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- Dr. Drew Hall

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☐

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☐

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If you said **“YES”** to any of the above, you may have vein disease.



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SKIP & GAIL SACK

As a result of treatment - feeling great and enjoying life!

My wife and I consider ourselves very fortunate to have been treated by Sforzo | Dillingham | Stewart Orthopedics. Dr. Sforzo's assessment of my broken wrist and Gail's broken finger and rotator cuff damage was spot on. We both are physically as good as we were before our injuries. They are not only excellent and caring doctors, they actually see patients within minutes of the appointment time. Additionally, the staff is not only pleasant, they are cheerful and made us feel like we were among friends.
- Skip & Gail Sack



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TIS' THE SEASON TO SHINE

Ready or not – the holiday season is here and the countdown to Christmas is on. It's time to surprise and delight your friends and family with bath and body care gifts that will make them look and feel their best. Here's how:

Inner Calm & Peace:

A gift of self care is an excellent way to promote mindfulness and wellness. Self care gifts encourage loved ones to escape the hustle and bustle to enjoy a soothing moment to themselves. Simple ideas include bubbly bath bomb sets, aromatic essential oils with a diffuser, or soothing face masks.

Every Day Luxury:

High-quality skin care can promote the feeling of every day luxury without the high-ticket price. Gifting something as simple as a handmade soap, creamy body lotion or foaming body wash, can provide that feeling of indulgence and joy.

A Complete Set:

You can't go wrong with a carefully curated skin care set. These sets are often filled with complementary products so that the recipient can enjoy a simple self care routine from start to finish. Examples include a face wash, face mask, face toner and face moisturizer. Skin care sets feature mini indulgences that will be enjoyed well beyond the holidays.



Stocking Stuffers:

Fill your stockings with something they'll actually use. From hair clips to massagers to lip balms and butters, it's easy to affordably stuff your stockings with simple items that your friends and family will enjoy.

Hostess Gifts:

Humorous holiday tea towels, Santa-themed wine stoppers and colorful Christmas soaps, are always a hit with the holiday hostess.

Earth-Friendly Gifts:

From eco-friendly, super concentrated shampoo and conditioner bars, to plastic-free bar soaps, to laundry detergent sheets, go for gift ideas with high usage and minimal waste.

This holiday, it's time to glow with your gifting. Your thoughtful gifting will not only help your friends and family look their best but also remind them to indulge in a little self care this festive season.



Skip the holiday hustle this year. Make your list. Check it twice. And get your holiday shopping done!



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THE HEART OF MANATEE MEMORIAL HOSPITAL

In celebration of Manatee Memorial Hospital's 70th anniversary, we took this opportunity to shine a spotlight on several members who are the heart of the hospital. We asked each individual:

1) How long they have been a part of Manatee Memorial Hospital (MMH), 2) Why they are so passionate about what they do and 3) If they have a favorite memory that stands out during their time with MMH.



Ronnie Washington
Security

1: 9 years.

2: I love my job, and this position grew on me. I oversee the security department. But it is really the people that work here. Everyone is very close knit,

and it feels like a real family. I like to say the family away from your family. It is the bond that keeps me here.

3: Well, which one do I pick... The best moment for me was when my supervisor surprised me with a CARES award about three years ago. I received the "S", for supportive.

• The CARES awards are presented twice a year, and each letter is given to a deserving employee who goes the extra mile.



Christine Cummings
Charge Nurse

1: Almost 16 years.

2: Teamwork. We have the best teamwork with our directors, staff, and throughout the hospital. I love my staff and everyone that I work with. I have worked with a few colleagues for a long time.

3: The SunCoast Heart Walk was fun. We also get to celebrate exciting moments, such as birthdays and pregnancies. Fun fact: The Tower building was finished right before I started working here. I also did my nursing clinicals here as well.



Larry Locascio
Volunteer

1: Almost 7 years.

2: My wife was at Manatee Memorial having a procedure done, and I was talking to the nurse. She said with my personality I'd be a good volunteer. While my wife was

in surgery, I went down to the Volunteer Office and signed up. Been volunteering ever since!

3: I have three daughters, and they are all nurses. So I have a real passion for the nurses and what they do. All nurses, including the nurses at Manatee, do a marvelous job. I also feel like I am fulfilling some of the promises I made when I was younger being a volunteer, plus this job also gets me out of the house!



Sandra Dean
Environmental Services

1: 25 years.

2: My mom and my cousin both worked here a long time ago.

3: I love to work. Patients like to see me say hello or good morning when I clean their room. I like when I can put a smile on their face, and I am more than happy to help when they call for me.



James Wengerd, PharmD
Director of Pharmacy

1: 16 years

2: When I was 15, my dad had heart disease and he had open heart surgery. There was a medication error, and unfortunately, he passed away. That is why I went to pharmacy school, to prevent

something like that from ever happening again. I was on rotations my last year of school, at different hospitals in the area, and I just connected with the people at Manatee. That's what drives me, my dad's situation,

and the people here. We have a great team. We all have the same mindset of preventing errors and helping patients, and that's what I want to be a part of.

3: I started out as a decentralized pharmacist out of the floors of the hospital, and I worked with nurses all the time. I was surprised one day when I was asked to join a meeting with my boss. I went in and sat down, and I was recognized with the Friends of Nurses award which I was nominated for by a group of nurses. I did collaborate a lot with them and help them out with customized patient care. That award meant a lot to me.



Teresa Rawe, DO
Medical Director of
Emergency Department

Manatee Chamber of Commerce 2023 Physician of the Year

1: 24 years.

2: I grew up in Bradenton and I'm very passionate about

the work I do. Manatee Memorial continues to invest in their patients to provide outstanding care.

3: I've worked at Manatee for such a long time I have a book worth of fond memories. One of my favorite recent stories is when one of my close friends collapsed at the Pittsburgh Pirates training facility. Our team was ready in the ER the moment he arrived. He was stabilized, taken to the cardiac catheterization lab, and stayed two days in the hospital. I visited him frequently and had the pleasure of talking with many of his family and friends. Watching firsthand the amazing care that he received and hearing from his family's perspective, their experience re-affirmed to me that we do amazing things every day at Manatee! We are truly a family of healthcare providers that love to serve our community.



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By Dr. Lackey

Complications of Vein Disease

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

Skin Changes

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

Phlebitis

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

Stages of Vein Disease



far enough up the leg it can cause a clot in the deep veins, which is a risk for pulmonary embolism, which can be fatal.

Bleeding

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

Swelling

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

Skin Ulcers

One of the most challenging vein complications is a skin ulcer. This is an open sore resulting from trauma to the skin. Trauma and chronic vein disease results in skin breakdown where the area around the open sore becomes red, swollen, tender, and painful. These ulcers typically occur on the inner side of the ankle. Patients are often frustrated by

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

Blood Clots

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

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DIABETIC FOOT INFECTIONS AND PREVENTING AMPUTATION

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

The prevalence of diabetes in the United States continues rising at an alarming rate. According to the CDC an estimated 30.3 million people have been diagnosed with diabetes with another 7.2 million adults undiagnosed in the United States. By 2030, the CDC expects there to be over half a billion diabetics in the U.S.* An increase in diabetic rates, unfortunately, leads to a rise in lower extremity amputations. The good news, the majority of lower extremity amputations are preventable if patients take the appropriate care.

The first step: diagnosis of diabetes. Once diagnosed with diabetes, routine follow up with your PCP is imperative to get your blood sugar under control. Next, find a podiatrist for routine care who can also educate you on preventative measures. Regular foot screenings can be lifesaving and limb saving for the diabetic population. Your Podiatrist will also screen for other risk factors that can contribute to the development of diabetic foot infections and/or amputations. If the proper health and lifestyles changes are made, many of the potential health risks are preventable or controllable. Some common risk factors include high blood sugars, high blood pressure, smoking, callouses/corns, foot deformity, poor blood flow, history of ulcers or previous amputations, vision loss, kidney disease and neuropathy. Working together with you, your PCP and other medical professionals, can significantly reduce your risk of amputation.

Ulcers are a primary cause of developing complicated foot infections, hospitalization, or amputation. Many ulcers start as a simple callous. As a diabetic with some degree of neuropathy, you may not feel a callous progressing into an open wound, missing the early signs of an infection. Without prompt treatment, this unnoticed wound or infection could quickly extend to the bone level or progress to a limb threatening infection that will likely require hospitalization and with the risk of amputation. This is why routine foot screenings are so important for the diabetic population.

In addition to routine foot screenings, self-inspection should be performed daily. Check your feet daily for blisters, cuts, sores, redness, swelling or any other abnormal changes. Make sure to also look between your toes. Many podiatrists recommend the use of white socks to their patients.



White socks make it easier to notice blood or drainage coming from the foot. Patients should wear socks that pull moisture away from the skin like cotton or special acrylic fibers, avoiding nylon. Avoid socks with seams that irritate your skin. If you can't reach your feet, ask someone for assistance or try using a foot mirror. Do not try to remove calluses or other foot lesion yourself and avoid walking barefoot. Other suggested recommendations include: avoiding worn down shoes, shoes that are too small or too narrow for your foot, and quit smoking. If you notice any abnormalities, contact your podiatrist or medical provider right away.

Together, we can change lives by saving limbs.

*<https://www.cdc.gov/diabetes/data/statistics-report/index.html>

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

Isin Mustafa, DPM, MSHS, DABPM, FACPM

Isin Mustafa, DPM, is a Podiatrist at Family Foot & Leg Centers in Sarasota, FL. She is a Fellow of the American College of Foot & Ankle Surgeons.

Call 239-430-3668 or visit www.NaplesPodiatrist.com to make an appointment. Visit FootHealthFacts.org to learn more about foot and ankle conditions.



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Caring for Your Skin During Cancer Treatment

By Nancy Gardner, Ph.D., Board Certified Nurse Practitioner at South Osprey Dermatology, Sarasota, Florida

Cancer treatments can take a toll on the skin, causing skin-related side effects such as dryness, itchiness, rashes, and sun sensitivity. Taking care of your skin can help you feel better and more comfortable during cancer treatment.

