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January 2024

Manatee/Sarasota Edition - Monthly

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Glaucoma: What You Need to Know

January is Glaucoma Awareness Month, the perfect time to raise awareness for this sight-stealing disease. Nearly all of us begin to experience some vision changes as we age, even if it's just having to rely on a cheap pair of readers from the grocery store. In order to remain independent as we get older, we need to know about age-related changes that could potentially affect our day-to-day lives. And vision loss – primarily glaucoma – is one of those changes.

What is Glaucoma?

According to the CDC, more than 3 million Americans have glaucoma, but only half actually know it. It is the second leading cause of blindness worldwide. Glaucoma is a group of diseases that damage the eye's optic nerve due to increased pressure inside the eye. The progression of the disease is usually gradual. However, once glaucoma has caused damage resulting in vision loss, the damage is permanent and irreparable.

Early Glaucoma Symptoms

Because vision loss caused by glaucoma cannot be restored, it's important that seniors watch out for signs and symptoms that could be an indication they have the eye disease. If caught early, glaucoma's progression can be slowed by various treatment methods, including surgery.

Some of the early signs of glaucoma include:

- Loss of side vision
- Inability to adjust to darkened rooms
- Blurred or foggy vision, especially when awakening
- Eye pain
- Severe headaches

Who's at Risk for Developing Glaucoma?

While anyone can get glaucoma, the risk is higher in people over the age of 60. Others with an increased risk of getting glaucoma include African Americans over the age of 40 and people who have diabetes. Glaucoma is also hereditary, so it's important to know your family history. According to the Glaucoma Research Foundation, your risk of developing primary open-angle glaucoma is up to nine times higher than average if one of your parents or siblings has the disease.



Other possible risk factors include:

- High myopia (nearsightedness)
- Hypertension
- Central corneal thickness less than .5 mm

Take Action to Prevent Glaucoma

Vision loss and glaucoma aren't a given just because you get older. There are steps you can take to protect your eyes and lower your risk of getting glaucoma. When it comes to this progressive eye disease, early detection and prevention are key.

Whether you fall into a high-risk category or not, make sure you're getting routine comprehensive dilated eye exams. These exams help to catch glaucoma and other eye diseases early when they are most treatable. Your eye care specialist will instruct you on how frequently you need to receive these exams. However, Medicare covers a glaucoma test once a year for people in high-risk groups, so be sure you take advantage of this benefit.

In addition to getting your eyes checked, you should try to do the following steps to help prevent glaucoma:

Exercise – Regular physical activity can help to lower intraocular pressure (IOP).

Maintain a stable weight – A high Body Mass Index (BMI) causes pressure in the eyes, while a low BMI can cause the optic nerve to press inward.

Stop smoking – Smoking causes thinning of the retinal nerve fiber layer, a symptom of glaucoma.

Monitor your blood pressure – Increased blood pressure results in increased eye pressure.

Glaucoma Treatment Options

Early onset of glaucoma usually affects your peripheral vision first – what you can see on the side of your head when looking ahead. If not treated in time and effectively, your central vision – vision used to see objects clearly – will also begin to be affected.

Early treatment intervention is vital to preserving your eyesight. Glaucoma is treated with eye drops, oral medication, and surgery. Treatment methods may be combined depending on your specific needs. The goal of treatment is to reduce the pressure in your eye.

You should always follow any specific directions given by your healthcare professional, whether it be your primary care provider or your eyecare specialist. Glaucoma is a highly detectable disease and one that can be managed properly. Make your eye health a priority. Schedule an appointment with a VIPcare provider to discuss your risk and what preventative measures you can take to protect your eyesight. Call **941-271-7897**.



Gerardo Pedroza, M.D.

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NEW YEAR, NEW YOU

The bariatric surgery journey can be a life changing, rewarding experience. What if a year from today you could look and feel like a new person? Sometimes the hardest part of this journey is the first phone call. **Stelios Rekkas, MD, FACS, FASMBS**, is the physician and director for Manatee Memorial Hospital Surgical Weight Loss Center. His bariatric coordinator, Cate Roskind, shared the process steps to surgery to help patients have a better understanding of this experience.

I would like more information about bariatric surgery. Where should I start?

Patients who are interested in bariatric surgery should call their insurance company to see if they have benefits for bariatric surgery as an initial step. Then, if they would like to learn more about their weight loss options, they should call our office information line. A knowledgeable patient advocate will provide an initial phone screening by asking you a few questions, such as your height and weight, to determine body mass index (BMI), and inquire about any comorbidities you may have, as well as which surgery you are considering. They can then determine if you meet general insurance criteria for bariatric surgery. If the patient meets the general insurance criteria, the patient will then be scheduled for the first initial consultation with Dr. Rekkas. The patient will meet with the experienced bariatric team at the consultation appointment, and they will discuss the individualized process steps to surgery.

What should I expect after the initial consultation appointment?

After your initial consultation appointment with Dr. Rekkas and the bariatric team, you will start your individualized process steps to surgery, which typically include the following:

Remember, insurance criteria vary by provider, but may include:

- A psychological evaluation
- A dietitian supervised diet which is either three or six consecutive months in duration
- One time visit with a physical therapist for exercise evaluation
- Lab work
- An EGD (camera study of the stomach)
- Cardiac or other specialty clearance as deemed necessary by the surgeon
- Other diagnostic testing could be required depending on the patient's history

Once these items are complete, you will be scheduled for the preoperative consultation appointment with Dr. Rekkas and if weight loss goals are met, a surgery date will be scheduled.

What else happens before surgery?

Patients will attend their hospital pre-testing appointment and pre-op instruction group class, usually one week prior to surgery. The comprehensive pre-op instruction class is one hour long, and we review everything you need to do to prepare for surgery. The bariatric coordinator will spend the entire day with the bariatric patient. From preop, to the moment the patient is taken to the OR, to when they go to the recovery room and finally when they are assigned to an inpatient nursing unit. Patients typically stay overnight, then go home the next day, whether they have a gastric sleeve or gastric bypass surgery.

What are the most common post-operative concerns with these kind of procedures?

Nausea and pain (gas and surgical site) are the two concerns patients are most cautious about. With these surgeries, these can be the most common side effects. Dr. Rekkas and his team follow best practice guidelines to keep patients as comfortable as possible in the post-operative period. Dr. Rekkas utilizes standardized order sets which give nurses medication options for pain and nausea control to better manage patient symptoms.

What are the guidelines for recovery?

The bariatric coordinator will review the discharge instructions with the patients before they leave the hospital. This includes activity restrictions, wound care, signs and symptoms of complications, diet instructions, medications & vitamins, and when to call the office. There is a structured post-op follow-up schedule to ensure we are meeting Center of Excellence (COE) criteria and ensuring our patients are losing weight at a healthy rate.

- 1-week
- 1-month
- 2-months
- 4-months
- 6-months
- 9-months
- 12-months
- 18-months
- Annually to five years post-op



Cate Roskind



Generally, 4-6 weeks after surgery, patients can advance from their walking plan and start going to the gym, or other activities. The post-procedure diet is done in five stages. Right after surgery, patients start with bariatric clear liquids for four days and they then advance to bariatric full liquids for 10 days. After this, they are on a bariatric pureed diet for 14 days, and then a bariatric soft diet for 14 days. They progress to the bariatric regular diet for life.

What would you say to someone who may still be hesitant?

If anybody is considering, yet hesitant about getting bariatric surgery, I invite them to come to one of the support group meetings. Support groups are held once a month. Guests do not have to participate, but they can sit in and listen, or ask questions if they would like. We have patients attending that are new post-ops right after surgery, and we also have patients attending that are one-month, six-months, one-year, or three-four years out. If someone does not feel comfortable coming into a group setting, they are more than welcome to call me directly, as I am more than happy to discuss bariatric surgery with them.

My goal as bariatric coordinator is to ensure the patient is well educated and prepared for surgery, and never blindsided. An important part of my job on surgery day is to provide emotional support—to put the patient at ease before and after their surgery. It is an honor to spend the bariatric patient's special day with them.

Individual results may vary. There are risks associated with any surgical procedure. Talk with your doctor about these risks to find out if bariatric surgery is right for you.



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By Dr. Lackey

Vein Disease: Underdiagnosed & Undertreated

Our circulatory system keeps our body and its tissues healthy, but when that system goes awry, we develop a series of diseases, including vein disease and all its symptoms. Based on the latest scientific data, vein disease in the U.S. is underdiagnosed and undertreated, and it affects more than 40 million Americans. Unfortunately, less than one-half of one percent of Americans seek treatment and fewer than half a million ever receive treatment for vein disease.

Venous circulation in legs is a very important part of our overall daily health and can become a problem when vein reflux affects circulation. Vein reflux is a medical condition where leg veins are unable to properly transport blood back up to the heart. Medically, this is known as chronic venous insufficiency (CVI). Typically, CVI is associated with the development of spider veins or varicose veins in the legs. When CVI is not treated properly, it will lead to more serious consequences, such as ulcers, spontaneous bleeding, and life-threatening deep vein thrombosis (DVT). Here's some perspective, chronic venous insufficiency is twice as prevalent as coronary heart disease (America's #1 killer), and five times more common than peripheral artery disease.

