibility.
- **Obesity:** Being overweight or obese is a known risk factor.
- **Genetic Syndromes:** Conditions like Lynch syndrome and familial adenomatous polyposis (FAP) can substantially increase risk.



Preventing Colon Cancer

While some risk factors, like family history or genetics, are beyond our control, there are steps we can take to reduce the risk:

- **Regular Screenings:** Colonoscopies and other screening tests can detect and remove polyps before they become cancerous.
- **Dietary Changes:** Embrace a diet rich in fruits, vegetables, and whole grains while reducing red meat consumption.
- **Physical Activity:** Regular exercise lowers colon cancer risk and promotes overall health.
- **Moderate Alcohol Consumption:** Limit alcohol intake to reduce risk.
- **Quit Smoking:** Smoking cessation is paramount for decreasing risk.
- **Maintain a Healthy Weight:** Strive to achieve and maintain a healthy weight.
- **Awareness:** Be informed about your family's medical history to take proactive measures.

Surviving Colon Cancer

A colon cancer diagnosis can be daunting, but advancements in treatment have improved survival rates. Treatment options include surgery, chemotherapy, radiation therapy, targeted therapy, and immunotherapy. The choice of treatment depends on the stage of cancer and individual factors.

Colon cancer is a formidable adversary, but knowledge and proactive steps can significantly reduce its impact. Regular screenings, a healthy lifestyle, and awareness of risk factors are pivotal in its prevention. For those facing a colon cancer diagnosis, remember that advances in medical science offer hope and survival. With early detection and comprehensive treatment, it's possible to overcome colon cancer and lead a fulfilling life.



Daniel Stanciu, MD

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

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



Joel Pelissier, MD

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



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Our Law Firm Leads with Kindness and Community at our Core - Free Consultations

By Kelly L. Fayer, P.A.

Being concerned about the well-being of an ageing loved one, how you will afford long-term care, or what will happen to those you love after you pass away, are all valid reasons to seek the services of an attorney. At The Law Office of Kelly L. Fayer, P.A., we are passionate about helping the people of our community answer difficult questions and implement solutions that help prepare them for the future. Our skilled, compassionate attorney has 25+ years of experience and will work closely with you from start to finish. Whether you are looking to plan your estate, establish a guardianship, need help creating a trust, or are struggling to navigate Florida's probate process, we can offer the attentive, personal guidance you need to achieve your goals.

No matter your circumstances, our estate planning services in Fort Myers are designed to guide you through the planning process and include assistance with a wide range of instruments, from wills and trusts, to advance directives and powers of attorney. We can continue to provide services should you no longer be able to make decisions, and in the event of your illness or passing.

This article is dedicated to how a skilled attorney can assist you and your family whether you have the ability to plan, or are facing an emergency.



Estate Planning: A skilled estate attorney helps clients create comprehensive estate plans based on their specific needs and desires. This may involve drafting and reviewing important documents such as wills, trusts, powers of attorney, and advance healthcare directives. By understanding each client's unique circumstances, an estate lawyer can design a plan that minimizes tax liabilities, preserves assets, and ensures a smooth distribution of property upon death.

Probate Administration: When a loved one passes away, a skilled estate attorney can guide the family through the probate process. They assist with gathering and valuing assets, preparing and filing necessary court documents, handling creditor claims, and distributing assets to beneficiaries in accordance with the decedent's wishes or state laws.

Trust Administration: Estate attorneys also provide guidance on trust administration, helping trustees fulfill their fiduciary duties and ensuring compliance with trust provisions and legal requirements. They assist with asset management, accounting, tax planning, and the distribution of trust assets to beneficiaries.

Guardianship: There may come an unfortunate time when a loved one is no longer able to care for themselves. If an aging relative is suffering severe mental decline or sustains a serious injury, it may be prudent to consider guardianship. By formally appointing a legal guardian, your loved one will have someone legally responsible for protecting their interests. A skilled estate attorney can assist with this process, as well as helping to complete all of the legal requirements to maintain guardianship.

Our law office can assist you with all your estate needs. With kindness and community and the core of what we do, we will continue to offer **free consultations** in honor of kindness. Please call 239.431.9369 and mention this article to receive a confidential consultation.

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WEIGHT LOSS MAKES YOUR BONES AND JOINTS HAPPY

By Physicians Rehabilitation

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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Schedule a weight loss consultation with Physicians Rehab and bring your copy of Health and Wellness Magazine for a \$100 DISCOUNT Off your initial consultation and injection. We are serious about your health and wellness!!

Why Physical Therapy is an Important Part of Orthopedic Care

After surgery or a traumatic, degenerative or over-use injury to a bone, muscle, joint, ligament or tendon, you need to recover flexibility, mobility, and strength.

Absent a medical emergency and depending upon the nature of the problem, your orthopedic physician or surgeon may recommend a course of physical therapy to help you recover more quickly and improve function.

Physical therapy as a profession is responsible for restoring function and improving your quality of life in the home and community. Physical therapists and physical therapist assistants who specialize in orthopedic medicine, such as those who work with the orthopedic surgeons at Orthopedic Specialists of SW Florida, are especially well-suited to guide you through the recovery process.

Moving Forward

While there are many different techniques, one of the most important steps in the healing process is to get you moving again as soon as possible.

When patients experience an orthopedic injury, key elements of their musculoskeletal system are disrupted, which can result in pain and ultimately limit their ability to perform even basic daily tasks.

Much of the physical therapy we prescribe is targeted at "re-balancing" your musculoskeletal system to help you better perform functions that matter to you.



We always look at the most conservative treatment available to help our patients. That may include medications, injections, splinting and physical or occupational therapy. Only then do we consider other options such as surgery.

Taking that First Step

Your physical therapist will perform a comprehensive evaluation and get the most detailed information available on the underlying cause of your presenting complaint. It's also important to hear, in your words how your problem impacts your daily life.