Chemotherapy, Immunotherapy, and Hormonal therapy can cause skin-related side effects due to the slowing down of cellular turnover in the skin and exposure to drugs, alterations in immune response to irritants, or endocrine imbalance. It is usually mild dryness and sensitivity. It can be easily managed with proper skin care, limited sun exposure, hydration, rest, and good nutritional status before and throughout cancer treatment.

Radiation treatment causes redness, irritation, swelling, and skin breakdown if not cared for properly. Avoid using any products in the area being treated that are potentially irritants. Every day, use your radiation skincare routine at least three, but preferably four times a day. Moisturize the treated area and apply a hydrating barrier such as Aquaphor. The exception is on the day of treatment; wait to use moisturizers until after the radiation treatment that day is completed; then apply your skin care.

Hand and Foot Syndrome is a unique side effect that can cause redness, swelling, and pain in the palms of the hands and soles of the feet. The side effects can become severe, and if left untreated, it can even result in the delay of scheduled treatment. Your oncology team can prescribe dose adjustments, creams, and ointments to manage serious side effects.

Skin color changes such as yellowing, bluish, or becoming pale can be serious indicators and you will need to notify your oncology team as soon as possible. This can represent other health problems.

Nail and cuticle changes are associated with cancer treatment. Your cuticles may become tender; nails may discolor or have white or dark lines across your nails. They can also become dry, cracked, and brittle and grow more slowly. Use topical cuticle removers and massage cuticle oils or cream to prevent hangnails, splitting, and

dryness. Wear gloves when exposing your hands to water other than washing them. Excessive exposure to water can increase the risk of nail fungal infections.

HERE IS WHAT YOU CAN DO TO KEEP YOUR SKIN FEELING AND LOOKING HEALTHY:

Cleansers you should choose one for dry and sensitive skin and hypoallergenic and gentle. Over-the-counter brands of facial and body cleansers we recommend are *Cetaphil*, *Lubriderm*, *Eucerin*, and *CeraVe*. Your dermatologist may recommend a high-quality facial cleanser like *SkinCeuticals*, *Gentle Cleanser*.

Body and Facial Moisturizers help repair dry-dehydrated skin, damaged skin, and promote healing. They are gentle and hypoallergenic, with no additional additives like parabens, fragrance, or alcohol. All moisturizers should be applied when the skin is damp. Some commonly recommended include *Cetaphil Intensive Healing Lotion with ceramides for dry, flaky, rough skin*, *Eucerin Intensive Repair Body Lotion* or *Eucerin Calming lotion for dry, itchy skin*, *CeraVe Moisturizing Lotion, or cream for Dry to Very Dry Skin with Hyaluronic Acid and three essential Ceramides*, *Aveeno Calm and Restorative Oat Repair Body lotion Therapy*.

Chemotherapy and Radiation therapy-specific lotions and creams that may be recommended by your oncology team include *Bog Balm Moisturizing Hand and Foot Lotion* is free of irritants. It is for Low-grade Hand and Foot Syndrome and severely dry and chafed hand and foot skin. It is free of skin irritants. *Recovery Skin Relief Radiation Ultimate Soothing Cream* is for sensitive skin. It has additional ingredients such as mineral oil, lanolin, and salicylic acid to help rehydrate the dry, cracked, or itchy skin due to radiation or chemotherapy. *OncoDerm chemotherapy cream* with urea helps hold onto moisture and glycolic acid, which helps increase cellular turnover. It contains ceramides, which protect the moisture in the skin. It can provide hydration for severely cracked and dry skin. However, some of its ingredients could irritate due to alcohol and fragrance.



Sun Protection, such as Mineral sunscreen for sensitive skin with an SPF of 30 or greater, is recommended. Reapply every two hours when you're outside, and always wear sun protection gear such as a brimmed hat, sunglasses, and protective clothing from the sun. Chemotherapy, immunotherapy, and radiation can interact with solar radiation. Your dermatologist may recommend a high-quality sunscreen, for example, *ELTA MD*.

Helpful Tips –

- Avoid harsh detergents; try those for allergy-prone use, such as Tide Free and Clear.
- Avoid bathing or showering using warm or tepid temperatures.
- Avoid products with alcohol or perfumes.
- Avoid shaving with a blade; use an electric razor to avoid nicks and cuts that could become infected.
- A good rule is to avoid products that make your skin more itchy, dry, sensitive, or red.

A Dermatologist can be helpful if you have a pre-existing skin condition that has become worse on treatment or if skin changes during and after treatment are challenging.



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Staying Smokefree During the Holidays

While the holidays are an exciting time of the year, they can also be stressful. With get-togethers to attend, food items to bake, gifts to shop for, and parties to host, the holidays can be quite overwhelming, especially for someone who has recently quit or is working to quit smoking.

If you have committed to smokefree living, managing that extra holiday stress can be a challenge; however, these helpful tips will help you manage the stress and remain smokefree:

- 1. Get enough sleep.** When we are tired or run-down, cravings feel stronger while we feel less able to manage them. Be sure to get plenty of sleep at night or, if possible, carve out some time during the day for power nap.¹
- 2. Replace caffeine with more water.** Many times, when we are feeling tired, we run to another cup of coffee for a quick energy boost. While this may help you to stay awake, too much caffeine can make you feel jittery and more stressed. Instead of reaching for another cup of coffee, grab a glass of water! Drinking water is great for lessening cravings and staying well-hydrated will make you feel better in general which will, in turn, help you manage the holiday stress more easily.¹
- 3. Go for a walk.** Walking not only reduces stress, but it also improves circulation and releases endorphins, the “feel good” hormones. Take a quick walk whenever you feel stressed; instead of caving in to the urge to smoke, you’ll come back feeling energized, refreshed, and relaxed.¹

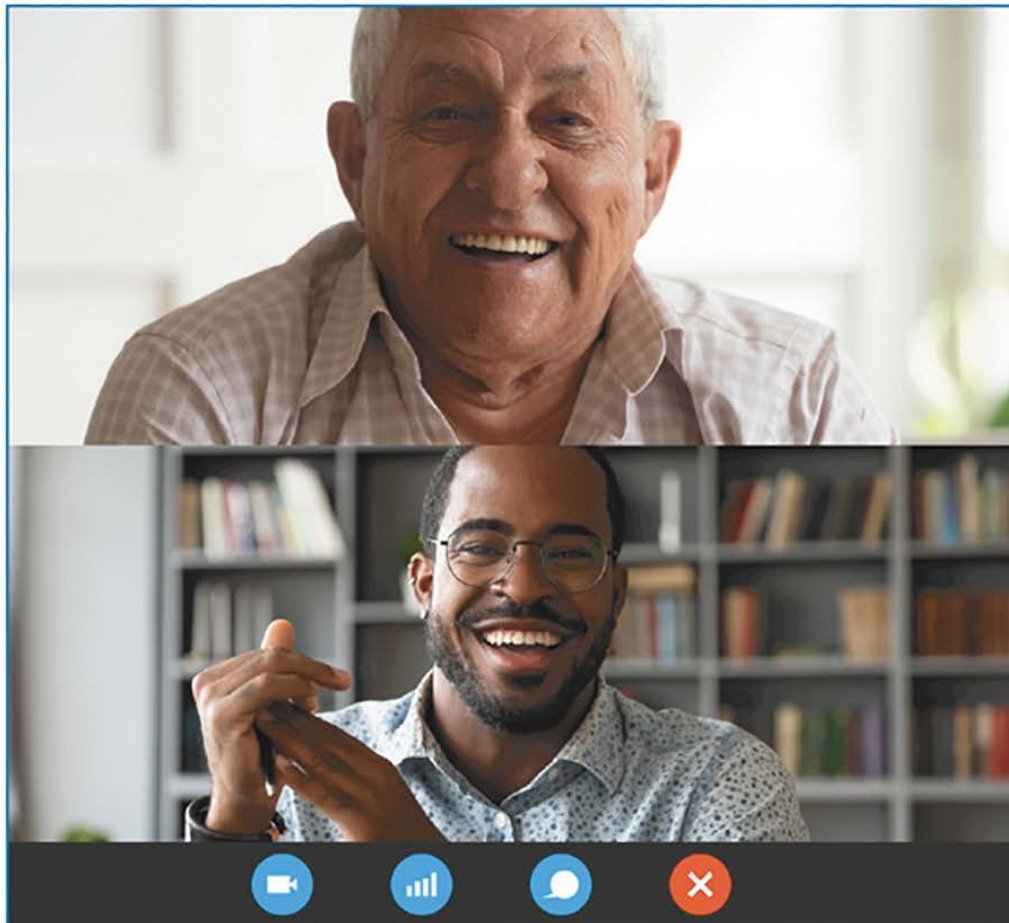
References:
1. <https://www.verywellmind.com/smoke-free-holidaytips-2824909>

4. Breathe deeply. Deep breathing is a quick way to reduce stress and release tension in your body.¹ Take a few moments to slowly inhale through your nose, then exhale through your mouth. You will start to feel the stress melt away after repeating this process just a few times.



If you or someone you know needs extra support to quit smoking for good, help is free! Gulfcoast South Area Health Education Center (GSAHEC), as part of Tobacco Free Florida’s Quit Your Way program—offers free Group Quit sessions to help someone quit all forms of tobacco. These group sessions, held virtually and in-person, provide information about the benefits of quitting, managing stress and triggers, and will assist you with developing your own customized quit plan. Free nicotine replacement therapy in the form of patches, gum or lozenges (*if medically appropriate and while supplies last*) are provided with the session. Attendees will also receive a participant workbook, quit kit materials, and follow up support from a trained tobacco treatment specialist.