What Causes Chronic Venous Insufficiency?

The short answer is malfunctioning valves inside the veins. When blood circulates inside the body, the heart pumps blood down the leg. To get the blood back up to the heart, however, the body relies on a combination of valves and muscle contractions to push blood upward. Healthy valves within the veins act as backflow prevention device in the legs to keep the blood from flowing backward and pooling in the legs. Faulty veins don't close completely, resulting in varicose veins, swelling, heaviness, itching, and a whole host of other life-changing symptoms.



Are You at Risk for Vein Disease?

Most likely, if you have any of these high-risk factors - a family history, obesity, prolonged sitting or standing, multiple pregnancies, you're older than 40 and/or you smoke or once did. Women are affected with vein disease more than men; however, men don't escape this dangerous disease.

What are the Signs & Symptoms of Vein Disease?

More common symptoms that develop over time include pain, heaviness, fatigue, aching, itching, restless legs, burning, and cramping. Physical findings are large areas of spider veins, varicose veins, leg swelling, discoloration, skin thickening, and ulcers.

What is the Treatment?

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LET'S TALK GOUT

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

Gout is a condition caused from a buildup of uric acid in the body. In the foot and ankle, it is most commonly seen in the big toe joint but can occur at nearby joints as well. Gout "attacks" or "flares up" are caused when uric acid crystallizes and deposits in a joint. Uric acid is a natural chemical in the body, that results from the breakdown of purine. Its naturally circulating in our blood and eliminated in our urine. When there is too much uric acid or the body cannot eliminate it properly it accumulates leading to a gouty attack or flare up. Some people's kidneys cannot eliminate the normal amount of gout found in the body and others make too much it.

The great toe is most often affected because uric acid is sensitive to temperature changes. At cooler temperatures, it crystallizes. The great toe is a "cool joint" as it is the far away from the heart. This cooler temperature environment allows the uric acid to crystallize and deposit in the joint. Although, it's important to remember gout cannot occur in other joints as well.

Gout has a genetic component and is often inherited. Other risk factors include high blood pressure, diabetes, obesity, chemotherapy, surgery, stress and certain medications and vitamins. For example, aspirin, diuretics and niacin can affect the body's ability to remove uric acid leading to gouty attacks. It can affect both men and women of all ages, but is more often seen in older men aged 40-60. Certain foods with high levels of purines can also increase your risk of gout. These foods include shellfish, organ meat, red wine, beer and red meat.

Symptoms of gout include a sudden intense pain, redness, swelling and warmth over a joint. If you think you are suffering from gout contact your local foot and ankle specialist. Your doctor will order blood work and x-rays to ensure correct diagnosis of your symptoms. Once it has been determined you are suffering from gout treatment can be initiated right away. Treatment may include one or more of the following: NSAID's, corticosteroids, injections, diet modifications, increased fluids and medications that can help your body eliminate uric acid. Without proper treatment, recurrent episodes of gout can lead to permanent damage of the affected joint.



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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.

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

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

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

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

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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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Understanding Glaucoma and Advanced Treatments for Retinal and Macular Disorders

George Skopis, M.D.

The human eye is a marvel, comprising intricate structures that collaborate seamlessly to grant us the gift of vision. Yet, within this delicate framework, several conditions can threaten this precious sense, among them glaucoma and disorders affecting the retina, macula, vitreous, and related structures. These conditions, while distinct, share a commonality in their potential to impair vision and require specialized attention and treatment.

Glaucoma, often referred to as the "silent thief of sight," manifests as increased pressure within the eye, leading to gradual damage of the optic nerve. This ailment progresses stealthily, oftentimes without symptoms until significant vision loss occurs. It's a leading cause of irreversible blindness globally. Timely diagnosis through routine eye exams is critical, allowing for early intervention to manage the intraocular pressure and preserve vision.

In contrast, disorders of the retina, macula, and vitreous encompass a wide spectrum of conditions, from macular degeneration to diabetic retinopathy, retinal detachments, and vitreous floaters. These afflictions affect various components of the eye's inner structures, impairing the crucial process of converting light into neural signals for vision.

Treatment strategies for these eye conditions have advanced significantly in recent years. For glaucoma, therapies aim to reduce intraocular pressure through medications, laser treatments, or surgery. The choice of treatment depends on the severity of the condition and the individual's response to different interventions.

Similarly, addressing retinal and macular disorders involves a multifaceted approach. Intravitreal injections, often containing anti-vascular endothelial growth factors, have revolutionized the management of conditions like age-related macular degeneration and diabetic retinopathy. Laser therapy, photocoagulation, and surgical techniques further contribute to preserving or restoring vision in these cases.

Furthermore, ongoing advancements in technology and medical research continue to enhance treatment options. From innovative surgical procedures to the development of targeted pharmaceuticals,

the future holds promise for improved outcomes and better quality of life for those affected by these eye ailments.

However, beyond treatments, awareness and preventive measures play pivotal roles. Regular eye check-ups, especially for individuals at higher risk due to age, genetics, or certain health conditions like diabetes, remain crucial for early detection and intervention.

In conclusion, while glaucoma and disorders of the retina, macula, vitreous, and related structures pose significant threats to vision, advancements in medical science offer hope. Timely diagnosis, coupled with a range of treatment modalities, is instrumental in managing these conditions effectively. With continued research and awareness, the outlook for preserving and restoring vision for those affected by these ocular disorders is brighter than ever.

Retina Group of Florida

If you are experiencing any changes in your eye health, whether it is blurry vision, pain, impaired vision, or any other visual irregularities, you should see an ophthalmologist right away. The earlier a disease is detected, the better the outcome and treatment options are for you. You will find a friendly and warm environment at Retina Group of Florida.

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George Skopis, M.D.

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George Skopis, M.D., is a board-certified ophthalmologist and fellowship trained vitreoretinal surgeon.

Dr. Skopis specializes in surgical and medical diseases of the retina and vitreous. He strives to utilize the most advanced imaging, medical and surgical techniques to diagnose and treat patients. Dr. Skopis has expertise in age-related macular degeneration, diabetic retinopathy, retinal vascular occlusions, macular holes, macular pucker/epiretinal membranes, retinal detachments, proliferative vitreoretinopathy, and scleral fixated intra-ocular lenses.

Dr. Skopis grew up in Tarpon Springs, FL and graduated from Tarpon Springs High School. He received his Bachelor of Science Degree in Biology from The University of Florida where he graduated cum laude.

Dr. Skopis earned his medical degree from the FIU Herbert Wertheim College of Medicine in Miami, FL where he was elected to the prestigious Alpha Omega Alpha medical honors society for his academic achievement. While in medical school, Dr. Skopis received multiple teaching awards. He completed his internship in internal medicine at the Mount Sinai Medical Center in Miami Beach, FL where he was voted "intern of the year" by both his co-residents and hospital medical faculty. Dr. Skopis completed his ophthalmology residency at Georgetown University Hospital in Washington, DC where he served as chief resident. During residency, Dr. Skopis volunteered with the Prevention of Blindness Society of DC to perform glaucoma screening examinations and back-to-school eye exams for children in underserved communities. Following residency, he completed a 2 year fellowship in vitreoretinal surgery and medical retina at the combined Illinois Eye and Ear Infirmary of University of Illinois Chicago/University Retina program.

Dr. Skopis is board-certified by the American Board of Ophthalmology and is an active member in the American Academy of Ophthalmology, American Society of Retina Specialists, and Vit-Buckle Society. He has published manuscripts in peer-reviewed medical journals and authored multiple book chapters. During his time in fellowship he participated in clinical trials for the treatment of diabetic retinopathy, diabetic macular edema, retinal vascular occlusions, and age-related macular degeneration.

As a Florida native, Dr. Skopis is thrilled to return to southwest Florida and serve the community. He enjoys watching and playing soccer, cheering on the Florida Gators and grilling anything he can get his hands on. He is fluent in English and Greek.

Clear Comfortable Vision with Today's Contact Lenses

By Dr. Steven Bovio

Contact lenses have advanced to give patients not only freedom from glasses but in some cases even better vision than glasses. Contact lenses can now correct most astigmatisms, correct presbyopia with multifocal contacts, offer myopic control, improve contrast sensitivity for sports vision, and treat dry eyes and keratoconus with scleral contact lenses.

Ocular health always comes first when fitting contact lenses. Most contact lens fits in our practice today are done with daily disposable contact lenses. This has improved comfort and health significantly. Patients who previously had trouble with dry eyes have improved comfort and vision when switching to daily wear contact lenses. Often, our new patients tell us they cannot wear contacts because they were told they have astigmatism or need a bifocal correction. Both these are now correctable with contact lenses. When fit correctly astigmatic patients can see great with contact lenses. In addition, they do not have the peripheral distortion they get with glasses. This is especially helpful for sports.