Your physical therapist will then develop a treatment plan based on these findings, which will be modified as you respond to treatment. This usually consists of specific exercises, hands-on manual treatments, and the control of inflammation and pain.

Physical therapy is discontinued once a) your goals have been met; b) you have reached a plateau or the maximum medical improvement; or c) your condition does not improve. Typically, you will go back to

see your Orthopedic physicians or surgeon after finishing a course of treatment, so further care plans may be developed if necessary.

For patients who undergo orthopedic surgery, it's highly likely physical therapy will be a part of your post-operative recovery. Physical therapy also has its place before a major orthopedic surgery such as hip and knee replacements.

Once we've "fixed" your issue surgically, your physical therapist will help ensure you are progressing as expected while protecting the healing process.

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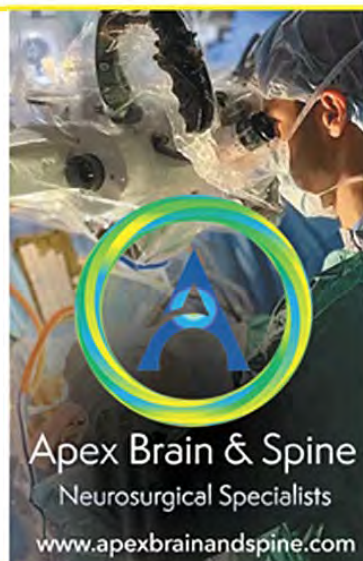
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By Ricardo S. Bocanegra, D.D.S.

Is Invisalign Treatment Right for You?



Four million people in the United States have braces at any one time. According to statistics, 25% of them are adults.

However, most adults would prefer not to have train track-style braces, as it can impact their self-esteem and detract from a professional appearance. But how can those who don't want the appearance of braces have their teeth fixed?

Enter Invisalign. With this method, you can fix any crooked teeth without ever looking like you've had braces at all. But, not everyone is a candidate.

In this article, we'll go over some of the signs that you are an Invisalign candidate, and can speak to your dentist or orthodontist about starting the process.

What Is Invisalign?

Invisalign is a series of clear trays that change your teeth's positioning over time. You'll get a custom mold made of your teeth and then you'll receive the first tray. This will shift the shape of your teeth slightly. Then, you'll receive another tray that will change your teeth ever so slightly even more.

After a series of trays, you'll have the straight teeth you originally set out to achieve. This way, you get the benefit of braces without having to wear them visibly.

Next, we'll go over some of the signs that you're a candidate for Invisalign.

1. Your Case Is Straightforward

Most cases of crooked teeth can be fixed with Invisalign. The system can work for those who have underbites, overbites, crossbites, open bites or those who have gaps or crowded teeth. But, that doesn't mean it works for everyone.

Your dentist or orthodontist will be able to assess your case and let you know if Invisalign is right for you. In more complex cases, you may require dental surgery, or you may not be able to have your teeth straightened without the use of traditional braces.

2. You're Responsible

One reason Invisalign is only for people over a certain age is that you must commit to wearing them for them to work. Invisalign trays are removable, meaning you can take them out if you wish. The system relies on you wearing them on your teeth for a set number of hours per day. In some cases, this means you'll have to wear them all of the time, except when you eat.

Because you can remove them, some people decide they won't bother wearing them. They may even lose them. These types of people likely won't progress very far with Invisalign, because they'll stall their own results.

If you aren't very committed to changing your teeth, or you know you lose important items easily, Invisalign probably isn't the solution for you.

3. You've Got All of Your Adult Teeth

Most orthodontists won't treat teeth cosmetically unless you have all of your adult teeth. That's because they can't predict how children's adult teeth will grow in.

In order to have Invisalign, you must have all of your adult teeth. In some cases, there are adults who still have a baby tooth or two that is lingering. If this is the case, you may require further orthodontic work before you're able to start the Invisalign process.

4. You've Got Good Oral Hygiene

Having good oral hygiene is a must for Invisalign trays. Not only must your mouth be healthy, but you must be able to take care of your trays so that they don't cause infections or further issues.

This goes along with the point that you must be responsible in order to wear Invisalign trays. You must clean them at regular intervals and take good care of the trays. Otherwise, you may have to pay quite a bit to replace them.

Additionally, you will need to ensure your mouth is free of disease or other problems and that you brush regularly before a dentist or orthodontist will consider you.



5. You Don't Smoke

As your Invisalign trays will be in most of the day, you can't smoke or use tobacco. This can interfere with the trays themselves, as well as make them dirty. If you smoke too often and remove your trays while you smoke, you may find that your Invisalign isn't as effective as it could be because you aren't wearing them for enough time during the day. Additionally, smoking is incredibly unhealthy for not just your teeth, but your entire body. If you want to have Invisalign and smoke, now might be the best time to quit.

6. You're Old Enough

Not only do you need to have all of your adult teeth, but you also need to be old enough to wear Invisalign. There is no upper age limit, and you can have your teeth straightened at any point in your life. But, most orthodontists aren't keen to give sets to young teens or children, regardless of if they have all of their adult teeth.

This is partially because the Invisalign trays are removable and must be looked after. This gives the wearer an added responsibility that they may not have with traditional braces that cannot be removed.

Am I an Invisalign Candidate?

Are you an Invisalign candidate? If you meet the six points listed above, there is a good chance that you'll benefit from the Invisalign system. Your dentist or orthodontist may have more to discuss with you about your individual case, so be prepared when you make your appointment for yourself, or for your teenager.

After reading this article, if you feel you might be interested in starting the Invisalign system, contact us to set up an appointment. We can assess your situation and discuss whether you're an appropriate candidate.