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REVOLUTIONIZING VISION:

Personalized Eye Care with Cutting-Edge Lens Technologies

By Dr. Steven Bovio

In the realm of eye care, advancements in lens technologies have not only transformed the way we see the world but have also played a pivotal role in enhancing the overall quality of life. This article delves into the profound impact of personalized eye care, particularly focusing on premium lens designs. The Optical at Gulf Coast Eye Center has embraced the art of Opticianry. We have adopted these lens advancements and recommend them when appropriate through our personal care. Some of the advancements are as follows:

Personalized Care with Premium Lens Designs:

1. NEUROLENS

Neurolens represents a paradigm shift in addressing visual discomfort and headaches related to digital device use. These lenses are crafted to provide personalized support, taking into account the individual's eye movements. By precisely aligning the optics with the patient's visual axis, Neurolens mitigates the strain caused by misalignment, offering a tailored solution for enhanced comfort and visual acuity. We test convergence on our patients and for those whose eyes are not aligned for near work the Neurolens have greatly improved their headaches caused by eyestrain. In many cases we have seen patients living with these symptoms of daily discomfort for years with undiagnosed convergence insufficiency.

2. ESSILOR XR AND ESSILOR XR TRACK

Essilor XR lenses are designed to correct vision at all distances, ensuring sharp and clear sight in various daily activities. The incorporation of advanced technologies, such as Extended Range (XR) and XR Track, allows wearers to seamlessly transition between near and far distances. The personalized nature of these lenses caters to the unique visual needs of each individual, promoting a more natural and comfortable visual experience.

3. AUTOGRAPH INTELLIGENCE

Autograph Intelligence represents the latest frontier in lens technology, offering a level of personalization that goes beyond traditional approaches. These lenses leverage artificial intelligence to analyze a multitude of visual parameters, including head and eye movement, to create a truly customized optical solution. The result is a lens that adapts to the wearer's unique visual behavior, providing unparalleled clarity and comfort in all situations.

4. SHAMIR DRIVERS

For those on the move, Shamir Drivers lenses are engineered to meet the specific visual demands of driving. With a focus on minimizing glare, enhancing contrast, and reducing visual fatigue, these lenses deliver a personalized driving experience. This is a new lens design tested by Formula 1 drivers.

5. SHAMIR SPORT ATTITUDE III SPORT

This is an excellent option for patients who need progressive glasses and play sports. This is great for tennis, pickleball, softball, etc. This allows you to see the ball that is further away yet has enough prescription change to allow the ball to stay in focus as it approaches.

6. SHAMIR WORKSPACE LENS AND SHAMIR COMPUTER LENS

These lenses are excellent for office work. If you are mostly at the computer all day the computer lens gives you a large area to view your computers with at the distance and eye level you prefer and still see printed text that is closer to you than the computer screen. The workspace lens allows you to see around the room yet still allows you to see your computer and near text clearly. Perfect for professions like teachers, hairdressers, Chefs and Nurses.

7. MYOPIA CONTROL

Due to the increased demand on us to focus up close to read our digital devices there has been a global increase in myopia. Eyezen lenses by Essilor provide extra support when focusing on digital devices and are thus a valuable tool in the effort to manage myopia progression. I would also add that the vast majority of the lenses we prescribe have blue light protection. This has shown to take away glare and fatigue as well.

At The Optical at Gulf Coast Eye Center we carry over 800 of carefully selected frames and sunglasses by the world's most fashion forward eyewear designers from Europe, Japan, and the U.S including: **Maui Jim** Sunglasses, renowned for their polarized lenses and vibrant lens colors. **Tom Ford**, made in Italy, exudes luxury and sophistication. Meticulous craftsmanship and attention to detail define Tom Ford eyewear. **Gucci**: Iconic Italian fashion house. **Silhouette**: Crafted with precision and innovation, offering lightweight and minimalist designs. Austrian quality and avant-garde aesthetics characterize Silhouette eyewear. **Prada**: Epitomizes modern elegance and chic style. Prada eyewear reflects the brand's fashion-forward approach. **Miu Miu**: Is the playful and whimsical sister brand of Prada; known for its unconventional designs and bold color choices. **Tiffany**:

Timeless elegance and sophistication. Signature Tiffany blue accents and classic designs. **Ray-Ban**: Timeless classics with iconic styles like the Aviator and Wayfarer. **Persol**: Italian craftsmanship known for its distinctive arrow detail. **Oakley**: Innovative sports eyewear with cutting-edge technology. **Costa Del Mar**: Specializing in high-performance sunglasses for water activities. **Wiley X**: A favorite among veterans, designed for extreme conditions; known for durability, impact resistance, and military-grade protection. **Modo**: Fusion of New York style and Japanese precision. Socially responsible approach with a "buy one, donate one" philosophy. **Lilly Pulitzer**: Vibrant and playful designs with a touch of resort style. **Max Mara**: Timeless elegance and sophistication. **Coach**: Is modern and versatile styles with a focus on craftsmanship. **Pomellato**: Exclusive and luxurious eyewear with Italian flair.

Our knowledgeable Opticians have over 40 years of combined experience. They will assist you in choosing a frame shape and color that compliments your facial features and is appropriate to your prescription. In addition, we use tools such as **Spark 4** and **Eye Ruler 2**, to take otherwise unobtainable measurements to ensure your lenses are custom fit to your frame while properly positioned on your face. This is vital to ensure your optimal vision.

Gulf Coast Eye Center has proudly served the Sarasota community since 1999. **Dr. Steven Bovio** and **Dr. Cameron Jones** are optometric physicians and provide primary eye care for all ages. You can learn them and our practice at our website: www.gulfcoasteyecenter.com. You can even virtually try on our frames through our website.

The Optical at Gulf Coast Eye Center is committed to providing the latest advancement in eyeglass lenses with extremely fashionable frames. We strive to make designing your eyeglasses a fun experience. We look forward to helping you see and look your best.



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UNLOCKING RELIEF:

Botox Injections for Neck Tension in Easing TMJ, Tinnitus, and Headaches

By Dr. Jai Grewal

In today's fast-paced world, stress is often held in our bodies, particularly in the neck and shoulders. But what if there was a surprising solution to alleviate not just neck tension but also its ripple effects on common issues like TMJ, tinnitus, and headaches? Enter Botox, typically associated with cosmetic enhancements, now proving to be a game-changer in therapeutic relief.

The neck, a junction of intricate muscles, is a hotspot for tension accumulation. Stress, poor posture, or even physical injury can tighten these muscles, leading to chronic discomfort and triggering various related conditions. However, recent medical studies have uncovered the profound benefits of Botox injections in addressing these issues.

Botox, known for its ability to relax muscles by temporarily blocking nerve signals, has gained attention beyond its cosmetic realm. By strategically injecting Botox into specific points of the neck muscles, practitioners can alleviate tension and offer relief from conditions such as TMJ (temporomandibular joint disorder), tinnitus (ringing in the ears), and headaches, including migraines.

TMJ, often caused by jaw tension or misalignment, can be excruciating, affecting one's ability to chew, speak, or even open the mouth comfortably. Surprisingly, Botox injections into the neck muscles surrounding the jaw have shown promising results in easing TMJ symptoms by releasing the tension responsible for this discomfort, providing welcome relief for sufferers.

Moreover, tinnitus, characterized by persistent ringing or buzzing in the ears, can be associated with muscle tension in the neck. Botox injections, by relaxing these muscles, have displayed potential in reducing the severity or frequency of tinnitus symptoms, improving the overall quality of life for those affected.

The correlation between neck tension and headaches, particularly migraines, has long been acknowledged. Many migraine sufferers experience relief after receiving Botox injections targeted at the neck muscles. This treatment not



only alleviates existing pain but also diminishes the frequency and intensity of future migraines, offering a more sustainable solution than conventional medications.

However, as with any medical procedure, the efficacy and suitability of Botox injections for neck tension-related conditions should be discussed with a qualified healthcare professional. Individual responses to treatment may vary, and thorough evaluation by a specialist is crucial to determine the best approach for each patient.

It's essential to highlight that while Botox injections for neck tension-related issues show promise, they are not a cure-all. Lifestyle changes, physical therapy, and other complementary treatments may be recommended alongside or instead of Botox, depending on the individual's specific condition and needs.

In conclusion, the application of Botox beyond cosmetic enhancements has emerged as a beacon of hope for those battling neck tension-related ailments like TMJ, tinnitus, and headaches. Its ability to relax targeted muscles offers relief and improved quality of life for many, paving the way for a more holistic approach to addressing these common yet debilitating conditions. Consulting with healthcare professionals knowledgeable in this therapy can be a crucial step towards unlocking the relief and reclaiming comfort and well-being.

About Dr. Grewal

Dr. Jai Grewal is a board-certified neurologist specializing in the use of botulinum toxins (such as Botox®) for therapeutic and cosmetic uses. Dr. Grewal completed his neurology residency at the University of Texas, Southwestern in Dallas. He completed his fellowship in cancer neurology at the MD Anderson Cancer Center in Houston. As Dr. Grewal was training in therapeutic uses of Botox, he fell in love with the therapy because he noticed that it was helping patients with their mood and improving how patients felt about themselves. He has been using Botox for over 20 years for a range of FDA approved uses. He has administered over 250,000 units across various indications, and is considered one of the most experienced injectors in the area. He has experience with most botulinum toxins including Botox, Dysport®, Xeomin®, and Myobloc®. When appropriate, Dr. Grewal incorporates cutting edge technology such as infrared vein locators, ultrasound guidance, and EMG guidance to optimize patient outcomes and minimize side-effects and avoid bruising. Precision is at the core of Dr. Grewal's technique. Dr. Grewal also injects dermal filler (Juvederm and Restylane), Kybella for excess fat under the chin, as well as biostimulators (Sculptra and Radiesse). In addition to expertise in standard of care therapies, Dr. Grewal is an experienced researcher and has participated in over 40 clinical trials for various neurological conditions, and has authored over 50 publications. Dr. Grewal has held faculty appointments as an Assistant Professor of Neurology at Stony Brook University and at Hofstra University.

About the Clear Aesthetics Team

Our team at clear aesthetics strives to deliver the highest quality service and treatment experience. Our staff has experience in various medical specialties as well as the hospitality industry. We hope to share our medical expertise with you in a calm and caring environment.

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MOVING CAN BE STRESSFUL, FREEDOM VILLAGE MAKES IT EASY

If you are a senior considering a move to a retirement community, you may be a bit overwhelmed with the prospect of having to sell your home and all that comes with downsizing, moving, and starting a new life.