Some of our most appreciative patients are ones that we fit with multifocal contact lenses. Often, they are new to our practice, and they wear distance only contact lenses and rely on reading glasses to see up close. The multifocal contact lenses allow them to see far and near without the readers. In addition, you do not have to hold your reading material in a certain position to read when wearing the multifocal contact lenses. This is a great advantage over progressive glasses. Mono vision fitting with contact lenses has been the option used frequently in the past when patients need bifocals. However, most patients prefer multifocal contacts over mono-vision due to the improved binocularity. There are several multifocal contact lens brands available. But it's not one size fits all. Finding the right lens based on the patients' parameters is the key to success.

A lot of eye care is now focusing on myopic control. In summary, there is a trend of increased occurrence of myopia, nearsightedness, throughout the



world. This has been linked to the increased demand of near vision tasks like computers and cell phones usage. Cooper Vision spent years studying this trend and has developed a lens to reduce near vision strain on young patients who wear contacts. The lens is called MySight 1 day and it is the only FDA approved product proven to slow myopia progression in children. We like this lens and use it to relieve eye strain in young adults as well. Another lens for patients that has shown to slow down myopia progression is orthokeratology lenses by Paragon Vision. These lenses reshape the eye and relieve the need for contacts or glasses during the day.

Athletes today are looking for any type of advantage they can get. Altius has come out with a contact lens that is tinted to mitigate visual noise with the goal of allowing the athlete to perform with maximal comfort, clarity, and quickness.

Scleral contact lenses are unique in that they rest on the scleral and not the cornea. This allows us to fit a much wider range of corrections. In addition, these lenses are great for patients with dry eyes. By keeping a reservoir of saline solution over the cornea these lenses can ensure the corneas stays lubricated throughout the day. Patients with keratoconus and irregular corneas can see better with scleral lenses than any other means.

Rigid gas permeable contact lenses are also a good option for some patients. They are good for high corrections and irregular corneas. Deciding between scleral and rigid gas permeable is done based on each individual patient's parameters. The corneal topography measurement is a must. Once the examination is completed, the lens is then custom made. The improved vision for these patients can be life changing.

Contact lenses can make us feel younger and see better. They can free us from the hassle of reading glasses, correct astigmatism, improve sports vision, offer myopic control, correct keratoconus, and help with dry eyes in some cases. We hope this was helpful. You can learn more about these options by visiting our website.



Dr. Steven Bovio grew up in Bradenton, Florida. He received his Doctor of Optometry degree from Nova Southeastern University in Miami in 1996. He had internships with Bascom Palmer Eye Institute, St. Luke's Eye Institute, and Bay Pines VA Hospital.

In 1999, Dr. Bovio founded the Gulf Coast Eye Center in Sarasota. It was always his goal to practice in beautiful Sarasota. Dr. Bovio treats patients of all ages. Dr. Bovio has implemented many of the latest advancements to help in areas of need such as: Ocular Surface Disease, Dry Eye Syndrome, Early Detection and Treatment of Retinal Disease, Emergency Eye Care, Specialty Contact Lenses, and low vision.

Dr. Steve Bovio, Dr. Cameron Jones and the entire team at Gulf Coast Eye Center are committed to friendly and compassionate excellent care. They give back by through educated, Lions club patient care, and Optometry Giving Sight.



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Anti-Aging: Love Your Skin

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

Throughout history, people have been interested in maintaining youthful-looking skin and preventing the effects of aging. The desire to care for our skin has evolved significantly, from Cleopatra's milk baths to the 1980's when sunscreens began competing with sun tanning products.

Evidence-based research has shed light on why there is such a variation in how our skin ages. This evolving knowledge base, along with public demand, has taken science to today's advanced cosmetic technology and industry.

Our skin is our largest organ and serves an essential role in protecting our body from bacteria, viruses, fungi, and water loss while regulating body temperature. Maintaining the integrity of our skin is very important to maintaining our well-being and feeling good.

Epidermal lipids (cholesterol, ceramides, and fatty acids) of keratocytes origin play a role in skin barrier function. As we age, the barrier becomes thinner, causing dryness, loss of youthful appearance, and fine lines.



Premature aging can be caused by:

- Health issues
- Daily exposure to environmental pollutants
- Sun exposure
- Climate extremes
- Dehydration
- Poor diet
- Stress

The breakdown of the lipid barrier contributes to various surface skin problems such as premature aging, infections, inflammation, irritation, itching, dryness, discoloration, acne, dermatitis, eczema, psoriasis, and sun damage.

I am often asked how someone can improve skin health and decrease signs of aging. Here are some things I recommend:

- Drink 6-8 glasses of water
- Use a high-quality moisturizer
- Adopt a diet rich in polyphenols
- Limit meat consumption and avoid processed or cured meats
- Consume multiple servings of fruits and vegetables
- Get restful sleep
- Spend time in the fresh air
- Avoid pollution and extended sun exposure
- Protect your skin from extreme temperatures
- Exercise for 30 minutes daily, walking counts!
- Practice mindfulness meditation for 5 minutes daily and engage in enjoyable activities

Sound familiar? What is suitable for antiaging is also good for our health!

Beware, there are some things we do to our skin that can adversely impact skin health such as over or under-exfoliation, excessive alcohol, smoking, sun exposure, and use of low-quality skincare products.

High-quality products like *CeraVe*, *Cetaphil*, *Neutrogena*, *SkinCeuticals*, *Beverly Hills, MD*, and others can help protect and restore skin damage and slow signs of aging. Cleansers enhanced with vitamin antioxidants can reduce dryness and inflammation. There are several versions of enhanced moisturizers, some with hyaluronic acid, oils, vitamins C, B, and E. There are creams and Gels with vitamin B3 - niacinamide. Many contain quality sunscreen. *Beverly Hills MD Brighten* and *Tighten Restorative Skin Oil*, and *SkinCeuticals Triple Lipid Restore 2-4-2* are excellent moisturizers for any skin condition and climate with optimal proportions of ceramides, fatty acids, and cholesterol.

Products based on natural oils that help protect and heal the skin's barrier are those with coconut, olive, jojoba, sunflower, and rosehip. Vitamin A products such as Retin-A should be prescribed by a dermatologist. They come in different strengths

and should be used appropriately for optimal results. Vitamin A- retinol products offer an excellent way to make the most of what you do to protect your skin barrier and decrease signs of aging.

Emerging affordable office procedures with limited to no downtime stimulate the natural process of improving and supporting a more youthful appearance. These treatments can help slow the appearance of lines to help turn back the clock.

Treatments such as:

- Botox to relax overused muscles
- Microchanneling (stimulates cell turnover and the body's collagen production to reduce fine lines and increase natural resiliency to the skin)
- PRX TC33 peel-less peels (zero downtime - it works from within, promoting cell turnover and collagen production underneath the top layers)
- Facial peels have different strengths that smooth, increase cell turnover, exfoliate, and reduce fine lines
- Hyaluronic acid fillers plump, lift, and stimulate natural hyaluronic acid
- Lasers treatments
- Plastic surgery
- Daily nutritional supplements

While most skincare products can enhance skin health and appearance, selecting the right ones for specific skin conditions is crucial. Consult with your dermatologist to determine the best options. Choose the right skincare products and seek professional treatments to maintain healthy, youthful-looking skin for years to come. Love your skin and promote its well-being.



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WHY SINGLE SENIORS FLOURISH IN SENIOR LIVING COMMUNITIES

Research has shown what most of us already intuitively know: After your 20s, it gets difficult to make friends, let alone find someone to date and/or marry. This issue usually gets tougher as we age. Although perceptions are slowly but surely changing, most of our culture and social activities are still built around couples. However, surrounding yourself with people of a similar life stage who share your interests increases your chances of forming new relationships.

That's why many single seniors are considering senior living communities like Freedom Village of Bradenton. This blog post will look at our retirement lifestyle and show you how communities like ours make building relationships easier.

WHAT IS INDEPENDENT LIVING?

Senior independent living is a term used to describe a maintenance-free community designed exclusively for older adults. They also typically feature a variety of activities and amenities and services like:

- Fully-equipped fitness center with fitness classes and wellness programs
- Heated indoor pool
- Lifelong learning opportunities
- On-campus shows and concerts
- Arts and crafts studio
- Woodworking shop

BENEFITS OF SENIOR LIVING FOR SINGLE SENIORS

Senior living communities provide a range of advantages you might not be able to get staying in your current home. Senior living can make it easier and more convenient to live the life you want. Some benefits include:

More social opportunities: For isolated seniors, senior living communities have calendars filled with social activities, classes, interest groups and clubs, outings, lifelong learning discussions and more. They also have a welcoming committee to help new residents meet people. So, you're sure to find others who share your goals and interests.



Maintenance-free lifestyle: Independent living communities have a variety of helpful services and thoughtful amenities to give you the freedom to do more of what you want and less of what you don't. So let our talented staff handle the housekeeping, indoor and outdoor maintenance and even the cooking.