You may reach us at 239-482-8806 or email us at info@portofinodental.org

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Unlocking Relief: CBD's Potential in Eczema Management

Eczema, or atopic dermatitis, is a challenging skin condition affecting millions globally. Its hallmark symptoms include itching, inflammation, and discomfort. While conventional treatments exist, some individuals seek alternative solutions, and one substance that has garnered attention in recent years is CBD, or cannabidiol. In this article, we'll explore the potential of CBD in alleviating eczema symptoms.

Understanding Eczema

Eczema is a multifaceted condition, often driven by genetic, environmental, and immune system factors. It causes the skin to become red, dry, itchy, and even painful. While treatments like topical steroids and emollients provide relief to many, some patients continue to experience symptoms, prompting a quest for alternatives.

Exploring CBD

CBD is a non-psychoactive compound found in the cannabis plant, known for its potential therapeutic properties. Research suggests that CBD may hold promise in managing eczema symptoms due to its interaction with the endocannabinoid system (ECS).

Anti-Inflammatory Effects

CBD is celebrated for its anti-inflammatory capabilities. By interacting with receptors in the ECS, it can help modulate the body's inflammatory responses. In the context of eczema, this could mean reduced redness, swelling, and irritation.

Itch Relief

One of the most challenging aspects of eczema is the persistent itchiness. CBD's interaction with the

ECS may help alleviate this symptom, offering individuals a chance to escape the itch-scratch cycle that exacerbates their condition.

Hydration and Skin Barrier Function

Eczema often leads to a compromised skin barrier, causing increased water loss and dryness. CBD may help by enhancing the skin's natural lipid production, improving hydration, and reducing dryness.

Using CBD for Eczema

If you're considering CBD as part of your eczema management strategy, here are some essential points to keep in mind:

- 1. Consult a Professional:** Always consult with a healthcare provider or dermatologist before starting any new treatment, including CBD.
- 2. Quality Matters:** Choose high-quality CBD products from reputable sources, preferably those that have undergone third-party testing.
- 3. Patch Test:** Before applying CBD extensively, perform a patch test on a small area of unaffected skin to ensure you don't have any adverse reactions.
- 4. Start Slow:** Begin with a low dose of CBD and monitor how your skin responds. Gradually adjust the dosage if necessary.
- 5. Complement, Don't Replace:** CBD should be viewed as a complementary therapy, not a replacement for prescribed medications or skincare routines.

While the potential benefits of CBD for eczema are encouraging, it's crucial to approach it cautiously and with guidance from a healthcare professional. CBD may offer relief through its anti-inflammatory, itch-reducing, and skin-barrier-improving properties. However, individual responses can vary, and more research is needed to fully understand its efficacy. In your journey to manage eczema, exploring CBD as an additional tool in your arsenal may be worth considering, but it should always be done under the guidance of medical experts.

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WHAT IS THE MIND DIET?

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

The possibility of losing our cognitive abilities can be even scarier than the loss of physical abilities as we age. There are an estimated 5.5 million Americans with Alzheimer's, affecting millions more people caregiving for loved ones affected by the devastating disease, with no cure at the present moment. Therefore, many seniors and their families are wondering what they can do to be proactive and prevent the onset of Alzheimer's.

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

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

HISTORY OF THE MIND DIET

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

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

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

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

FOODS TO EMPHASIZE

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

FOODS TO AVOID

Some foods to avoid include:

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

Butter and margarine: less than a tablespoon daily.

Cheese: less than one serving per week.

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

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









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

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

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A FIVE-OUNCE GLASS OF RED WINE EACH DAY 		
NO MORE THAN ONE TABLESPOON A DAY OF BUTTER OR MARGARINE; CHOOSE OLIVE OIL INSTEAD 	CHEESE, FRIED FOOD AND FAST FOOD NO MORE THAN ONCE A WEEK 	
PASTRIES AND SWEETS LESS THAN FIVE TIMES A WEEK 		

DEPRESSION—LEADING CAUSE OF DISABILITY WORLDWIDE

Depression is a pervasive mental health condition that has been identified as the leading cause of disability worldwide. WHO (World Health Organization) reports that close to 280 million people carry this diagnosis, noting that in the US approximately 21 million suffer from depression. Most people who have depression do not attempt or die by suicide, but depression is linked to a greater risk of suicide. Researchers estimate that about 60% of people who lose their lives to suicide have a mood disorder such as depression or bipolar disease. Depression affects all walks of life although some demographic groups, such as women and individuals with a family history, may be more vulnerable. Furthermore, it affects the young noting that by age 14, 50% of all lifetimes mental health conditions have begun and that by age 24, the number is 75%. Given these statistics and the sequelae of disability and potential death, it is imperative that we raise awareness and provide access to the tools and education to help and treat those with this disease.

Common symptoms of depression can manifest as a persistent (2 weeks minimum) low mood or loss of interest in previously enjoyed activities, along with additional symptoms like changes in sleep patterns, appetite, energy levels and self-esteem. Mental health professionals commonly use the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-5) criteria to make a formal diagnosis and to classify the severity. A common screen used by health professionals is the Patient Health Questionnaire also known as PHQ-9. A comprehensive evaluation usually includes a psychological assessment, physical examination as well as family

and personal history. Early diagnosis is crucial because it enables timely intervention improving the chances of successful treatment and recovery.

Conventional treatments for depression typically involve a combination of psychotherapy, medications and lifestyle changes. Psychotherapy typically consists of cognitive-behavioral therapy (CBT), interpersonal therapy and psychodynamic therapy which commonly are used to help individuals identify any negative thought patterns and behaviors. Antidepressant medications, such as selective serotonin receptor inhibitors (SSRIs) or serotonin-norepinephrine reuptake inhibitors (SNRIs) are prescribed to help rebalance brain chemicals (neurotransmitters) that help regulate mood. Lifestyle changes such as physical activity/exercise, nutrition, sleep and management techniques such as mindfulness can help complement therapy and medications. Also joining support groups or seeking the support of friends and peers can provide additional emotional support.