You may be concerned – or even a little stressed – about the size of your new home and how you are going to fit your prized possessions into a smaller space. You could be flooded with thoughts about the logistics of the move itself and don't know where to start.

The best starting point to address these types of concerns is having a conversation with Jessica Campese, the move-in coordinator for Independent Living at Freedom Village of Bradenton, a Life Care retirement community that has been serving seniors since 1984.

"My job is to take away the stress of moving to our community," said Jessica. "Moving to a senior living community is a big decision, and most people feel overwhelmed when they start, but we have a great team here who will help seniors every step of the way."

Jessica meets with people who are considering a move to talk about one of the scariest realities they face: downsizing.

"We like to call it rightsizing," she says. "When people age, they need to simplify their lives and reduce the stress they feel."

Campese said that there are several things that cause seniors stress: managing a household, especially when a person lives alone; dealing with the overwhelming amount of stuff they have accumulated over the years; and worrying about what will happen if they become ill or who will care for them as they age and can no longer care properly for themselves.

"Moving to an independent living community takes away the pressure of owning a house," Jessica said. "As one of our residency counselors, Bruce Call, likes to say, 'you may love your house, but your house doesn't love you back.' Bruce is right, home repairs, appliances breaking down, simple upkeep and chores cause pressure, not to mention the fear of living alone, especially during hurricane season."



Jessica said the second concern people have – worry about what to do with all of their stuff -- can be crippling.

"We all have a bunch of stuff, and people get attached to their stuff. Unfortunately, stuff that is meaningful to us isn't important to our kids or grand-kids, so we need to purge."

"We listen to people to help them determine what is really important to keep, like family heirlooms, and help them sell other belongings or donate stuff to secondhand stores. It really is a wonderful feeling to declutter your life and start anew!"

Campese also assists people in renovating their new apartment home or villa, and of course, the move itself.

"We provide a full range of services, from helping seniors preserve and move their prized possessions, to choosing the right-sized apartment or villa, to selecting the paint colors and furnishings that will create a beautiful home. We have wonderful partners that specialize in helping seniors move."

As a Continuing Care Retirement Community (CCRC), Freedom Village provides a full spectrum of living accommodations and health care services.

Five hundred of Freedom Village's 700 residents live in independent living; the community also features assisted living, memory care, rehab services and skilled nursing. The Life Plan contract option guarantees priority access to these services at a greatly reduced rate compared to market rates.

"The best part of my job is seeing an individual or couple become part of our community because their life changes in such a positive way," said Jessica. "The stress of everyday living melts away, and you can just feel the peace of mind and security our residents have. Freedom Village is a special place."

FREE LUNCHEON

On Thursday, Dec. 14, Freedom Village will host a free luncheon on downsizing, selling your home, moving, packing and set-up.

A panel of experts will provide advice on how to manage these processes with as little stress as possible. We'll provide tons of practical advice and answer all your questions. We hope you will join us for this important conversation from 11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. in our Tuscany Dining Room. The panel will feature:

Kathy McKinnon, broker and owner at Point South Realty.

Cassidy Junot, owner and CEO at Sundance Move Solutions

Abby Goff, who leads the residency counseling team at Freedom Village.

Jessica Campese, who serves as the move-in coordinator at Freedom Village.

Reservations are required.
Call 941-798-8122 today to reserve your spot.



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Then & Now

A Historical Perspective on Manatee Memorial Hospital



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As we come to the end of our 70th anniversary, we'd like to reflect on where we began in the community and how far we've come over 70 years. We have future plans for improvements in patient care, technology and our various healthcare service lines.

THEN



HOSPITAL

Then: From humble beginnings in 1953, Manatee Veterans Memorial Hospital opened with 100 beds.

Now: Now, our main campus, as a 295-bed facility with specialties and centers of excellence including the Heart and Vascular Center, Stroke and Cerebrovascular Center, Robotics, Orthopedic and Spine Surgery, and Family Birthplace.

NOW



FIRST BABY

Then: The first baby was born at Manatee Veterans Memorial Hospital within the first 24 hours of accepting patients.

Now: Manatee Memorial welcomed more than 1,800 babies in 2022. The hospital also has the only Level II NICU in Manatee County.



IMAGING TECHNOLOGY

Then: The first X-ray machine became available for use at the hospital in 1963.

Now: There are various radiological procedures that the hospital offers such as: digital X-rays, CT scans, MRIs, nuclear medicine, and ultrasounds. Manatee Memorial is accredited by the ACR (American College of Radiology), which is the largest organization of radiologists in the nation.



GIFT SHOP

Then: The hospital has always strived to provide a quality experience to patients and visitors alike.

Now: What began as candy strippers who assisted staff at the hospital, has now become the Shoppe on the River gift shop providing a retail experience for visitors and employees to purchase novelties for every season.



EMERGENCY ROOM

Then: The original ER building was built in 1977 and was officially opened in 1979. In 1990, the building was remodeled and expanded.

Now: An expanded ER, which includes 48 beds. In addition to this, we also have two free-standing emergency rooms in Sun City Center and Bayshore Gardens, with a future facility planned to open in Palma Sola in 2024.



Physicians are on the medical staff of Manatee Memorial Hospital, but, with limited exceptions, are independent practitioners who are not employees or agents of Manatee Memorial Hospital. The hospital shall not be liable for actions or treatments provided by physicians. For language assistance, disability accommodations and the nondiscrimination notice, visit the hospital's website.

Upper Cervical Care Beneficial for Children

By Dr. Drew Hall

Some adults may wonder why more and more children are starting to see Upper Cervical Chiropractors. That's a good question and the answer is simple: whether we have a large spine or a small spine, if that spine is creating nerve distress then our bodies will not be able to operate properly.

The Nervous System is the Master Control of the Body

The nervous system is the master control system of our body and the messages exchanged between the brain and body (through billions of nerves) guide the transformation of a newborn child into an adult. Each message provides instructions to the child's growing body to provide for growth and repair of tissues, coordination of muscle activity, immune function, respiration and digestion among others.

As with adults, an upper cervical (neck) misalignment can have significant effects upon the nervous system's ability to transmit information to and from a child's body. If communication channels become fuzzy, distorted or damaged then we experience all sorts of communication errors. For babies and children, this ineffective communication may play out as colic or irritability, an inability to suckle and breastfeed, poor sleep and immunity, frequent ear infections, developmental delays, digestion issues, asthma, behavioral problems, low energy, inability to concentrate, headaches, etc – the list is endless. In fact, regardless of what the end result or symptom may be, all roads lead back to the body's ability to self-regulate and function at a peak level.

While upper cervical care may be able to help with a number of health issues, our focus is not treating conditions; rather, our focus is on ensuring the nervous system has every opportunity to work efficiently and effectively.

How Do Children get Nerve Irritation?

Nerve irritations (or vertebral subluxations) occur as a part of normal daily life. They result from physical, chemical and emotional stressors or 'insults' to our health, such as knocks and falls, bad posture, prolonged postures, stomach sleeping, poor food choices, dehydration, exposure to chemicals and toxins, and stress and anxiety.



Even before these lifestyle stressors have an impact, nerve irritation can occur in the uterus from awkward positioning, restriction of movement, and exposure to toxins, and from birth complications such as long labors, very fast labors, forceps or caesarean delivery. Even during the gentlest of births, presentation of the baby's head through the birth canal requires physical pressure exerted by the mother. This can force the baby's neck to twist or bend causing misalignment of the upper cervical vertebrae.

A study published in the *Journal of Manual Medicine* revealed that nearly 80% of all children are born with blocked or reduced nerve impulses due to a misalignment of the top bone in the spine called the Atlas. Dr. Gutmann, the medical doctor who performed the research, concluded that the blocked nerve impulses can cause motor and developmental impairments, as well as lowered resistance to infections, especially ear, nose and throat infections.

If the newborn makes it through the birthing process unaffected, the inevitable tumbles and falls of childhood increase the risk of injury to the upper cervical spine potentially compromising brain-body communication.

When we appreciate how important the nervous system is and how easily it can be hindered and impaired it makes sense that more parents are having their child's spine and nervous system assessed.

10 Reasons Parents Take Their Children to See Upper Cervical Doctors

1. To maximize the child's brain and nerve development (neural plasticity).
2. To enhance their child's overall health and wellbeing.
3. To strengthen immunity and reduce the incidence of colds, ear infections and general illness.
4. To help with colic and irritability.
5. To help with asthma, breathing difficulties and allergies.
6. To improve spinal posture.
7. To improve their child's ability to concentrate.
8. To assist with behavioral disorders and enhance emotional wellbeing.
9. To help alleviate digestive problems.
10. To assist with bed-wetting and sleep issues.

Because the upper cervical spine is the most mobile area of the entire spine, it is particularly vulnerable to injury, making it the most common location for spinal problems to occur. Get your children checked for a misalignment today!

If you are interested in learning more about how upper cervical care can benefit the smaller and younger members of your family, call Sarasota Upper Cervical Chiropractic and schedule a consultation with Dr. Drew Hall. Call 941-259-1891 today!



Dr. Drew Hall



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Intranasal Esketamine (Spravato®)

A Promising Treatment Modality for Treatment-Resistant Depression

By Steven Stein, MD - Board-certified Psychiatrist

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

Understanding Treatment-Resistant Depression

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

The Rise of Intranasal Esketamine

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

The Evidence and Efficacy of Intranasal Esketamine

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

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

Safety and Considerations

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

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

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

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

Steven Stein, MD

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

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

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

A Modern Approach

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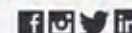
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Christopher Dillingham, M.D., Charles Stewart, M.D., Philip Meinhardt, M.D., Christopher Sforzo, M.D.

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

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

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

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

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



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EMPOWERING LIVES: THE EVOLVING LANDSCAPE OF CROHN'S DISEASE AND COLITIS TREATMENT

Crohn's Disease and Ulcerative Colitis, collectively known as Inflammatory Bowel Diseases (IBD), significantly impact millions worldwide. With Paragon Healthcare's dedication, the landscape of treating these conditions is shifting positively. In 2022, Paragon's commitment was evident, administering nearly 15,000 infusions to aid patients. In the ongoing year, that number soared to over 16,000, showcasing a vital increase in support for IBD patients in 2023.