Community of support: Many senior living communities offer support groups and spiritual services. These circles of support often develop organically through continual social interactions.

Right-sized residences: Most senior living communities offer studio and one-bedroom senior apartments that are the perfect size for a single person. Once you compare the cost of living in your current residence with everything you get at a retirement community, you'll also find it's more affordable than you think.

DISCOVER THE SINGULAR FREEDOM OF FREEDOM VILLAGE

If you're looking for a group of active older adults who share your interest in getting more out of life, consider attending one of our free luncheons to learn more. Call us today at 941-798-8122 to arrange a personal visit to our beautiful campus and we'll be happy to show you around our beautiful community, where you can meet with one of our residency counselors and some of our residents to learn more.

JOIN US AT AN UPCOMING EVENT

Jan. 11 - Leadership Roundtable Discussion
11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.

* *Tuscany Dining Room*

Enjoy fun, lively conversations about the benefits of living at our Life Care Community. Our "speed dating" style format provides a golden opportunity to learn what makes Freedom Village unique.

Jan. 18 - Fraud Prevention for Seniors
11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.

* *Tuscany Dining Room*

Learn how to reduce your risk of identity theft and other fraud schemes with Erin Mace from Youthful Aging Home Care

Jan. 23 - Friendship Table for Widows, Widowers, Singles | 11:30 to 1 p.m.

* *Grapevine Restaurant*

Designed to introduce seniors to our Life Plan Community, enjoy a relaxed, casual lunch where you will meet other singles, enjoy good conversation, and have your questions answered.

Jan. 25 - Assisted Living and Memory Care Open House | 4 to 6 p.m.

* *The Inn Health Center*

You'll learn how we help families understand and manage complex challenges associated with dementia and Alzheimer's disease through our compassionate "Heartfelt Connections Memory Care Program." You will also learn about our quality assisted living accommodations and programs designed to help individuals lead their very best life.

Jan. 30 - Navigating the Game of "LIFE" Care
11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. * *Tuscany Dining Room*

You'll learn about the enriching benefits and tremendous value that make Life Care a winning senior living option.

Reservations are required.

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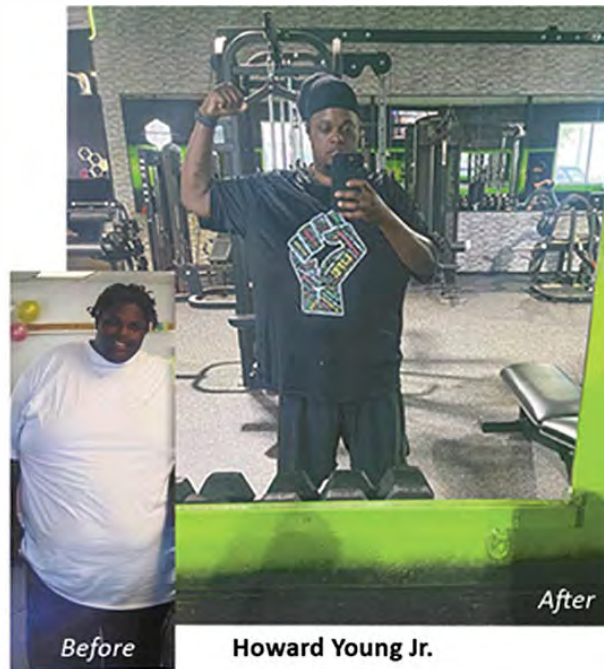
Howard Young Jr., 36 years old, was born and raised in Sarasota, FL. He recently underwent bariatric surgery with Stelios Rekkas, MD, FACS, FASMBS at Manatee Memorial Hospital. We had the opportunity to sit down with Howard and discuss his experience.

A few years ago, I started to gain a lot of weight. I was working all day and creating bad habits for myself. During this time, I was a Type-2 diabetic. I initially connected with Dr. Rekkas and began preparing myself for bariatric surgery. I completed all my pre-op clearances and was ready. Unfortunately, soon before the surgery, I caught COVID-19. My situation was extreme, and I was in a coma for a total of two and a half months. There were some complications with treatment and both of my legs had to be amputated due to necrosis. Once I came to the realization of what happened, I began to suffer with deep depression and anxiety, and I couldn't hold it together for quite a while. It took some time, but I slowly started to regain my confidence.

I waited about a year and a half before I went back to see Dr. Rekkas. I had to complete many doctor visits to be sure I was healthy enough to be a candidate for surgery again. I redid all my tests and went through the pre-surgical criteria for the second time. I had to lose 25-30 pounds before I could have the surgery, and Dr. Rekkas and I agreed that the robotic sleeve gastrectomy would be the best option. I will admit that I was somewhat scared this time around but was determined. I could not believe I got to the point where I was going to be able to have this done.

After the surgery, I woke up in the recovery room and was in some pain. I also experienced some nausea and vomiting, but after the initial day it was bearable. I was in the hospital for about two-three days. During my stay, my care was absolutely wonderful. When I was there, I felt like I was home. I did not have anything to worry about. I cannot thank the hospital, Dr. Rekkas and his team enough. As a matter of fact, I recommended Dr. Rekkas to my cousin for surgery.

After my recovery period was over, I got back into the gym. I've been with a trainer and weight lift four times a week. I don't feel as though I am tired



all the time, my eating habits have changed, and my focus has improved. The weight loss has been a huge factor in helping me walk with my prosthetic limbs. The more weight I lose, the easier life has become for me. I was in a dark place, but I feel very free and full of life now. I feel different, but in a good way. I also don't have to take nearly as much insulin for my diabetes and I no longer have sleep apnea. My goal is to lose 40 more pounds and then I should be able to come off my diabetes medications completely.

Everyone goes through their chapter as I have been through mine. I've noticed that there are obstacles that I can climb now that maybe I was not able to back then and I hope people take away that message.

If you are interested in learning more about surgical weight loss options, contact Manatee Weight Loss Center at 941-896-9507.

Individual results may vary. There are risks associated with any surgical procedure. Talk with your doctor about these risks to find out if bariatric surgery is right for you.



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WEIGHT LOSS OPTIONS

**Robotic Sleeve Gastrectomy vs.
Laparoscopic Gastric Bypass**

A robotic sleeve gastrectomy and gastric bypass are different weight loss procedures but have the same overall goal. That goal is to help restrict the amount of food you can consume. Dr. Rekkas' years of experience in bariatric surgery has shown the following results for weight loss and complications.

Robotic Sleeve Gastrectomy

During a robotic sleeve gastrectomy, your stomach is reduced by 60-80%, which means your stomach is now smaller and can't hold as much food. Patients can expect to reduce their excess weight by 60-80% within one-two years after their procedure. There is a 1-2% risk of serious complications with this procedure.

Gastric Bypass

During minimally invasive gastric bypass, the surgeon will create a small pouch from the top of your stomach and attach it to your small intestine. Your stomach will hold less food, and you will feel full faster. Patients can expect to reduce their excess weight by 80-85% within one-two years after their procedure. There is about a 5% risk of serious complications with this procedure.

Source: msoweightloss.com

How to make—and keep—a New Year's resolution to quit tobacco.

It is no secret that most New Year's resolutions tend to fail before they even have a chance to "get off the ground". However, something about the "clean slate" that a new year brings inspires every one of us to try anyway. We think about all the positive changes we want to make in our lives, to get off to a great start, but get sidetracked by the busy-ness and pressures of life and lose focus. Despite our failures, we vow to ourselves that we will "do better next year". The failure that many of us experience is often the result of failing to make a sustainable plan. Benjamin Franklin said it best when he said: "If you fail to plan, you are planning to fail!"

If you're planning to start off this new year tobacco-free, set yourself up for success by creating a plan, learning what it takes to quit and knowing what to expect from the process.³

When it comes to quitting and staying quit, you must have a plan.¹ Having a personalized plan will not only keep you on track, but it will also help get you through the challenging moments that will inevitably come your way. Here are six simple steps to create your quit plan that will set you up for success:⁴

Step One: Mark your calendar.

With New Year's coming up, now is a perfect time to quit tobacco for good. Start 2024 off on the right foot by cutting out the #1 preventable cause of death and disease in the United States: tobacco use.¹ Set your quit date, but also tell your friends and family your plans to quit and explain how they can help you. Quitting tobacco is easier when people in your life support you.⁴

Step Two: Calculate your savings.

Did you know a pack-a-day smoker can save over \$2,200 a year from quitting?⁴ Cutting out tobacco use is an excellent way to build your savings back up now that the holidays are behind you. To see how much you can save, visit [TobaccoFreeFlorida.com/cost](https://www.tobaccofreeflorida.com/cost) to view a smoking cost calculator.

Step Three: Think about your reasons for quitting.

Whether your main reason for quitting is related to health, money, family, job, or social stigma, you are making the right decision for your health and the health of those around you by quitting tobacco use. Knowing your reasons for why you want to quit can keep you motivated and on track, especially in the difficult moments.⁴

References:

1 Tools to Quit: Area Health Education Center (AHEC) Cessation Program Participant Toolkit. Area Health Education Centers, 2018.