Complementary treatment strategies and plans may enhance conventional approaches as well as improve overall wellbeing for those with depression. Mindfulness and medication often help manage stress, reduce rumination and improve emotional regulation. Nutritional therapy aiming for a balanced diet rich in omega 3 fatty acids, vitamin D and other nutrients can support brain health and mood stability. Physical activity/exercise helps release endorphins which can help alleviate symptoms. Also, many find forms of yoga helpful in that mindfulness is combined with motion. Acupuncture has also been shown to help some individuals find relief. Supplements such as SAME, St John's wort, adaptogens,

B complex vitamins, calming herbs may also help but warrant medical supervision as can interact with prescribed medications. Alternative therapies such as art, music, dance and animal-related therapy can also provide additional outlets for support.

Substance use disorder (SUD) and depression are bidirectional in that in many both exist and that if one disease is untreated or relapse occurs then the other worsens in severity. It is imperative that both disorders are managed and treated; awareness of this relationship must be acknowledged as the path of destruction and despair soon becomes apparent. Substance use is often a sign of self-medication, noting that in some studies up to 33% of those with major depressive disorders will also be diagnosed with SUD upon presentation.

Depression is a widespread condition that affects adults across the globe. With the right knowledge and resources, individuals can seek timely diagnosis and treatment, combining conventional and complementary strategies to regain control of their lives. By understanding depression's statistics, warning signs and treatment options, we can work collaboratively to combat this mental health challenge.

Resources:

NAMI (National Alliance for Mental Illness)

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EMSELLA CHAIR

The Ultimate Baby Shower Gift for Postpartum Moms

By Joseph Gauta, MD, FACOG

Welcoming a new baby into the world is undoubtedly a joyous occasion, and celebrating it with thoughtful gifts is a cherished tradition. But what do you get for a seasoned mom who has all the baby essentials like cribs and strollers? Look no further than the Emsella Chair, a revolutionary magnetic chair designed to help women regain their pelvic floor strength after childbirth. In this article, we'll explore the benefits of this remarkable device and why it makes the perfect baby shower gift for moms who have been through it all.

The Postpartum Pelvic Challenge

Childbirth is a beautiful and transformative experience, but it can take a toll on a woman's body, particularly the pelvic floor muscles. These muscles play a crucial role in supporting the bladder, uterus, and rectum. After giving birth, they often become weakened, leading to issues such as pelvic organ prolapse and urinary incontinence later in life.

The Emsella Chair Solution

Enter the Emsella Chair – a game-changer in postpartum recovery. This innovative chair employs electromagnetic technology that, with each session, simulates the effect of 11,000 Kegel exercises. A full treatment typically consists of six sessions, and the results are nothing short of astonishing.

How It Works

The Emsella Chair utilizes High-Intensity Focused Electromagnetic (HIFEM®) technology to stimulate the pelvic floor muscles. When a patient sits in the chair, electromagnetic waves penetrate deep into the muscles, causing rapid contractions. These contractions are involuntary, mimicking the natural process of Kegel exercises but with much greater intensity.

The Benefits

Efficiency: One of the most remarkable aspects of the Emsella Chair is its efficiency. Busy moms don't always have the time or energy for traditional exercises, but a 30-minute session in the chair is equivalent to hours of manual Kegel exercises.



Non-Invasive: Unlike surgical procedures, the Emsella Chair is non-invasive. There are no incisions, anesthesia, or recovery time required. Moms can return to their daily activities immediately after a session.

Effective Results: The chair's ability to rapidly strengthen the pelvic floor muscles can help prevent and alleviate issues like urinary incontinence and pelvic organ prolapse, common concerns for women who have given birth.

When to Start

Dr. Gauta, a renowned expert in women's health, recommends waiting for approximately three months after childbirth before beginning Emsella Chair treatment. This allows the body time to heal and ensures the best results.

The Perfect Baby Shower Gift

Now, you may be wondering why the Emsella Chair makes such an ideal baby shower gift. Well, consider this: while cribs and strollers are undoubtedly essential, the gift of postpartum recovery is equally invaluable. Helping a mom regain her pelvic floor strength contributes to her overall well-being and quality of life.

In a time when self-care is crucial, the Emsella Chair is a thoughtful and forward-thinking gift. It shows that you care not only about the new addition to the family but also about the health and happiness of the remarkable woman who brought that new life into the world.

When pondering the perfect baby shower gift for a mom who's seen it all, think beyond the onesies and baby blankets. Consider gifting the Emsella Chair, a remarkable device that can help her reclaim her strength and confidence postpartum. With its non-invasive approach and impressive results, it's a thoughtful gesture that speaks volumes about your care and consideration for her well-being. Give the gift of a stronger, healthier pelvic floor – a gift that keeps on giving for years to come.



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THE DYNAMIC DUO

B Vitamins and Glutathione - Champions of Liver Health

BY Kasey Cook, RN, Owner

The liver, one of the body's most vital organs, is a true workhorse, tirelessly performing countless functions that keep us healthy. From detoxifying harmful substances to storing essential nutrients, the liver's role is paramount. In this article, we delve into the importance of B vitamins and the remarkable role of glutathione in supporting liver health.

B Vitamins: The Liver's Lifeline

B vitamins are a group of essential nutrients that play a multifaceted role in maintaining overall health, with their significance extending to liver function. The B-vitamin family includes B1 (thiamine), B2 (riboflavin), B3 (niacin), B5 (pantothenic acid), B6 (pyridoxine), B7 (biotin), B9 (folate), and B12 (cobalamin).

These vitamins are involved in various metabolic processes within the liver, such as breaking down carbohydrates, fats, and proteins. Specifically, B vitamins aid in the production of enzymes responsible for detoxifying harmful substances, ensuring that the liver can efficiently neutralize toxins and prevent damage.