Paragon Healthcare's arsenal of therapies encompasses a diverse range, tailoring treatments to individual needs. From Albumin to Avsola, Cimzia, Entyvio, Infliximab (and biosimilars), Iron (Injectafer, Monoferic, Venofer), Hydration, Skyrizi IV, Steroids, and Stelara (IV & subcutaneous), this comprehensive array reflects the commitment to personalized care.

The impact of these treatments goes beyond mere numbers; it echoes in the stories of individuals battling IBD. Each infusion represents a step towards betterment, offering relief from the relentless symptoms that define these conditions. Through Paragon Healthcare's interventions, lives are being transformed, allowing patients to regain control and quality of life amidst their challenging journey with Crohn's Disease and Colitis.

The rise in administered infusions from 2022 to 2023 is not just statistical growth; it's a testament to the continuous advancements in healthcare. It mirrors the ongoing efforts to enhance treatment accessibility, efficacy, and patient experience. It signifies a collective stride towards a future where IBD is better understood and managed.

However, awareness remains a cornerstone in this journey. Educating individuals about Crohn's Disease and Colitis is pivotal in fostering a supportive and informed community. It's crucial to demystify misconceptions surrounding these conditions, cultivating empathy and understanding among the public.



Moreover, the integration of innovative therapies like Skyrizi IV alongside established treatments showcases a commitment to exploring and embracing cutting-edge solutions. This proactive approach underlines Paragon Healthcare's dedication to not just meeting current needs but also anticipating and addressing future challenges in IBD treatment.

The significance of Paragon Healthcare's impact extends beyond the medical realm. It's a beacon of hope for those navigating the complexities of IBD. Each infusion administered represents a compassionate touch, a lifeline that propels patients towards a better tomorrow.

Looking ahead, the trajectory of Crohn's Disease and Colitis treatment is promising, bolstered by the dedication of organizations like Paragon Healthcare. As research progresses and technology evolves, the possibilities for improved therapies and outcomes continue to expand.

In conclusion, the strides made by Paragon Healthcare in administering infusions and their diverse treatment options exemplify a paradigm shift in Crohn's Disease and Colitis care. Their unwavering commitment not only transforms statistics but fundamentally reshapes lives. Together, as awareness grows and advancements continue, a future where those battling IBD find solace, support, and effective treatments draws nearer.

This ongoing commitment to innovation and patient-centric care heralds a future where the burdens of Crohn's Disease and Colitis may be alleviated, enabling individuals to live life beyond the confines of their conditions.

Paragon Healthcare

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



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Exploring the Vital Role of Urgent Care Services in Modern Healthcare

By Alfonso L. Espinel, MD

In today's fast-paced world, urgent care services have emerged as a crucial component of the healthcare landscape, catering to immediate medical needs without the wait times often associated with traditional hospitals. These facilities offer a wide array of services, from rapid swab testing for ailments like flu and strep throat to comprehensive diagnostic tools like X-rays and EKGs, providing quick and efficient solutions for a spectrum of medical concerns.

Rapid swab testing has become a hallmark of urgent care centers, enabling individuals to receive prompt diagnoses for various infectious diseases. With the ability to swiftly detect flu, strep throat, and other viral or bacterial infections, these tests facilitate early treatment and prevent the spread of illness within communities.

Moreover, urgent care centers have evolved to encompass advanced diagnostic capabilities, including X-rays and EKGs. These services allow for immediate assessments of injuries, such as fractures or sprains, as well as rapid evaluation of cardiac conditions, ensuring timely interventions and appropriate treatment plans.

Beyond diagnostics, urgent care facilities specialize in providing urgent medical procedures. From minor injuries requiring stitches to more complex wound care, these centers are equipped with skilled medical professionals who can promptly attend to injuries, minimizing the risk of complications and expediting the healing process.

One of the primary advantages of urgent care services is their accessibility and convenience. With extended operating hours, including evenings and weekends, they offer flexibility for individuals who require medical attention outside of typical office hours. This accessibility reduces the burden on emergency rooms, alleviating congestion and enabling hospitals to focus on critical cases.

The efficiency and effectiveness of urgent care services have significantly impacted healthcare delivery, especially in managing non-life-threatening emergencies. Patients appreciate the streamlined experience, avoiding lengthy waits while receiving quality care for their immediate medical needs.

Urgent care services play a pivotal role in modern healthcare by providing rapid swab testing, diagnostic tools like X-rays and EKGs, and timely procedures such as stitches. Their accessibility, efficiency, and focus on immediate medical needs contribute significantly to the healthcare ecosystem, offering convenience and swift solutions to patients seeking prompt attention for non-life-threatening conditions.

Top 5 Things to Know About PrimeHealth Urgent Care

1. Providing care for patients aged 6 months and older.

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2. Bilingual Staff.

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3. Cost-Effective.

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- Employment Physicals
- Flu Testing & Treatment
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- Minor Abrasions, Burns, Contusions, Cuts & Scrapes
- Pre-Operative Clearance Evaluations
- School & Sports Physicals, Sprains, Strains, Dislocations
- Sinus Infections, Sore Throat & Strep
- STD Testing & Treatment
- UTI Treatment & Vaginal Infections

Alfonso L. Espinel, MD

Dr. Espinel is certified by the American Board of Family Medicine. He attended the Catholic University in Ecuador and the University of Miami - Jackson Memorial Hospital followed by a preliminary General Surgery residency at Mount Sinai Medical Center in New York City, NY and Yale New Haven Hospital in New Haven, CT. Dr. Espinel completed his Family Medicine residency in Montgomery, AL and has practiced emergency medicine for over 10 years.

Dr. Espinel is a member of the American Academy of Family Physicians, American Medical Association, Florida Medical Association, Florida Academy of Family Physicians, Manatee County Medical Society, Parrish Civic Association, Manatee Chamber of Commerce and Gulf Coast Latin Chamber of Commerce. He also holds certifications in Advanced Trauma Life Support, Advanced Cardiovascular Life Support, Pediatric Advanced Life Support and Basic Life Support.

Dr. Espinel has served as a physician for Turning Points - a non-profit organization dedicated to providing free medical care to the homeless in Manatee County. Dr. Espinel and his staff are committed to providing the most compassionate and quality healthcare to people of all ages.

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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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At Physicians Rehabilitation, we offer Semaglutide injections for weight loss. Approved by the FDA for weight loss in June of 2022, using Semaglutide, 90% of patients are losing 5% or more of their body weight.

Semaglutide (Wegovy/Ozempic generic) injections:

- Increase insulin production
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- Suppress hunger
- It signals your brain that you are full so you can lose weight without feeling like you are depriving yourself.

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!!



Can Holiday Stress Cause You to Grind Your Teeth?

By Dr. Amanda Rizner

Teeth grinding, or bruxism, is a common dental condition that affects individuals across various age groups. It is characterized by the clenching or grinding of teeth, often involuntarily, and can occur during the day or night. While occasional teeth grinding may not cause significant harm, chronic and severe cases can lead to various adverse effects on the dentition. In this discussion, we will explore the causes, symptoms, and consequences of teeth grinding and shed light on how this habit can impact one's overall oral health.

Causes and Symptoms

Bruxism, per the American Academy of Sleep Medicine, is defined as "the repetitive jaw muscle activity characterized by the clenching or grinding of teeth and/or bracing or thrusting of the mandible." Sleep bruxism occurs in 13 % of adults while awake bruxism occurs in around 22% of the population. Teeth grinding can result from a combination of factors, including stress, anxiety, misaligned teeth, and sleep disorders. During the day, individuals may grind or clench their teeth due to stress or as a response to concentration. Conversely, nocturnal teeth grinding often occurs during sleep and is associated with a range of sleep-related issues, such as sleep apnea.

The symptoms of teeth grinding can vary and may include headaches, jaw pain, earaches, and facial soreness. Many individuals have no symptoms and are unaware that they grind their teeth until a dentist identifies signs of wear during a routine examination. Common indicators include flattened or chipped teeth, increased tooth sensitivity, and broken restorations.

Effects on Tooth Structure

Bruxism exerts excessive force on the teeth, which can lead to the destruction of enamel, the protective outer layer of the teeth. Enamel is the hardest substance in the human body, but constant grinding can wear it down, exposing the underlying dentin layer. Dentin is softer and more susceptible to decay, making affected teeth more prone to cavities.

Furthermore, the continuous grinding motion can cause micro-fractures in the teeth, compromising their structural integrity. This can result in the need for restorative dental procedures such as crowns, bridges, or even tooth extraction in severe cases where the fracture is so severe it leads to the tooth being non restorable.

Impact on Jaw and Muscles

The temporomandibular joint (TMJ), which connects the jaw to the skull, can be adversely affected by bruxism. The repetitive grinding motion places strain on the TMJ, leading to jaw pain and dysfunction. Individuals with bruxism may experience difficulty in opening and closing their mouths, a condition known as temporomandibular joint disorder (TMD).

Moreover, the surrounding muscles, including those in the face and neck, can become fatigued and sore. This can result in chronic headaches and contribute to the overall discomfort experienced by individuals who grind their teeth regularly. On average, a person can create 150 psi of force while chewing naturally. Bruxism has been shown to create almost double this psi, and most of the time unknowingly at night.

Contributing Factors and Risk Factors

Several factors can contribute to the development and exacerbation of teeth grinding. Stress and anxiety are significant contributors, as individuals may unconsciously clench their jaws as a response to emotional tension. Malocclusion, or misalignment of the teeth, can also play a role, as it disrupts the natural biting and chewing patterns, leading to increased wear on teeth.

Certain lifestyle factors, such as excessive caffeine intake and smoking, have been linked to an increased risk of bruxism. Additionally, individuals with sleep disorders, such as sleep apnea, are more prone to nocturnal teeth bruxism.

Prevention and Management

Preventing teeth grinding often involves addressing its underlying causes. Stress management techniques, daily exercises, physical therapy, and even acupuncture can be beneficial for those who grind their teeth due to emotional factors. Dental interventions, such as the use of mouthguards or splints, can help protect the teeth from the damaging effects of grinding, especially during sleep. In severe cases, dentists may collaborate with healthcare professionals to manage sleep disorders contributing to bruxism by sending patients for a sleep study. Some dental and medical professionals may then recommend a sleep appliance in order to eliminate some airway issues that may be causing the bruxism.