2 <https://www.lifehack.org/articles/lifestyle/10-reasons-why-new-years-resolutions-fail.html>

3 <https://www.verywellmind.com/tips-to-quit-smoking-for-new-years-2824378>

4 <https://smokefree.gov/build-your-quit-plan>



Step Four: Know your triggers.

Think about what things make you more likely to use tobacco, then develop strategies to keep you in control of those triggers.

Step Five: Fight your cravings.

When you get an urge to use tobacco, changing what you are doing or your physical location can make it easier to get your mind off of tobacco until the craving passes.

Step Six: Set yourself up for success.

Choose strategies and tools to help you quit. Gulfcoast South Area Health Education Center (GSAHEC), as part of the Tobacco Free Florida AHEC Cessation Program — offers Group Quit, free tobacco cessation classes that are available to help someone quit all forms of tobacco. These group cessation classes, now held virtually, provide information about the effects of tobacco use, the benefits of quitting, and will assist you with developing your own customized quit plan. Free nicotine replacement therapy in the form of patches, gum or lozenges (*if medically appropriate and while supplies last*) are provided with the class. Attendees will also receive a participant workbook, quit kit materials, and follow up support from a trained tobacco treatment specialist.

Contact us today at 866-534-7909 or visit www.tobaccofreeflorida.com/groupquitcalendar to schedule a class or learn more about the program!



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Pre-registration required

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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 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.

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Alcohol & Its Implications on Mental Health

By Steven Stein, MD - Board-certified Psychiatrist

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

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

What is Alcohol Use Disorder:

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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



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Infusion Therapy

An Effective Treatment Option for Osteoporosis

Osteoporosis is a condition that weakens the bones, making them fragile and prone to fractures. It affects millions of people worldwide, with women being more susceptible to it than men. The condition often develops slowly over the years and may go unnoticed until a bone fracture occurs. However, with the advancements in medical technology, various treatment options are available for managing osteoporosis. One such option is infusion therapy, which involves the administration of medications directly into the bloodstream.

Paragon Healthcare is a leading provider of infusion therapy services for 20+ years, and they offer several medications to help treat osteoporosis. These medications include Prolia, Zoledronic Acid, Evenity, and Boniva. These drugs work by increasing bone density, reducing the risk of fractures, and improving overall bone health.

Prolia is an injectable medication that belongs to a class of drugs known as monoclonal antibodies. It works by inhibiting the activity of osteoclasts, which are cells that break down bone tissue. By reducing the number and activity of osteoclasts, Prolia can increase bone density and reduce the risk of fractures. The medication is administered once every six months and is suitable for postmenopausal women with osteoporosis.

Zoledronic Acid is another infusion therapy medication that is used to treat osteoporosis. It belongs to a class of drugs known as bisphosphonates, which work by inhibiting bone breakdown. Zoledronic Acid is administered once a year and can significantly reduce the risk of fractures in patients with osteoporosis.

Evenity is a newer medication that is used to treat osteoporosis in postmenopausal women. It works by increasing bone formation and reducing bone resorption. Evenity is administered as a subcutaneous injection once a month for twelve months. Clinical trials have shown that Evenity can significantly increase bone density and reduce the risk of fractures in patients with osteoporosis.

Boniva is another bisphosphonate medication that is used to treat osteoporosis. It works by slowing down the breakdown of bone tissue and increasing



NORMAL BONE DENSITY



OSTEOPOROSIS

bone density. Boniva is administered as a once-a-month tablet or as an injection every three months. It is an effective medication for preventing fractures in patients with osteoporosis.

Infusion therapy offers several advantages over other treatment options for osteoporosis. For example, infusion therapy medications are administered directly into the bloodstream, which allows for rapid and efficient delivery to the bones. This means that patients can experience faster results and may require fewer doses than they would with oral medications. Additionally, infusion therapy medications are often more potent than oral medications, which can lead to better outcomes for patients.

Another advantage of infusion therapy is that it is generally well-tolerated by patients. While some patients may experience side effects such as fever, headache, or muscle pain, these side effects are typically mild and short-lived. Infusion therapy also allows for more consistent dosing, which can help to ensure that patients receive the proper amount of medication each time.

In conclusion, infusion therapy is a highly effective treatment option for osteoporosis. Paragon Healthcare offers several infusion therapy medications, including Prolia, Zoledronic Acid, Evenity, and Boniva, that can significantly improve bone density, reduce the risk of fractures, and improve overall bone health. Infusion therapy offers several advantages over other treatment options, including more efficient delivery to the bones, more consistent dosing, and fewer side effects. If you or a loved one is living with osteoporosis, consider speaking with a healthcare provider about whether infusion therapy may be a suitable treatment option.



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Vertigo or Meniere's Disease?

Aren't they the same?

By Dr. Drew Hall

If you've ever felt off-balance, dizzy, or like the room is spinning around you even though you're sitting down, you've probably experienced vertigo or Meniere's disease. The two are commonly confused since they both affect balance and/or hearing. But what's the difference? Aren't they the same thing?

What is vertigo?

Vertigo is a sensation of feeling off balance. If you have dizzy spells, you might feel like you are spinning or that the world around you is spinning. Dizziness is an altered sense of balance that can make you feel unsteady or lightheaded. In contrast, vertigo is a false sense of motion that you may experience while sitting, standing or even lying still.

Causes of Vertigo

Vertigo is often caused by an inner ear problem. Some of the most common causes include:

BPPV (benign paroxysmal positional vertigo) BPPV occurs when tiny calcium particles are dislodged from their normal location and collect in the inner ear. The inner ear sends signals to the brain about head and body movements relative to gravity. It helps you keep your balance. BPPV can occur for no known reason and may be associated with age. Meniere's disease. This is an inner ear disorder thought to be caused by a buildup of fluid and changing pressure in the ear. It can cause episodes of vertigo along with ringing in the ears (tinnitus) and hearing loss.

Vestibular neuritis or labyrinthitis. This is an inner ear problem usually related to infection (usually viral). The infection causes inflammation in the inner ear around nerves that are important for helping the body sense balance.

Vertigo may also be associated with:

- Head or neck injury
- Brain problems such as stroke or tumor
- Certain medications that cause ear damage
- Migraine headaches



Symptoms of vertigo

People with vertigo typically describe it as feeling like they are:

- Spinning
- Tilting
- Swaying
- Unbalanced
- Pulled to one direction

Other symptoms that may accompany vertigo include:

- Feeling nauseated
- Vomiting
- Abnormal or jerking eye movements (nystagmus)
- Headache

What is Meniere's Disease?

Meniere's disease is a disorder of the inner ear that can lead to dizzy spells (vertigo) and hearing loss. In most cases, Meniere's disease affects only one ear. It can occur at any age, but it usually starts between early to middle adulthood. It's considered a chronic condition, but various treatments can help relieve symptoms and minimize the long-term impact on your life.

Causes of Meniere's disease

The cause of Meniere's disease is unknown. Symptoms of Meniere's disease appear to be the result of an abnormal amount of fluid (endolymph) in the inner ear, but it isn't clear what causes that to happen.

Factors that affect the fluid, which might contribute to Meniere's disease, include:

- Improper fluid drainage, perhaps because of a blockage or anatomic abnormality
- Abnormal immune response
- Viral infection
- Genetic predisposition

Because no single cause has been identified, it's likely that Meniere's disease results from a combination of factors.

Symptoms of Meniere's disease

Signs and symptoms of Meniere's disease include:

- **Recurring episodes of vertigo.** You have a spinning sensation that starts and stops spontaneously. Episodes of vertigo occur without warning and usually last 20 minutes to several hours, but not more than 24 hours. Severe vertigo can cause nausea.
- **Hearing loss.** Hearing loss in Meniere's disease may come and go, particularly early on. Eventually, most people have some permanent hearing loss.
- **Ringing in the ear (tinnitus).** Tinnitus is the perception of a ringing, buzzing, roaring, whistling or hissing sound in your ear.
- **Feeling of fullness in the ear.** People with Meniere's disease often feel pressure in an affected ear (aural fullness).¹

1. Meniere's disease (2020) Mayo Clinic. Mayo Foundation for Medical Education and Research. Available at: <https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/menieres-disease/symptoms-causes/syc-20374910>.

After an episode, signs and symptoms improve and might disappear entirely for a while. Over time, the frequency of episodes may lessen.

If you're looking for reliable vertigo treatment or relief from Meniere's disease symptoms, visit Dr. Drew Hall at Sarasota Upper Cervical Chiropractic. Visit Dr. Hall to get to the root cause of your vertigo. In their office they take 3D cone beam computed tomography (CBCT) that allows the doctor to view the neck and joints that may be misaligned causing your vertigo. Don't guess at the cause of your problems.