Glutathione: The Master Antioxidant

Glutathione, often referred to as the body's "master antioxidant," plays a pivotal role in liver health. It is a tripeptide composed of three amino



acids: cysteine, glutamine, and glycine. This powerhouse molecule has the remarkable ability to neutralize harmful free radicals, safeguarding liver cells from oxidative stress and damage.

One of the most critical functions of glutathione is to support the liver in detoxification. It aids in the removal of toxins and waste products from the body, helping the liver operate at its best. Moreover, glutathione recycles other antioxidants like vitamins C and E, ensuring their availability to protect liver cells from damage.

The Synergy Between B Vitamins and Glutathione

The connection between B vitamins and glutathione in maintaining liver health is fascinating. Several B vitamins, such as B6, B9, and B12, are crucial for the synthesis of glutathione. Without an adequate supply of these vitamins, the liver's ability to produce glutathione is compromised.

Furthermore, B vitamins indirectly support glutathione by aiding in the metabolism of amino acids like

cysteine, which is a precursor to glutathione production. In this way, B vitamins act as catalysts for the creation of this vital antioxidant.

In conclusion, the collaboration between B vitamins and glutathione is a key factor in promoting liver health. B vitamins facilitate detoxification processes and provide the necessary building blocks for glutathione synthesis. Meanwhile, glutathione serves as the liver's ultimate protector, defending it against oxidative stress and toxins.

To ensure your liver's well-being, maintain a balanced diet rich in B-vitamin-containing foods like leafy greens, whole grains, and lean proteins. Additionally, consider lifestyle choices that support glutathione production, such as regular exercise and minimizing exposure to environmental toxins.

By understanding and harnessing the power of B vitamins and glutathione, you can help your liver perform its vital functions, ultimately contributing to your overall health and well-being.



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LUMBAR SPINAL STENOSIS: Understanding the Narrowing Pathway to Relief

By Amanda N. Sacino, MD-PhD • Neurosurgeon and Managing Partner

Key Takeaways:

- Lumbar spinal stenosis is a condition characterized by the narrowing of the spinal canal in the lower back, leading to nerve compression.
- The prevalence of moderate and severe acquired lumbar stenosis increases with age to 47.2% and 19.4%, respectively, in the 60–69 year-old age group.
- Common symptoms include back pain, leg pain, and numbness, which usually worsen while standing or walking.
- Diagnosis is usually confirmed through an MRI scan after an initial physical examination.
- Treatment options vary from conservative measures like medication and physical therapy to surgical interventions like laminectomy.
- Early diagnosis and treatment can significantly improve quality of life and may prevent medical and neurological complications.

What is Lumbar Spinal Stenosis?

Lumbar spinal stenosis is a degenerative condition affecting the lower back. It involves the narrowing of the spinal canal, which houses the spinal cord and nerve roots, leading to compression and irritation of these neural elements. This condition most commonly occurs in people over the age of 50 due to age-related changes, although younger individuals can also be affected, often due to congenital anomalies or injury. The prevalence of moderate and severe acquired lumbar stenosis increases with age to 47.2% and 19.4%, respectively, in the 60–69 year-old age group.¹ It is important to diagnose and treat lumbar spinal stenosis promptly to prevent worsening of symptoms and the development of neurological complications.

Common Symptoms: The Troubling Signs

The symptoms of lumbar spinal stenosis vary widely but generally revolve around the themes of pain, discomfort, and functional limitation. The most common symptoms include lower back pain, leg pain, numbness, and tingling. The condition may also lead to sciatica—a painful condition caused by irritation of the sciatic nerves, which runs from the lower back down to the legs. One of the hallmark features of lumbar spinal stenosis is “neurogenic claudication,” which manifests as pain or cramping in the legs that worsens with prolonged standing or walking and is alleviated by sitting down or leaning forward.

How Symptomatic Spinal Stenosis can Quickly Worsen Overall Health

Over the past decade, several landmark studies have shown that daily walking step count is a critical

determinant of overall health and mortality. In 2020, a study published in JAMA showed that increases in daily step count from 4000 steps to 8000 steps daily cut mortality rates by 50%.² Another follow-up study in JAMA in 2022 showed similar results, with lower risk of both cardiovascular and cancer mortality in persons with higher daily step counts. The importance of daily walking with high step counts, ideally 8000-10000 steps daily cannot be overstated. Spinal stenosis unfortunately is most often symptomatic when patients are upright and walking, and many patients self-regulate their pain symptoms by doing less of the activity that causes the pain. In this case, that translates into spinal stenosis patients walking fewer steps daily, thus worsening their overall health.

Diagnosis: Confirming the Condition

Diagnosis of lumbar spinal stenosis typically starts with a comprehensive medical history and physical examination. Your healthcare provider will assess your symptoms and may perform specific maneuvers to replicate the pain or discomfort you are experiencing. An MRI of the lumbar spine without contrast is generally ordered to confirm the diagnosis and assess the extent of the stenosis. These scans provide detailed images of the spinal canal and surrounding structures, allowing for precise evaluation and planning for potential surgical interventions.

Treatment Options: From Conservative to Surgical

Treatment for lumbar spinal stenosis is often stratified into conservative and surgical options. Conservative measures include medication for pain relief, physical therapy, and lifestyle modifications like weight loss and ergonomic adjustments. Corticosteroid injections may also be used to alleviate inflammation and pain temporarily. These measures are often effective in the early stages or for mild cases of stenosis.

Surgical treatment becomes an option when conservative measures fail to provide relief, or when the stenosis leads to severe or worsening neurological symptoms and decreases in quality of life. The most common surgical intervention is lumbar laminectomy. Laminectomy involves removing a small portion of the vertebral bone to decompress the spinal canal and nerves through a small incision in the midline back. Patients are often able to go home the same day of the surgery or by the next day. Surgical intervention aims to relieve symptoms and improve the quality of life.