Conclusion

Bruxism poses a significant threat to oral health, affecting not only the structure of the teeth but also the jaw joint and surrounding muscles. Understanding the causes, symptoms, and consequences of bruxism is essential for both individuals and healthcare professionals. Early detection and appropriate intervention can mitigate the damaging effects of teeth grinding, preserving the integrity of the dentition and promoting overall oral well-being. Regular dental check-ups, coupled with lifestyle modifications and stress management, play crucial roles in preventing and managing the impact of bruxism on the dentition.



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Effective & Proven Chronic Pain Relief with VAX-D®

By Craig S. Aderholdt, BSc, DC

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

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

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

How does VAX-D work?

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



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

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

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

Is VAX-D Right for Me?

You may be a candidate for VAX-D if:

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

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

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

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

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

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Dr. Craig S. Aderholdt, BSc, DC



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

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

Dr. Aderholdt also holds certification in chiropractic adjunctive physiotherapy from New York Chiropractic College and completed extensive postgraduate training in therapeutic modalities at National-Lincoln School. He is a member of the Florida Chiropractic Association and American Chiropractic Association and is a certified VAX-D consultant. He was also voted a Bradenton Herald People's Choice Awards Winner for 2008, 2022 and is the Manatee Herald-Tribune Awards winner for 2015, 2016, 2017, 2020 and 2021 and Sarasota Herald-Tribune finalist for 2016, 2017, 2018, 2020, 2021, 2023 and winner in 2019.



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REVITALIZE YOUR WELLNESS:

Exploring IV Therapy for Boosting Health and Vitality

By Dr. Pamela Chapman, The Beauty and Wellness Institute

In today's fast-paced world, maintaining optimal health and vitality can be a challenge. However, an innovative solution gaining traction is IV therapy, a method that delivers essential vitamins and fluids directly into the bloodstream. This technique has gained popularity for its ability to swiftly address a myriad of ailments, ranging from dehydration and hangovers to flu and stomach bugs.

IV therapy works wonders in replenishing lost fluids and essential nutrients efficiently. Dehydration, a common concern due to various factors like intense workouts, excessive heat, or illness, can lead to fatigue, dizziness, and reduced cognitive function. IV therapy quickly rehydrates the body, assisting in restoring energy levels and overall well-being.

Moreover, after a night of revelry, the dreaded hangover can leave individuals feeling drained and nauseous. IV therapy infused with key vitamins like B12, B Complex, and Vitamin C works as a potent remedy, alleviating hangover symptoms by replenishing nutrients and aiding in detoxification.

During the flu season, when the immune system needs extra support, IV therapy becomes a valuable ally. Vitamin C, known for its immune-boosting properties, administered intravenously, strengthens the body's defense mechanism, potentially reducing the severity and duration of flu symptoms.

Additionally, stomach bugs causing vomiting and diarrhea can severely deplete the body of essential fluids and electrolytes. IV therapy provides a direct and efficient route to restore these vital elements, aiding in quicker recovery and preventing complications from dehydration.

The inclusion of specific vitamins in IV therapy plays a pivotal role in enhancing its effectiveness. Vitamin B12, crucial for nerve function and energy production, contributes to combating fatigue and promoting overall vitality. B Complex vitamins, a group of eight essential nutrients, support numerous bodily functions, including energy metabolism and the nervous system. Glutathione, a powerful antioxidant, helps detoxify the body and fortify the immune system.

The process of IV therapy is relatively simple. A qualified healthcare professional inserts a small needle into a vein, allowing the customized solution of fluids and vitamins to flow directly into the bloodstream. This method bypasses the digestive system, ensuring maximum absorption and immediate effects.

In conclusion, IV therapy emerges as a promising solution for swiftly revitalizing the body, especially during times of dehydration, hangovers, flu, and stomach bugs. Its ability to deliver a potent blend of essential vitamins and fluids directly into the bloodstream makes it a convenient and effective option for those seeking rapid recovery and an instant boost in well-being. Always remember, before embarking on any medical treatment, consulting a healthcare professional is key to ensuring the best possible outcome for your health.

At The Beauty and Wellness Institute, Dr. Chapman offers Functional Medicine and Aesthetics services to help women feel beautiful inside and out. Board Certified in Family Medicine and trained in Functional Medicine through the Institute of Functional Medicine, Dr. Chapman has combined her passion for health, aesthetics and community into a practice bringing women together to enjoy dynamic, youthful lives. She focuses on underlying root causes of chronic illness and encourages a holistic approach to healing through extended one on one visits as well as group visits that can promote support and accountability. Trained in Aesthetics, she also offers non-surgical cosmetic procedures including Botox, Fillers, Kybella, HIFU for skin tightening and targeted fat reduction, Vaginal Rejuvenation, Laser Hair Removal, and more.



DR. PAMELA CHAPMAN

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Dr. Pamela Chapman

Dr. Chapman believes that every woman has a story that is worthy of being truly heard. By listening to their stories and partnering with her patients to navigate their concerns, she reminds women that they deserve to feel radiant. Through the modalities of Functional Medicine, she helps each woman to look within herself in order to find the root cause of her concerns and restore her innate wellness.

A native of South Louisiana, Dr. Chapman developed a love of the culture and the ease that time seems to move with there. She studied at Louisiana State University, earning a bachelor of science in biochemistry, and still returns often to visit friends and family. She relocated to Florida for medical school, receiving her doctorate in Osteopathic Medicine from LECOM. She went on to serve as Chief Patient Advocate and Chief Resident in Family Medicine at Saint Petersburg General Hospital.

Board Certified in Family Medicine and OMT, Dr. Chapman currently resides and practices medicine in Bradenton, Florida. She is a member of IFM, AOA, ACOFP, and AAFP.

Dr. Chapman and her husband love spending time walking on Anna Maria Island, camping, exploring and traveling together.

FREE 10 MINUTE DISCOVERY CALL

Take the free online health assessment and schedule a discovery call with Dr. Chapman to review your health concerns.



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

By Dr. David S. Zamikoff

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

Natural Healing Arts Medical Center

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

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THE INTRIGUING LINK BETWEEN GUT HEALTH, METABOLIC HEALTH, AND OUR MENTAL WELL-BEING

By Jared J. Wallen, MD

In recent years, a burgeoning field of research has progressively unveiled a fascinating narrative: our mental health is intricately tied not just to our brain or psychological experiences, but also to our gut health and overall metabolic state. This understanding marks a paradigm shift, especially relevant in holistic health approaches like those championed by Max Performance Health. As a physician with expertise in Functional Medicine, the significance of these findings cannot be overstated, particularly in addressing the rising tide of mental health issues such as anxiety and depression.

The Gut-Brain Axis: A Two-Way Street

The gut-brain axis, a bidirectional communication highway linking the enteric and central nervous systems, has emerged as a key player in this narrative. The gut microbiota – the trillions of microorganisms residing in our gastrointestinal tract – can produce and modulate neurotransmitters and metabolic pathways that significantly impact brain function and mental health. In fact, some research suggests that there are 10 times the number of messages being sent from the gut to the brain than vice versa.

The Microbiota's Influence

Ninety-five percent of Serotonin, a neurotransmitter pivotal in regulating mood, appetite, and sleep, is predominantly produced in the gut. Disruptions in gut microbiota can lead to an imbalance in serotonin levels, potentially leading to mood disorders like anxiety and depression. Moreover, gut bacteria produce other neuroactive substances, including GABA and dopamine, further influencing mental health.

The Role of Inflammation

Inflammation is another critical link between gut health and mental wellbeing. An imbalanced gut microbiota can trigger an inflammatory response that extends beyond the gut, affecting the brain and potentially leading to neuroinflammation, a known contributor to various psychiatric disorders.

Metabolic Health: The Fuel of Mental Well-being

Metabolic health, referring to the optimal functioning of metabolic processes (including glucose and lipid metabolism), is another crucial factor. Poor metabolic health, often manifested as conditions like obesity, insulin resistance, and type 2 diabetes, can significantly impact mental health. Unfortunately, upwards of 88-93% of our populations is metabolically unhealthy and that includes 2/3rds of "skinny" people.

Insulin Resistance and Brain Function

Insulin plays a vital role not just in regulating blood sugar levels but also in brain function. Insulin resistance, a hallmark of metabolic syndrome, has been linked to cognitive impairments and a higher risk of mood disorders. This relationship can be attributed to several mechanisms, including impaired glucose metabolism in the brain, oxidative stress, and inflammation.

The Stress-Obesity-Mental Health Triangle

Stress, both psychological and physiological, can lead to increased cortisol levels, contributing to weight gain and obesity. This relationship creates a vicious cycle: obesity exacerbates stress responses and inflammation, which in turn can deteriorate mental health.

Integrating Gut and Metabolic Health in Mental Health Care

Understanding these connections opens new vistas for therapeutic interventions in mental health care. Holistic approaches that integrate diet, lifestyle modifications, and functional medicine can be particularly effective.

Diet: The Cornerstone of Gut and Metabolic Health

Dietary choices significantly impact gut microbiota and metabolic health. A diet rich in fiber, fermented foods, and diverse plant-based foods can promote a healthy gut microbiota, while diets low in processed foods and high in fruits, vegetables, and omega-3 fatty acids can improve metabolic parameters. Further, a ketogenic diet has been suggested by multiple studies to stabilize another neurotransmitter called GABA, which has been shown to lead to better mental focus, reduced stress, and anxiety. Finally, intermittent fasting has been suggested to alter the gut microbiome in two very important ways: increasing diversity and promoting microbial remodeling. Both of which offer positive benefits for gut health.

Lifestyle Modifications

Regular physical activity, stress management techniques (like mindfulness, meditation, and yoga), and adequate sleep are vital. These not only help in maintaining a healthy gut microbiome and metabolic state but also directly enhance mental health.