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UNLOCKING METABOLIC HEALTH:

A Holistic Approach to Weight Management and Reversing Metabolic Syndrome

By Dr. Pamela Chapman, The Beauty and Wellness Institute

In today's world, the quest for a healthy weight and reversing metabolic syndrome has become a journey of multifaceted approaches. Combining dietary adjustments, regular exercise, personal accountability, and, when necessary, medical interventions such as GLP-1 medications, individuals are discovering a path towards reclaiming their metabolic health and vitality.

Understanding the Metabolic Challenge

Metabolic syndrome, often triggered by unhealthy lifestyle choices, presents a cluster of conditions like high blood pressure, high blood sugar, excess body fat around the waist, and abnormal cholesterol levels. This condition not only increases the risk of heart disease, stroke, and type 2 diabetes but also challenges one's quality of life.

The Power of a Balanced Diet

A cornerstone in the journey towards metabolic health is a nutritious, well-balanced diet. Embracing whole foods, plenty of vegetables and fruits, lean proteins, and healthy fats empowers individuals to regulate their blood sugar levels and manage weight effectively. Adopting mindful eating practices can be a game-changer, fostering a healthier relationship with food while maintaining metabolic balance.

Exercise: The Catalyst for Change

Physical activity is not just about burning calories; it's a catalyst for metabolic change. Incorporating regular exercise into daily routines aids in weight management, improves insulin sensitivity, and enhances overall well-being. From brisk walks to strength training, finding enjoyable activities ensures sustainability and long-term success in reversing metabolic syndrome.

The Role of Accountability

Accountability stands as a potent force in achieving and maintaining metabolic health. Support networks, whether in the form of friends, family, or healthcare professionals, provide encouragement, guidance, and the necessary push towards sustainable lifestyle changes. Regular check-ins and setting achievable goals bolster motivation and adherence to healthy habits.



Medical Management: GLP-1 Medications

In cases where lifestyle modifications require additional support, medical interventions like GLP-1 medications offer a strategic ally. These medications assist in weight loss by regulating appetite, reducing calorie intake, and improving glycemic control. When prescribed under professional guidance, they complement lifestyle changes, aiding individuals in achieving their metabolic goals.

The Synergy of Comprehensive Approach

The key to successfully reversing metabolic syndrome lies in the synergy of these elements. While each component - diet, exercise, accountability, and medical interventions - holds significance individually, their amalgamation into a holistic approach amplifies their efficacy, empowering individuals to take charge of their metabolic health.

Empowering the Journey

Empowering individuals with knowledge about their metabolic health is paramount. Offering guidance on making informed choices, understanding the impact of food and exercise, and providing ongoing support lays the foundation for long-term success in reversing metabolic syndrome.

Embracing Change, Embracing Health

As individuals embark on this transformative journey, they realize that achieving and maintaining a healthy weight while reversing metabolic syndrome is not just about shedding pounds—it's about embracing a lifestyle that fosters sustainable health. It's about reclaiming vitality, enhancing overall well-being, and enjoying life to its fullest.

In conclusion, the path to reversing metabolic syndrome and achieving a healthy weight encompasses a comprehensive approach integrating healthy dietary habits, regular exercise, accountability, and, when appropriate, medical management like GLP-1 medications. This holistic approach not only aids in weight management but also empowers individuals to reclaim control over their metabolic health, fostering a life of vitality and wellness.

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.



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At the core of compassionate home health lies the understanding that each individual's journey toward wellness is unique. It's about recognizing the person beyond the ailment and establishing a profound connection built on empathy and understanding. This approach transcends the mere clinical routine; it cultivates a sense of trust, fostering an environment where individuals feel heard and cared for on a deeper level.

To promote health in the home setting requires a holistic view that extends beyond just physical wellness. It encompasses emotional support, mental resilience, and nurturing an environment that encourages overall well-being. It's about empowering individuals to take charge of their health while providing the necessary guidance and support to navigate the intricacies of their wellness journey.

Maintaining health within the confines of one's home demands a harmonious blend of expertise and personalized care. It involves meticulous planning, where every aspect of care is tailored to suit the unique needs of each individual. Whether it's managing medications, assisting with daily activities, or offering companionship, the goal remains unwavering – to maintain the highest standard of health and comfort.

However, the true essence of compassionate home health shines when restoration becomes imperative. It's during these challenging times that the dedication to excellence truly becomes palpable. Restoring health isn't just about addressing the physical symptoms; it's about instilling hope, inspiring resilience, and guiding individuals through the process of healing with unwavering support and encouragement.



A passion for excellence becomes the cornerstone in every facet of our service. It drives continuous improvement in the quality of care provided, propelling us to seek innovative approaches, staying abreast of the latest advancements in healthcare, and fostering an environment where learning and development are constant companions.

Moreover, this passion transcends individual roles; it becomes a collective commitment ingrained in the ethos of every caregiver, nurse, and therapist member. It's the unwavering dedication to going above and beyond, to not just meet but exceed expectations, ensuring that those we serve receive nothing short of exemplary care.

In the pursuit of excellence, compassion becomes the guiding light that illuminates every decision made and action taken. It's the willingness to listen intently, to hold hands during difficult times, and to celebrate victories – big or small. Excellence isn't just a standard; it's a way of life that echoes in every interaction, every treatment, and every smile shared.

Compassionate home health, driven by a passion for excellence, isn't merely a profession; it's a calling. It's a commitment to humanity, a dedication to making a tangible difference in the lives of those we serve. It's about transforming healthcare into an experience imbued with empathy, respect, and a relentless pursuit of the highest quality care.

In conclusion, the heart of compassionate home health beats in rhythm with the passion for excellence. It's a symphony where empathy, dedication, and expertise harmonize to create a melody of healing and hope. This compassionate pursuit of excellence defines our commitment to promoting, maintaining, and restoring health for those whose lives we touch, leaving an indelible mark of care and compassion.

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Navigating Weight Management:

Prime Health Urgent Care's Medically Supervised Services

Many individuals use medically supervised weight management services to pursue a healthier lifestyle. Prime Health Urgent Care stands at the forefront, offering comprehensive programs overseen by board-certified providers. Let's explore the benefits of Prime Health's services and compare semaglutide drugs—Wegovy, Ozempic, and Mounjaro.

Prime Health Urgent Care's Weight Management Services:

Prime Health Urgent Care prioritizes your well-being, providing tailored weight management services. These services are supervised by experienced and certified healthcare providers, ensuring a personalized approach to achieving your health goals. The program combines medical expertise with lifestyle adjustments, fostering a holistic and sustainable approach to weight management.

Individuals may consider semaglutide options, such as Wegovy, Ozempic, or Mounjaro, for weight management for various reasons, backed by clinical evidence. One significant factor is the observed significant weight loss demonstrated in clinical trials. This can be particularly appealing for individuals struggling with obesity or overweight conditions.

Semaglutide drugs, including Wegovy and Ozempic, have received approval for both weight management and glycemic control in individuals with type 2 diabetes. For those managing both conditions, these medications offer a dual benefit. The convenience of once-weekly injections (Wegovy and Ozempic) or oral capsules (Mounjaro) may be attractive to individuals seeking a weight management solution with a less frequent dosing schedule.

These medications are often used in conjunction with lifestyle modifications, emphasizing a holistic approach to weight management. This may include dietary changes, increased physical activity, and behavioral strategies. Moreover, semaglutide drugs have undergone rigorous clinical testing, and their efficacy in promoting weight loss is supported by scientific evidence, providing individuals with confidence in the potential success of their weight management journey.

Some studies suggest that semaglutide drugs may have additional cardiovascular benefits beyond weight loss. This can be particularly relevant for individuals with obesity who may also have cardiovascular risk factors. For some individuals, starting a prescribed medication for weight management can serve as a motivating factor. Knowing that they have a medical intervention and support from healthcare providers may encourage adherence to lifestyle changes.

Healthcare providers can tailor the use of semaglutide drugs to an individual's specific health profile, ensuring that the chosen medication aligns with the person's overall health needs and goals. The decision to use semaglutide for weight management should be made in consultation with a healthcare provider. They can assess individual health status, consider potential contraindications, and provide personalized recommendations based on the person's unique circumstances.

1. Wegovy (Semaglutide Injection 2.4 mg): CLINICAL TRIALS:

In clinical trials, Wegovy demonstrated remarkable efficacy in promoting weight loss. Participants experienced a statistically significant reduction in body weight compared to a control group. Approximately 75% of participants achieved weight loss of 5% or more, and over 50% achieved weight loss of 10% or more.

Glycemic Control:

Wegovy has also shown benefits in improving glycemic control, making it a valuable option for individuals with type 2 diabetes. Clinical studies reported reductions in HbA1c levels, contributing to better overall blood sugar management.

Administration and Adherence:

One of Wegovy's notable features is its once-weekly injection, enhancing user convenience. However, adherence is essential, and users should be aware of potential gastrointestinal side effects, including nausea and diarrhea.

2. Ozempic (Semaglutide Injection 1 mg): WEIGHT LOSS EFFICACY:

Ozempic has demonstrated efficacy in promoting weight loss. Clinical trials revealed a significant reduction in body weight compared to a placebo group. A notable percentage of participants achieved clinically meaningful weight loss, reinforcing Ozempic's effectiveness.