Conclusion: The Path to Relief

Lumbar spinal stenosis can severely impact your quality of life, but understanding the condition and seeking prompt medical attention can make a significant difference. Conservative treatment methods are effective for many patients, but neurosurgical intervention may be necessary for severe or worsening cases. Consult your neurosurgeon for a comprehensive diagnosis and treatment plan tailored to your needs. Early diagnosis and treatment are key to preventing complications, maintaining high daily walking step counts, and improving your quality of life.

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About Amanda Sacino, MD, PhD

Dr. Sacino was born and raised on the east coast of Florida. After securing her undergraduate degree at Boston University, she returned to her home state and attended the University of Florida, where she obtained her medical and post-doctorate degrees.

Her PhD work focused on proteinopathies, mainly Parkinsonism. But her mentors recognized her surgical precision skills, and so Dr. Sacino pursued extensive training in cranial, spine, and peripheral nerve surgery at Johns Hopkins Hospital. From there, she completed two spine fellowships at Johns Hopkins Hospital and the Swedish Neuroscience Institute. Her surgical spine training includes experience with degenerative diseases, congenital diseases, deformity, oncology, and trauma.

Dr. Sacino trained under Dr. Nicholas Theodore, the inventor of the Globus ExcelsiusGPS robot. She was present during the first robotic surgery at Johns Hopkins and trained extensively for five years with the robot during both spine and cranial cases.

Dr. Sacino’s high standards and pursuit of quality has led her to become well-respected by her mentors and peers. Her goal is to provide patients with case-specific solutions so they have all the information and options they need to make informed decisions.

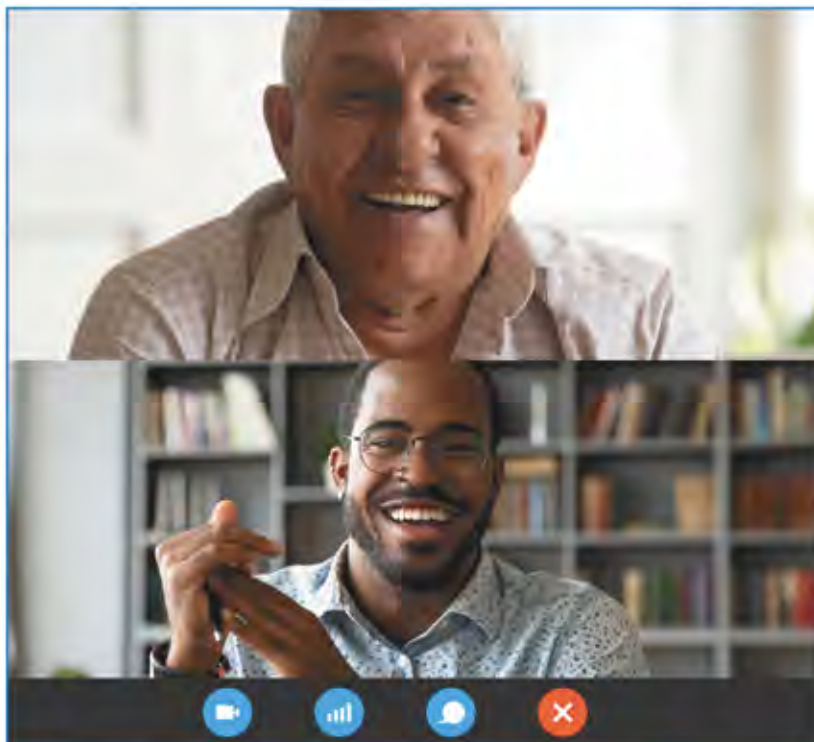


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KIDNEY CANCER: Are You at Risk?

By Neetu Malhotra, MD

The kidneys are a major part of our detoxifying system. These two small bean-shaped organs clean the blood and filter waste products and toxins from the body through the urine. Kidney cancer is one of the ten most prevalent cancers. The lifetime risk for developing kidney cancer is about 1 in 46 in men and 1 in 82 in women.¹

The symptoms of kidney cancer often go unnoticed or don't begin to show until the tumor(s) has grown. However, some of the key indicators are as follows:

- Blood in the urine
- Fatigue
- Loss of appetite
- Weight loss
- Fever or infection
- Swollen abdomen
- Lump on the side of the abdomen (with or without pain)
- Anemia
- Swollen legs and ankles
- Chronic inflammation
- High blood pressure
- Shortness of breath

If you have symptoms or your physician finds a lump during a physical examination, they will order diagnostic testing such as a renal arteriogram, MRI, CT Scan, blood and urine analysis, and a needle biopsy may be necessary.

There are some increased risk factors, which make some individuals more susceptible to renal cancer. The risks factors included:

- Being over the age of 40
- Being male
- Being black
- Smoking
- Obese
- Overuse of NSAIDs and other prescription medications
- Family History
- Chemical Exposures
- Kidney disease

Most kidney cancer appears first in the tubules of the kidneys. When the malignant cells form a tumor(s) the growth rate is typically slow, so the

likelihood of an early diagnosis is increased, and the treatment can usually be performed before the tumor has metastasized into any other organs.

Treatment

Depending on the stage and size of the tumor(s), your physician will develop a specific treatment plan tailored to your needs.

Typically, performing a nephrectomy treats kidney cancer. There are three main types of this surgical option. The first is a Partial nephrectomy, which removes the tumor and some of the surrounding tissue. The second is a Simple nephrectomy, which removes the entire kidney, and the third treatment method is a Radical nephrectomy, which removes the kidney, adrenal glands, lymph nodes, and any questionable surrounding tissue margins. These procedures can usually be done laparoscopically. Some patients may also require radiation or chemotherapy treatments.