Functional Medicine: A Personalized Approach

Functional medicine's emphasis on individualized, holistic care is well-suited to tackle these complex interactions. Assessing individual dietary habits, lifestyle factors, and gut microbiome compositions can guide personalized interventions.

Conclusion: A New Perspective on Mental Health

abolic-mental health connections necessitates a broader perspective in tackling mental health disorders. This perspective champions a more preventative, integrative approach, addressing root causes rather than just symptoms. For companies like Max Performance Health, this means adopting a multifaceted strategy that includes dietary guidance, lifestyle changes, and possibly personalized microbiome interventions to optimize wellness both physically and mentally.

In embracing this holistic paradigm, we are not just addressing specific health issues but moving towards a more sustainable, health-optimizing system, transcending the limitations of traditional "sick care." This approach represents a beacon of hope, particularly for those grappling with mental health challenges, steering us towards a future where mental wellbeing is integrally linked to our overall physiological health.

Jared J. Wallen, MD is the CEO and Physician at MAX Performance Health, a soon to be graduate of the Institute of Functional Medicine, and thoroughly enjoys optimizing the health of Floridians between the ages of 18-64 so that they might be able to live each day more fully, and be blessed with more days here on our beautiful earth so that they can have more time for joy, adventure, love, and giving. Dr. Jared can be reached at www.maxperformancehealthfl.com.





Navigating Urinary Tract Infections in Postmenopausal Women

By Christine King, PA-C

Urinary tract infections (UTIs) are a common concern among postmenopausal women, often posing significant discomfort and potential complications. The shift in hormone levels during menopause alters the urinary tract's environment, making women more susceptible to these infections. However, several preventive measures and treatment strategies can help manage and alleviate UTIs in this demographic.

Understanding UTIs in Postmenopausal Women
Postmenopausal hormonal changes result in reduced estrogen levels, impacting the urinary tract's defense mechanisms. The decline in estrogen compromises the lining of the urinary tract, weakening its ability to ward off bacteria. As a consequence, bacteria, primarily *E. coli*, can thrive and cause UTIs more easily in postmenopausal women.

PREVENTIVE MEASURES

- 1. Hydration:** Encouraging adequate water intake helps flush out bacteria from the urinary system, reducing the risk of infection.
- 2. Cranberry Products:** While controversial, some evidence suggests that cranberry products may prevent bacteria from adhering to the urinary tract lining, potentially reducing UTI occurrences.
- 3. Maintaining Good Hygiene:** Proper genital hygiene, including wiping from front to back after using the restroom, helps prevent the spread of bacteria to the urinary tract.

4. Avoidance of Irritants: Limiting consumption of caffeine, alcohol, and spicy foods can help minimize irritation to the bladder and urinary tract.

5. Regular Urination and Emptying Bladder Completely: Postmenopausal women should ensure regular, complete emptying of the bladder to minimize the chance of bacterial growth.

TREATMENT APPROACHES

1. Antibiotics: Most UTIs in postmenopausal women are treated with a course of antibiotics. However, antibiotic resistance is a concern, necessitating proper diagnosis and prescription by a healthcare professional.

2. Estrogen Therapy: Topical estrogen therapy can help restore the lining of the urinary tract, enhancing its defense against bacteria. It's an option worth discussing with a healthcare provider for some women.

3. Natural Remedies: Probiotics, D-mannose, and herbal supplements are being explored for their potential in preventing and treating UTIs. While further research is needed, some women find relief through these alternatives.

4. Home Remedies for Comfort: Applying a heating pad to the abdomen or using over-the-counter pain relievers can alleviate discomfort while waiting for medical treatment.

UTIs in postmenopausal women can significantly impact their quality of life, but preventive measures and effective treatment approaches exist to manage and reduce the frequency of these infections. It's crucial for women experiencing UTI symptoms to seek prompt medical attention to avoid complications and receive appropriate treatment tailored to their individual needs.

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

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

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

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

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TBS: Osteo – Because Bone Structure Matters

Osteoporosis is a condition characterized by the weakening of bones, leading to an increased risk of fractures. Early detection and management of osteoporosis are crucial for preventing fractures and maintaining bone health. One innovative technology that has been integrated into imaging services for the diagnosis and management of osteoporosis is TBS iNsign™.

TBS iNsign™ is a software solution designed to assess bone microarchitecture, providing valuable insights into bone quality beyond what traditional bone density measurements can offer. TBS stands for Trabecular Bone Score, which refers to the evaluation of the microarchitecture of trabecular bone, the spongy bone tissue that makes up the interior of bones.

This technology enhances the screening process for osteoporosis and fracture risk by offering a more comprehensive understanding of bone health. Traditional methods, such as Dual-Energy X-ray Absorptiometry (DEXA) scans, primarily focus on bone mineral density. While bone mineral density is important in assessing bone strength, it doesn't provide a complete picture of bone quality.

TBS iNsign™ works by analyzing the texture and pattern of trabecular bone in the spine. Trabecular bone is vital for maintaining bone strength, and changes in its microarchitecture can indicate osteoporosis-related issues. The software generates a TBS score, which is then used with bone mineral density measurements to assess overall bone health.

The integration of TBS iNsign™ into imaging services brings several advantages to the table:

- 1. Improved Fracture Risk Prediction:** By assessing trabecular bone microarchitecture, TBS iNsign™ enhances the fracture risk prediction beyond what traditional methods can achieve. This additional information is valuable for healthcare providers in identifying individuals at a higher risk of fractures.
- 2. Personalized Treatment Approaches:** Understanding bone mineral density and trabecular bone quality allows for more personalized approaches to osteoporosis management. Healthcare providers can tailor interventions based on a more comprehensive patient bone health assessment.



**Ask your medical provider
about Advanced Bone
Densitometry with TBS!**



50% of patients at risk of fracture are potentially missed by bone densitometry alone! You need additional information about your bone quality! This can be assessed by TBS.

3. Early Detection: TBS iNsign™ contributes to the early detection of changes in bone microarchitecture, enabling proactive measures to be taken before significant bone loss occurs. Early intervention is crucial in preventing fractures and maintaining overall bone health.

In addition to the exciting integration of TBS iNsign™ into our imaging services for osteoporosis diagnosis and management, some key points enhance the overall patient experience and accessibility to this advanced technology:

- **Availability Across Locations:** TBS iNsign™ will be available at all three of our locations by mid-December. This widespread implementation ensures that patients can conveniently access this innovative screening technology, making it a seamless part of their healthcare journey.
- **Patient Empowerment:** To maximize the benefits of TBS iNsign™, we encourage patients to proactively ask for TBS when scheduling their annual Bone Density/DEXA exams. This prompts a discussion between patients and healthcare providers about the relevance of TBS in their specific bone health assessment.
- **Insurance Coverage:** Good news for patients—insurance is covering the cost of TBS iNsign™. While we have taken steps to facilitate insurance coverage, we still encourage patients to inquire with their insurance providers to ensure a clear understanding of the coverage details.
- **Efficiency and Safety:** Integrating TBS iNsign™ into the screening process comes with no additional time requirements for the exam. Patients can expect the same efficiency level during their Bone Density/DEXA scans while gaining the added benefits of TBS iNsign™. Importantly, there is no increase in radiation exposure associated with the inclusion of TBS iNsign™, ensuring the safety of the screening process.

By disseminating this information, we aim to empower patients to participate in their bone health actively. The ease of access across our locations,

insurance coverage, and the seamless integration of TBS iNsign™ into existing screening procedures underscores our commitment to providing comprehensive and patient-friendly healthcare services.

As always, readers are encouraged to discuss the inclusion of TBS iNsign™ in their screenings with their healthcare providers. This collaborative approach ensures individuals receive personalized guidance based on their unique health needs and circumstances.

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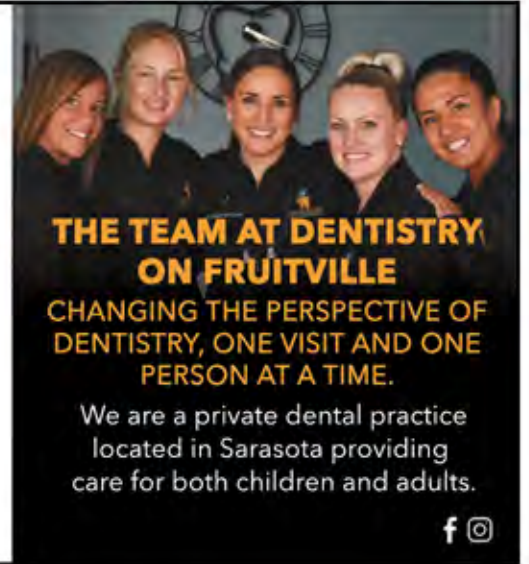


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BACK PAIN INSTITUTE OF WEST FLORIDA

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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PROMOTING COMFORT AND SUSTAINABILITY: Bidets as a Game-Changer for Crohn's and Colitis Awareness

In a world where health conditions like Crohn's disease and ulcerative colitis affect millions, raising awareness is crucial. Beyond medical treatments and support, simple changes in daily habits can make a significant difference. Enter bidets – a solution that not only aids those with inflammatory bowel diseases (IBD) but also promotes sustainability and well-being for everyone.

Crohn's disease and ulcerative colitis are chronic inflammatory conditions that affect the digestive tract, causing symptoms like abdominal pain, diarrhea, and fatigue. Individuals battling these conditions often endure the discomfort of frequent restroom visits, exacerbating the irritation caused by toilet paper. This is where bidets emerge as unsung heroes, offering a gentle and effective alternative.

By reducing reliance on traditional toilet paper, bidets alleviate the risk of irritation and discomfort associated with Crohn's and colitis. The gentle cleansing stream of water not only provides relief but also promotes better hygiene, crucial for those with compromised immune systems. This simple yet impactful shift can significantly improve the quality of life for individuals managing these challenging conditions.

However, the benefits of bidets extend far beyond the realm of IBD. Embracing bidet usage introduces a sustainable approach to personal hygiene by



drastically reducing toilet paper consumption. With environmental concerns at the forefront of global conversations, bidets contribute to a greener planet by cutting down on the vast amounts of paper products used daily.