DUAL APPROVAL:

Ozempic has received approval for weight management and glycemic control in individuals with type 2 diabetes. This dual approval makes Ozempic a versatile option for those addressing weight and diabetes management.

Convenience and Side Effects:

Ozempic is administered once a week, providing a convenient dosing schedule. Gastrointestinal side effects, such as nausea and diarrhea, are potential considerations, and users should be vigilant about their impact on adherence.

3. Mounjaro (Semaglutide Oral Capsules):

ORAL ALTERNATIVE:

Mounjaro stands out as an oral alternative to injectable semaglutide, offering a different administration method for individuals who may prefer capsules over injections. Clinical studies have supported its effectiveness in promoting weight loss and improving glycemic control.

Real-World Data:

While Mounjaro has demonstrated efficacy in clinical trials, its real-world performance is an ongoing study area. Limited real-world data is available compared to the more established injectable semaglutide options.

Gastrointestinal Effects:

Gastrointestinal side effects, a common theme among semaglutide drugs, may also be observed with Mounjaro.

Wegovy, Ozempic, and Mounjaro are all semaglutide drugs that have shown efficacy in weight management and, in some cases, glycemic control. Individual responses may vary, and the choice between these medications should be made in consultation with a healthcare provider.

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How Fluoride Helps to Prevent Tooth Decay

By Dr. Amanda Rizner and Maria Guzman Garcia, RDH

The use of fluoride has been a major public health initiative for decades, and has been proven to be a safe and effective way to improve oral health for people of all ages. When incorporated into dental care products and community water supplies, fluoride helps to prevent tooth decay and promote overall dental health. In the following article we will explore how fluoride aids in the cavity prevention process. We will discuss the mechanisms by which it works and how it is used in both community water and topical commercial dental products. Finally, we will address current criticisms and risks associated with fluoride and compare it with other up and coming products and their possible future benefits.

One of the primary advantages of fluoride is its ability to prevent tooth decay. To understand how fluoride aids in cavity prevention, it's essential to discuss the mechanism of tooth decay. Cavities, also known as dental caries, occur when bacteria in the mouth produce acids from sugar that erode the enamel, leading to the formation of tiny holes or cavities in the teeth. Fluoride strengthens tooth enamel, making it more resistant to the acid attacks that can lead to cavities. This protective effect is especially important for children, whose developing teeth can greatly benefit from the strengthening effects of fluoride. By using fluoride toothpaste and receiving fluoride treatments from a dentist, both children and adults can significantly reduce their risk of developing cavities.

Fluoride can also help reverse the early stages of tooth decay. One of fluoride's primary mechanisms of action involves its interaction with hydroxyapatite, the main component of tooth enamel. Through a process called fluorapatite formation, fluoride ions replace some of the hydroxide ions in hydroxyapatite,

resulting in the creation of fluorapatite. Fluorapatite is more resistant to acid attacks than hydroxyapatite, making the enamel more robust and less prone to decay. By promoting remineralization, fluoride can stop the progression of cavities and even reverse the damage that has already occurred, preserving the natural structure of the teeth.

Community water fluoridation is a particularly effective way to ensure that people receive the benefits of fluoride, regardless of their access to dental care. By adjusting the fluoride content of public water supplies to an optimal level, entire communities can receive the protective benefits of fluoride in a cost-effective and equitable manner. This approach has been widely recognized as one of the most successful public health measures in history, dramatically reducing the incidence of tooth decay and improving oral health on a population level.

In addition to water fluoridation, fluoride is commonly added to dental products such as toothpaste, mouthwash, and professional treatments. These fluoride-containing products provide individuals with an easy and practical way to incorporate fluoride into their daily oral hygiene routine. By using these products regularly, people can consistently maintain the protective benefits of fluoride and support their overall oral health.

It is important to note that the use of fluoride is safe and has been extensively researched and endorsed by leading health organizations. When used as directed, fluoride is a valuable tool for preventing tooth decay and promoting oral health.

However, it is essential to use fluoride products responsibly and to follow the recommendations of dental professionals to ensure optimal benefits and safety. Excessive fluoride intake can lead to dental fluorosis, a condition characterized by discoloration or mottling of the teeth. In very high dosages, it has also been shown to have negative cognitive effects. Recently, despite the fact all of this has been known for decades, there is a growing movement to completely discredit all benefits of fluoride using false information, conspiracy theories and scare tactics. As dental professions we will continue to present the current facts from actual scientific research and to educate the public about all of the possible variables. If individuals choose to be fluoride free, they must come to terms with the fact that they may be forgoing an easy and affordable defense against tooth decay.

Due to some of the controversy surrounding fluoride, newer products have come onto the market that claim to aid in remineralization of teeth. Some of these products include calcium phosphate, casein proteins, xylitol, or hydroxyapatite (the substance which enamel is comprised of) which claim to make the enamel stronger. However, it's crucial to note that the effectiveness of these alternatives might vary, and more research is needed to validate their long-term benefits and compare them to fluoride-based interventions.

In conclusion, fluoride offers a wide range of benefits for oral health, including preventing tooth decay, promoting remineralization, and improving overall dental health. With its proven safety and effectiveness, fluoride remains a cornerstone of preventive dentistry and a valuable resource for maintaining healthy teeth and gums.

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Navigating Weight Loss with Ozempic/Semaglutide: IMPACT ON JOINT AND BACK PAIN TREATMENTS

By Physicians Rehabilitation

Weight loss and its connection to joint and back pain treatments have been areas of significant interest for those exploring the benefits of medications like Ozempic/Semaglutide. The correlation between weight reduction and pain management holds promise, but understanding their intricate relationship is crucial.

Ozempic/Semaglutide, known for its effectiveness in aiding weight loss by regulating appetite and reducing calorie intake, has drawn attention not only for its weight-reduction abilities but also for its potential impact on joint and back pain. Research suggests that obesity significantly contributes to joint and back pain due to added stress on weight-bearing joints and strain on the back muscles. Therefore, the weight loss achieved through medications like Ozempic/Semaglutide might alleviate these issues.

The mechanism behind this relationship lies in the reduction of excess weight. As individuals shed pounds while on Ozempic/Semaglutide, the pressure on joints lessens, potentially resulting in decreased joint pain. Moreover, weight loss can alleviate strain on the back, relieving discomfort and improving mobility for those suffering from chronic back pain.

However, it's essential to approach this connection with a nuanced perspective. Weight loss, although beneficial, might initially exacerbate joint and back pain for some individuals. Rapid weight reduction can lead to temporary changes in muscle structure and joint alignment, causing discomfort until the body adjusts to the new weight.

Additionally, Ozempic/Semaglutide might interact with certain pain medications commonly used for joint and back pain. Understanding these interactions is vital to ensure optimal pain management while undergoing a weight loss regimen. Consulting healthcare providers becomes imperative to navigate potential medication adjustments or considerations for alternative pain management strategies.



Incorporating a holistic approach that combines weight loss strategies with targeted exercises aimed at strengthening muscles supporting joints and the back can further enhance the positive outcomes. Physical therapy, low-impact exercises, and adopting ergonomic practices in daily activities play crucial roles in managing joint and back pain while on a weight loss journey with Ozempic/Semaglutide.

Nevertheless, individual responses to Ozempic/Semaglutide and its influence on joint and back pain treatments can vary. Some may experience significant relief, while others might notice moderate improvements or even initial discomfort before benefits manifest. Monitoring one's body, staying in touch with healthcare professionals, and maintaining open communication about experiences are pivotal during this process.

Furthermore, lifestyle modifications beyond medication play a pivotal role in achieving sustainable weight loss and managing joint and back pain.

Healthy dietary choices, adequate hydration, stress management techniques, and sufficient sleep complement the effects of Ozempic/Semaglutide, fostering an overall healthier lifestyle conducive to weight loss and pain management.



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In conclusion, Ozempic/Semaglutide's role in weight loss holds promise for positively impacting joint and back pain. While the connection between weight reduction and pain management is notable, it's essential to approach it with a comprehensive understanding of individual responses, potential interactions, and the need for a holistic approach combining medication, lifestyle adjustments, and targeted exercises. Ultimately, navigating weight loss with Ozempic/Semaglutide while addressing joint and back pain requires personalized strategies tailored to individual needs, emphasizing the importance of collaboration between patients and healthcare providers.

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!

MEDICAL WEIGHT LOSS IS NOW EASIER THAN EVER

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
- Decrease glucagon synthesis
- Delay gastric emptying
- 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!!

OBESITY & MEDICALLY ASSISTED WEIGHT MANAGEMENT

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

World Health Organization Fast Facts on Obesity

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

Health effects from obesity

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

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



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

Combating obesity through medically assisted weight management

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

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

What Does a Medically Assisted Weight-Loss Program Monitor?