Associates in Nephrology

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

Chronic Kidney Disease Program

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

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

Source:

1. https://www.nfcr.org/cancer-types/kidney-cancer/?gclid=CjwKCAIAyc2BBhAAEiwA44-wW9qTM7gXbIKsBU1dxNN-rM7OKwmgG3j43bZni6h175MIIQCzwNsKORoCE5QQAvD_BwE

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

Services Provided

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

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

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

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CRYOTHERAPY: A PROMISING APPROACH TO REDUCING INFLAMMATION

Inflammation is a natural response of the immune system to injury or infection. However, chronic inflammation can contribute to the development of various diseases, including anabolic and autoimmune diseases. Anabolic diseases are caused by the excessive growth of tissues, while autoimmune diseases occur when the immune system attacks healthy cells and tissues. Both types of diseases can lead to chronic inflammation, which can result in pain, swelling, and other symptoms. Cryotherapy is a relatively new therapeutic approach that has been shown to reduce inflammation in various conditions, including anabolic and autoimmune diseases.

Cryotherapy is a treatment that involves exposing the body to extreme cold temperatures. The most common form of cryotherapy is whole-body cryotherapy (WBC), which involves standing in a chamber that is cooled to temperatures below -100°C for 2-3 minutes. During this time, the body's surface temperature drops rapidly, triggering a range of physiological responses that are thought to have therapeutic benefits.

One of the key benefits of cryotherapy is its ability to reduce inflammation. Inflammation is a complex biological process that involves the activation of various immune cells and the release of inflammatory molecules. In anabolic and autoimmune diseases, this process becomes dysregulated, leading to chronic inflammation. Cryotherapy has been shown to modulate this process by reducing the production of inflammatory molecules and promoting the release of anti-inflammatory molecules.

In a study published in the *Journal of Sports Science and Medicine*, researchers investigated the effects of WBC on markers of inflammation in athletes. The results showed that WBC significantly reduced levels of inflammatory markers, such as IL-6 and TNF-alpha, in the blood. These findings suggest that cryotherapy may be an effective approach to reducing inflammation in athletes and other individuals who engage in high-intensity exercise.

In addition to reducing inflammation in athletes, cryotherapy has also been shown to be effective in reducing inflammation in patients with autoimmune diseases. A study published in the *European*



Journal of Applied Physiology investigated the effects of WBC on patients with rheumatoid arthritis, an autoimmune disease that causes chronic inflammation of the joints. The results showed that WBC significantly reduced pain and stiffness in the joints, as well as levels of inflammatory markers in the blood.

Another study published in the *International Journal of Rheumatic Diseases* investigated the effects of WBC on patients with ankylosing spondylitis, a chronic inflammatory disease that affects the spine and joints. The results showed that WBC significantly reduced levels of inflammatory markers in the blood and improved pain, stiffness, and mobility in the joints.

The exact mechanism by which cryotherapy reduces inflammation is not fully understood. However, it is thought to involve the activation of the body's natural anti-inflammatory pathways, including the release of endorphins and the activation of the parasympathetic nervous system. Additionally, the extreme cold temperatures may reduce blood flow to inflamed tissues, which can help to reduce inflammation.

Despite the promising results of cryotherapy in reducing inflammation in anabolic and autoimmune diseases, more research is needed to fully understand its therapeutic potential. It is also important to note that cryotherapy should be used as a complementary therapy and not as a replacement for conventional treatments.

Cryotherapy is a promising approach to reducing inflammation in anabolic and autoimmune diseases. It has been shown to reduce levels of inflammatory markers in the blood, improve pain and stiffness in the joints, and promote the release of anti-inflammatory molecules. While more research is needed, cryotherapy has the potential to become a valuable addition to the treatment of chronic inflammatory conditions.



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Is it Depression or Dementia:

Risk Factors, Masking and Differentiating Between the Two

By Cynthia Perthuis, CDP, CADDCT, CSA

October is Depression Awareness Month and it leads into the holiday season which is oftentimes a difficult time of year for seniors. Depression is common. It is important to understand that dementia and depression are two distinct yet interconnected conditions, often creating a perplexing challenge for individuals and their families to distinguish what is happening, especially as people age.

The connection between these two conditions is not merely coincidental; it is grounded in scientific research. Let us explore the connection between dementia and depression, how depression can mimic dementia, and discuss strategies to differentiate between the two, with a particular focus on age-related aspects. Several factors contribute to this intricate relationship, particularly in older adults:

Shared Risk Factors

• Age

Aging is a common risk factor for both dementia and depression. As individuals grow older, they become more susceptible to these conditions. It is not just the act of aging that makes depression a risk factor. We are at greater risk of depression as we age because people are not good at cultivating new relationships and experiences as they age. Watching the world change and loved ones pass away, coupled with being less active, increases our risk of depression and dementia. Additional risk factors for both depression and dementia include: genetics, inflammation, and chronic health conditions.

• Neurobiological Overlap

The brain regions affected by both conditions frequently intersect, which can lead to symptom overlap. For example, the hippocampus, vital for memory function, is vulnerable in both depression and certain types of dementia, such as Alzheimer's disease.

• Symptom Similarities

Depression can manifest symptoms that mimic those seen in dementia, such as cognitive decline, memory problems, and disorientation. Conversely, individuals with dementia may experience mood disturbances, which can lead to a misdiagnosis of depression.

Depression Masking as Dementia in Older Adults

In older adults, depression can sometimes imitate dementia, complicating the diagnostic process.

• Cognitive Impairment

Depression often leads to cognitive impairments, including difficulty concentrating, forgetfulness, and poor decision-making. These symptoms can be misattributed to dementia, especially in older individuals. For example: An elderly person experiencing cognitive difficulties and forgetfulness might be wrongly assumed to have dementia, when in fact, they may be battling depression. In times of stress, cognitive function diminishes. If your loved one is dealing with cognitive impairment, consider what their life has been like recently.