The environmental impact of traditional toilet paper production is substantial, involving deforestation, water usage, and energy consumption. Bidets, on the other hand, require minimal resources – a small amount of water to generate a cleansing spray. By adopting bidet technology, individuals can actively participate in reducing their ecological footprint and promoting a more sustainable future.

Moreover, bidets cater to a broader audience by addressing common issues associated with traditional toilet paper use. Skin irritation, discomfort, and even allergic reactions are common problems for many, and bidets offer a gentle and efficient solution. The soothing water stream not only cleans but also refreshes, providing a more comfortable experience for everyone.

As we advocate for Crohn's and Colitis Awareness, it's essential to recognize the interconnectedness of health, sustainability, and personal well-being. Bidets symbolize a shift towards a more compassionate and eco-conscious approach to personal hygiene. By embracing this technology, we not only stand in solidarity with those facing the challenges of IBD but also contribute to a healthier, more sustainable world for everyone. Let's make bidets a symbol of awareness, comfort, and environmental responsibility – a small change that can have a profound impact on individuals and the planet alike.

House of Bidets

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

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Navigating Life with Crohn's: A Comprehensive Guide to Medications and Management

Living with Crohn's Disease demands a nuanced and individualized approach to management. In this comprehensive guide, we will explore the specifics of managing Crohn's Disease with a focus on prominent medications, including Cimzia, Delzicol, Entyvio, Humira, Pentasa, and Skyrizi.

Understanding Crohn's Disease

Crohn's Disease is a chronic inflammatory condition that primarily affects the digestive system. It can lead to a range of symptoms, from abdominal pain and diarrhea to fatigue and weight loss. While the exact cause is unclear, a combination of genetic, environmental, and immune system factors is believed to contribute to its development.

MEDICATION SPOTLIGHT

1. Cimzia (Certolizumab Pegol)

Cimzia, belonging to the class of biologics, specifically targets tumor necrosis factor alpha (TNF-alpha) to reduce inflammation. Administered via injection, it has shown efficacy in inducing and maintaining remission for some individuals with moderate to severe Crohn's Disease.

2. Delzicol (Mesalamine)

Delzicol, an aminosalicylate, works as an anti-inflammatory agent, primarily used for treating mild to moderate symptoms of Crohn's Disease. Typically administered orally, it releases mesalamine in the colon to reduce inflammation and maintain remission.

3. Entyvio (Vedolizumab)

Entyvio, a gut-selective biologic, targets the alpha-4 beta-7 integrin to modulate the immune response specifically within the gastrointestinal tract. This makes it a valuable option for individuals who have not responded well to other treatments or those with concerns about systemic effects.

4. Humira (Adalimumab)

As one of the most widely prescribed biologics, Humira inhibits TNF-alpha, reducing inflammation and providing relief for those with moderate to severe Crohn's Disease. Administered via injection, it has demonstrated effectiveness in inducing and sustaining remission.



5. Pentasa (Mesalamine)

Similar to Delzicol, Pentasa is an aminosalicylate used to treat mild to moderate cases of Crohn's Disease. Administered orally, Pentasa releases mesalamine throughout the entire gastrointestinal tract, targeting inflammation in various parts of the digestive system.

6. Skyrizi (Risankizumab)

Skyrizi, originally developed for psoriasis, is being explored as a potential treatment for Crohn's Disease. It works by targeting interleukin-23 (IL-23), a cytokine involved in the inflammatory process. Research on its efficacy and safety in Crohn's Disease is ongoing.

NAVIGATING TREATMENT PLANS

Effectively managing Crohn's Disease involves collaboration between patients and healthcare providers to create personalized treatment plans. Factors such as the location and severity of inflammation, previous treatment responses, and potential side effects guide the decision-making process.

Regular communication with healthcare professionals is crucial to monitor treatment efficacy and adjust plans as needed. In some cases, a combination of medications or a switch to a different treatment may be recommended to optimize outcomes.

CHALLENGES AND CONSIDERATIONS

While these medications offer significant relief for many individuals, challenges may arise. Possible side effects, the need for regular monitoring, and

the potential for developing antibodies to certain biologics are factors that necessitate careful consideration and ongoing dialogue between patients and healthcare providers.

In the realm of Crohn's Disease management, a tailored and informed approach is key. By understanding the nuances of medications like Cimzia, Delzicol, Entyvio, Humira, Pentasa, and Skyrizi, individuals living with Crohn's can actively engage in their healthcare journey. Regular communication with healthcare professionals, a commitment to treatment adherence, and a holistic approach to well-being empower individuals to navigate the challenges of Crohn's Disease with resilience and hope.

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CHRON'S			
DRUG NAME	Retail Cost	Prescription Hope	Total Savings
Cimzia	\$5,193.00	\$60.00	\$5,133.00
Delzicol	\$192.00	\$60.00	\$132.00
Entyvio	\$7,854.00	\$60.00	\$7,794.00
Humira	\$6,654.00	\$60.00	\$6,594.00
Pentasa	\$103.00	\$60.00	\$43.00
Skyrizi	\$18,953.00	\$60.00	\$18,893.00

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It's A Wonderful Life

By Pastor Timothy Neptune

Every year around this time the old classic Christmas movies start coming on television. It is easy to start a conversation at work by simply asking, "So, what's your favorite Christmas movie?" Mine is Frank Capra's *It's A Wonderful Life*.

Some of you might be able to relate to George Bailey this holiday season—lost, confused, stressed out, or at the end of your rope. Perhaps you are even thinking that it would be much easier to die than to go on living as you are.

Perhaps for you life isn't a joy right now. Maybe the debts are high and funds are low. It might even be difficult for you to even enjoy your family as you know you should. You may be wondering, "Is it really possible to live a wonderful life?"

I think the idea of a wonderful life is not that you can attain a wonderful life, but that it is an attitude that results from having certain issues settled in your life.

Truthfully, no one's life is wonderful—even Christ's life was filled with pain, hurt, loneliness, rejection, and sorrow. It is your attitude that determines how you "feel" about your life. You are the one responsible for settling the issues in your life and having an attitude of wonderment. So, what are the issues that need to be settled?

The first issue is to determine **what you are going to love**. To have a wonderful life, you start by having an attitude of love toward God and others. I say this first because where you choose to direct your love is going to affect every other area of your life. Love is a decision we make to place a high value on someone or something.

God loved us so much that He sent His Son Jesus to die for us. Jesus died to prove how much He loved us. God desires more than anything else to have a loving relationship with His creation. We were created to love God and other people. Maybe this Christmas it would be good for you to find a person or family in need and help them by buying some food or gifts. If you want to feel loved... start by loving others.

The second issue to settle is... **how am I going to live?** To have a wonderful life, you need an attitude of joy. This attitude deals with how you look at life. Are you a positive person or a negative person? If you are a person with joy, it simply means that you are cheerful. Over 350 times the Bible talks about us having a spirit of joy or rejoicing.

Joy isn't a feeling that is produced only when good things happen. Joy is the attitude by which we look at the things that happen to us and then respond in a way that lets everyone know we are trusting in God's grace in spite of our circumstances. Remember the disciples in the Bible... they had many negative things happen to them, yet in spite of it all, they had joy.

I've heard it said that you don't feel your way into an action but rather act your way into a feeling. If you want to be a joyful person... start acting joyful around others and you will most likely begin to genuinely feel joyful.

The third issue to settle is...**who are you going to help?** If you want to have a wonderful life, you've got to get beyond serving yourself, and start serving others. Isn't that the lesson that George Bailey learned? His life was wonderful because of all the people he was able to help in his lifetime.

When Clarence showed him what life would have been like had he never been born he realized that he really was making a difference in the world! His life did have purpose! Mr. Potter only cared about making money. Violet only cared about pleasure. But George understood a greater truth: life is better when you are working to make other people's lives better.

Understanding these things can make all the difference in the world. You are not here to fall in love with money and things—you're here to love God. You're not here to point out all the things that are wrong with the world—you're here to spread the joy that God has placed in your heart. You're not here to serve yourself—you're here to serve God and others—thus making a huge difference in the world.



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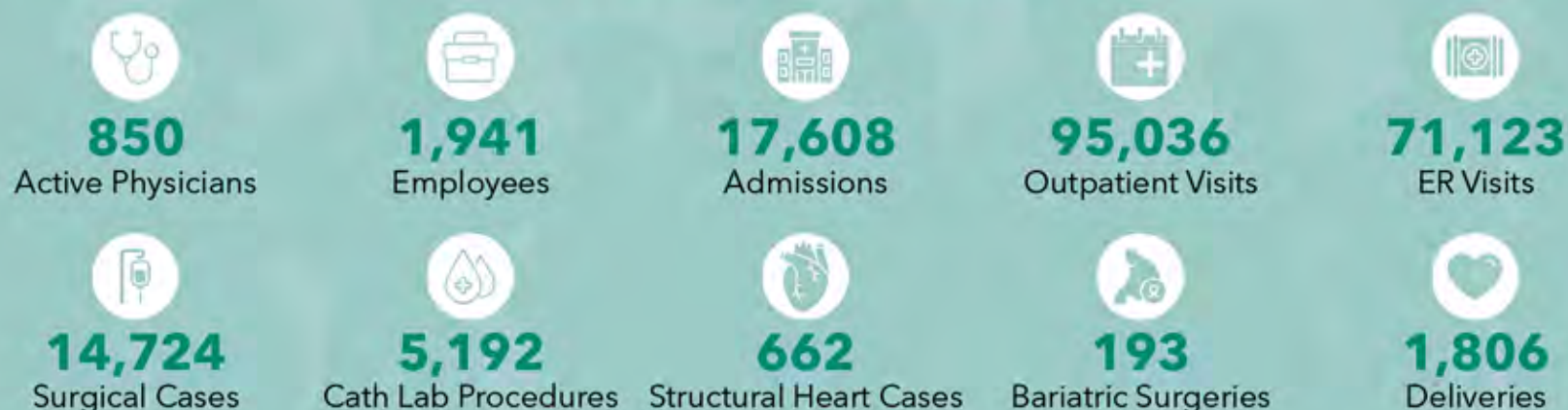
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Source: Data pulled from internal reporting from January to December 2022

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