• Social Isolation

Both depression and dementia can cause social withdrawal and a decreased interest in activities. In older adults, social isolation may be interpreted as a sign of cognitive decline when it could be related to the emotional challenges of depression. For example: An older individual who suddenly withdraws from social activities may be thought to have dementia due to their decreased engagement, but it may be a manifestation of underlying depression. After upsetting events, we are all likely to be less socially active. Consider, have there been any upsetting life events in your loved one's life recently?

• Physical Symptoms

Depression can manifest physical symptoms like fatigue, sleep disturbances, and psychomotor agitation. These physical symptoms can be mistaken for the frailty and cognitive sluggishness often associated with dementia. For example: An older person displaying signs of physical and mental slowing may raise concerns about dementia, yet these symptoms may be due to depression's psychomotor effects.

Differentiating between Dementia and Depression

To distinguish between dementia and depression in older adults, a comprehensive approach is necessary. Here are some strategies that can be helpful:

1. Comprehensive Evaluation: A thorough evaluation by a healthcare professional, considering medical history, physical examination, and relevant diagnostic tests, is crucial. Imaging studies, such as MRI or CT scans, may be needed in some cases to differentiate between the two conditions.

2. Mood Assessment: Assessing the individual's mood is vital. Depression is characterized by persistent sadness, hopelessness, and a loss of interest in once-enjoyed activities. If these emotional symptoms are prominent, it may suggest depression rather than dementia.

3. Cognitive Testing: Cognitive assessments, such as the Mini-Mental State Examination (MMSE) or the Montreal Cognitive Assessment (MoCA), can help gauge cognitive impairment. However, it is essential to consider that depression can affect test performance, so results should be interpreted by a professional in the context of the individual's emotional state.

4. Timeline of Symptoms: Understanding the timeline of symptom onset is valuable. Depression often has a more abrupt and identifiable onset, whereas dementia typically progresses gradually over time. Keep a journal of symptoms and events. Example: If an elderly individual experiences a sudden and marked decline in cognitive and emotional functioning, it may point more toward depression than dementia.

5. Response to Treatment: Monitoring how an individual responds to treatment can be a valuable diagnostic clue. Depression typically improves with psychotherapy, medication, or a combination of both. If cognitive and emotional symptoms improve with treatment, it may suggest that depression was the primary cause.

Conclusion

The intricate relationship between dementia and depression, especially in older adults, necessitates a nuanced approach to diagnosis and treatment. Recognizing how depression can mimic dementia is crucial for ensuring that individuals receive appropriate care and support. By raising awareness about the age-related complexities of these conditions, we can reduce stigma and enhance the quality of life for older adults and their families facing these challenges. Accurate diagnosis and tailored interventions can make a significant difference in the well-being of individuals navigating the maze of dementia and depression.



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HUNGRY HEART

By Alex Anderson

The songwriter and performer Bruce Springsteen was right when he wrote,

"Everybody's got a hungry heart..."

Inside of every human is this need or hunger. Sometimes we try to fill it with love for another person, but for some reason...another person is not the answer.

Sometimes the hungry heart destroys the very things we love and want.

Springsteen goes on to sing,

"We fell in love, I knew it had to end...we took what we had and we ripped it apart...everybody's got a hungry heart...don't make no difference what nobody says...ain't nobody like to be alone...everybody's got a hungry heart."

I do believe our hungry heart is about loneliness, not for another human...but for God himself. We were created in the very image of God (Genesis 1:26) but when man left God...man missed, and still misses, God. They had a bond that filled man with joy and satisfied his heart like nothing else.

C.S. Lewis calls this the, "Numinous Awe." It seems to be built into mankind, this *ravenous hungry heart to know God*. And it's so strong nothing can fill it but God himself.

Psalms 34:8 says, "*Taste and see that the Lord is good.*"

And the truth is... If you don't get that deep ravenous hunger in your heart satisfied by Jesus you will starve to death spiritually, while eating everything else.

So how do you do that? How do you find the true satisfaction that calms your hungry heart?

If you are a Christ-follower, then you know how to do this. You...do again...something that you have already experienced when you asked God to be your Lord and Savior. You "make up" with God and you're back to stay.

You are so glad to be back together. Glad that God owns you and your life. So you decide to be happy because God owns you and is your life partner (Philippians 4:4).

Feel the pleasure, the joy and the delight again about Jesus being your master. Let this fact cause you happiness, pleasure and delight.

Be full of joy because Jesus paid a high price for your life. (1Corinthians 6:19-20).

Let the reality of what He has done sink over you.

Not only are you in His family now, but you can live the life of a victorious and joyful person of God; with all the rights and privileges of a child of rich royalty.

"You are my child says the Lord...my very rich child says the Lord...let the riches of your heart begin to overflow into all of your life." (3 John 2)

You can, should, and must rejoice always in the Lord...way before anything changes physically in your life.

The seed of hope and joy is there if you have become one with Jesus Christ. His seed is within you. If your hope is nonexistent then find the seed once planted deep in your heart by the Holy Spirit.

Like a precious pearl search for it (Matthew 13:45).

When you find it (that small seed), clean it up, Polish it and put it in the center room of your heart, shine the brightest light you can find on it and let its magnificent beauty captivate you. Stare at it with intentional focus as though you are searching and waiting for hope itself.

Its magnificent light will light up your life.

For it will change everything about you as you clearly see and feel the love that God has shed in your heart...that is for you (Romans 5:5).

It is so worthy of your time my friend to mediate and think about Jesus, again.

Whether things in your life are going well or not...you have the power of a Christ-follower to focus on Jesus...the author and finisher of your faith and the centerpiece of your heart.



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