The best medically assisted weight loss programs monitor things like:

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

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

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Dr. Devine's website at:
www.johndevinemd.com/contactus

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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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Diagnostic Imaging Saves Lives

Medical imaging technology has revolutionized health care over the past 30 years, allowing doctors to find disease earlier and improve patient outcomes. Whether you are a young child with cancer or a grandmother who just wants to make sure she's in good health, medical imaging helps you detect and diagnose disease at its earliest, most treatable stages and guides physicians and patients in determining the most appropriate and effective care.

Radiology Associates physicians are board certified radiologists with training in all aspects of diagnostic imaging, including CT, Mammography, MRI, Ultrasound, X-ray, and Nuclear Medicine. Additionally, each has advanced subspecialty training in one or more areas of medical imaging or interventional radiology that we believe provides the basis for providing the highest level of patient care.

Our goal is to provide high quality patient care in a comfortable environment, using the latest imaging and interventional technology and working in close collaboration with referring physicians.

Radiology Associates of Venice and Englewood is pleased to offer the following diagnostic imaging services:

MRI Scan

Magnetic resonance imaging, commonly known as MRI is a medical test that aids physicians in diagnosis and treating medical conditions. This is a noninvasive and typically painless test.

Breast MRI

Breast MRI uses Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI) to look specifically at the breast. It is a non-invasive procedure that doctors can use to determine what the inside of the breast looks like without having to do surgery or flatten the breast (as in a mammogram).

MRA

Magnetic Resonance Angiography - Magnetic Resonance Angiography (MRA) uses the same MRI scanner to get its images, however it is a special type of MRI scan that looks at blood vessels and blood flow. MRA can help diagnose aneurysms, and also detect narrowing or blockages of blood vessels. If there is decreased or blocked flow leading to the brain this can be the cause of a stroke. Additionally, it can be an ideal aid to the physician for surgical planning. Some MRA's, as with MRI's, require a contrast medium.

CT Scan

CT Scan sometimes called CAT scanning is a painless and a non-invasive medical test that helps physicians diagnose and treat medical conditions.

Ultrasound

A process that uses high-frequency sound waves to produce pictures of the inside of the body. Because ultrasound images are captured in real time, they are able to show blood flowing through the blood vessels, as well as the movement of the body's organs and its structure.

Nuclear Medicine

Nuclear medicine is a specialized form of radiology. Patients are given a radioactive substance either by mouth or intravenously that collects in specific body organs. Then the gamma camera detects the energy being emitted from that substance and an image can then be captured.

Digital X-Ray & Fluoroscopy

An X-ray is a painless and quick test for the patient to endure. It involves exposing the part of the body that is being examined to a small dose of ionizing radiation to produce pictures of the inside of the body.

3D Mammography

3D mammography is a new technology in the fight against breast cancer that allows doctors to examine your breast tissue one layer at a time. 3D mammography uses high-powered computing to convert digital breast images into a stack of very thin layers or "slices"- building what is essentially a "3-dimensional mammogram".

Bone Density DEXA

Bone density scanning, also called dual-energy x-ray absorptiometry (DXA) or bone densitometry, is an enhanced form of x-ray technology that is used to measure bone loss.

PET Scan

Positron emission tomography, also called PET imaging or a PET scan, is a type of nuclear medicine imaging.

For more information about the diagnostic imaging services available at Radiology Associates of Venice, Englewood and Sarasota. Call the Venice office at 941-488-7781 or the Englewood office at 941-475-5471 or the Sarasota office at 941-342-7283.

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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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ESTATE ADMINISTRATION

By James W. Mallonee

How many personal representatives do you need to manage your estate following death. You can select any number of persons to serve as personal representative, but with that selection comes potential problems and litigation. You are limited (under Florida law) to who can serve as your personal representative but not as to quantity.

Florida law states that your personal representative must either be a family member or the spouse of one of the family members. It also allows any Florida resident to serve as personal representative and the individual selected must be over 18 years of age and have capacity.

The problems of selecting a personal representative normally comes into play when there are two or more nominees selected to serve at the same time. Generally speaking, the selection of multiple personal representatives is the result of Mom (or Dad) not wanting to hurt the feelings of someone and thus such persons are selected to serve together. This has the potential of causing a disaster when the personal representatives have differing agendas.

Consider the following facts:

Mom is dying and elects to have a Will drawn up. Her immediate family consists of three children, with one child living nearby and the other two living out of State. Because mom is concerned about hurting the feelings of the children by not selecting them as a personal representative, she insists that the Will give management of her estate to her three children. At mom's death, issues quickly escalate



over who has control over her real estate and bank accounts. The local child changes the locks on the real estate (in an effort to secure the property from possible vandalism). In addition, Mom's bank accounts (titled in Mom and the local child's name) are closed (supposedly in an effort to pay Mom's immediate expenses such as electric, water and insurance). Lastly, the local child removes Mom's car to secure it and keeps the keys.

So far everything seems to be moving in the right direction until one of the other children comes into town and wants to check on the house and other assets of the property. The problems quickly escalate when it is learned by the other two children that accounts were closed and there is no access to the residence.

The other two children want to enter the residence but the local child refuses and no information concerning the date of death values of the bank accounts are forthcoming. Suddenly, lines of animosity are drawn and the specter of litigation is beginning with each party claiming the other has stolen funds and items from the estate. What is worse is that there is no communication nor consent between the siblings.

The failure to communicate and gain consent among the siblings before taking action almost always assures a disaster. You should not depend on the attorney selected to manage the beneficiaries to play nicely. The question that gets asked at this point is, did this really have to happen?

The immediate answer is no. Had Mom selected only one of the children to serve then much of the animosity would not occur. What usually happens next is finger pointing and accusations which leads to litigation and expenses that simply did not have to happen. Thus, the recommendation is to have only one person serve as personal representative. Make certain that the individual you select is capable of communicating, is honest and can manage multiple things at once along with good monetary skills.

If you are unsure who would be in the best interest of your estate, have a conversation with the attorney of your choice to discuss the aspects selecting the best personal representative for your estate and the reason why you believe them to be a good choice. Being the oldest and local sibling is not always in the best interest of the family dynamics.

This article is intended for informational use only and is not for purposes of providing legal advice or association of a lawyer - client relationship.

James W. Mallonee, P.A.

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Making CBD Your Health Resolution 2024

Have you ever wondered what CBD is and why it's effective for so many different problems? I'm often asked how CBD can help with seizures, PTSD, anxiety, pain, inflammation, digestive issues, depression, sleep, blood pressure, diabetes, glaucoma, and more. CBD, or cannabidiol, is just one of over a hundred cannabinoids found in the cannabis or hemp plant. Since the farm bill of 2018, research that was previously impossible due to cannabis prohibition has become feasible.

CBD activates a system in our body called the endocannabinoid system, which is specifically designed to receive cannabinoids. Essentially, it's a system primed by nature to interact with one plant—CBD activates it. The role of CBD is to restore balance and homeostasis in our body. Activating this system prompts the body to produce appropriate responses: managing pain, reducing inflammation, regulating digestion, boosting the immune system, and maintaining mood, blood pressure, blood sugar, and sleep cycles.

In essence, it's our body performing as nature intended because we're providing what it needs to function optimally. Just like deficiencies in vitamins and nutrients impair our body's ability to heal and repair, cannabinoid deficiency affects our body's optimal function due to limited access caused by prohibition.

The most widely recognized benefit of CBD is its anti-inflammatory properties. Let me explain the chain reaction and how it works. Everyone experiences pain, even if they don't acknowledge it. As a society, we've learned to overlook much of our discomfort and push through. Whether physical or emotional, pain creates stress, affecting our sleep and impeding our body's natural healing response.

Sleep is vital for our body's recovery, but if it's disrupted by pain or an overactive mind, it initiates a cycle of dysfunction leading to reliance on various prescriptions. Inflammation is the body's immune response to fix issues, but when it overreacts, it can damage tissues and organs, mimicking conditions like arthritis. Reduced activity due to discomfort further disrupts our sleep, impacting mental capacities.



Reducing inflammation with CBD decreases pain, allowing for more activity during the day and better sleep at night. Think of CBD as a vital nutrient; consistency is key for desired benefits.

Finding the right dosage requires trial and error to determine what works best for you. Overdosing on CBD is not a concern, but it's essential to consult your doctor or pharmacist for potential interactions with pharmaceutical medications before starting a CBD regimen.



Glaucoma, a January focus, was also one of the few approved conditions to be part of the government's federal compassionate use cannabis program started back in 1978 to 13 patients which continues today to the remaining living participants. The Cannabis is grown at the university of Mississippi and each patient was sent a tin of 150 pre rolled cigarettes every month. Cannabis has shown to be effective at alleviating the pressure behind the eyes due to the constricting or narrowing of the blood vessels. Cannabis is known as a vasodilator opening the blood vessels to decrease pressure because of this property it may also help with blood pressure, migraines and headaches through vasodilation.

Sources: The Science Beyond the Controversy.
<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK224386/>

<https://www.mpp.org/policy/federal/federal-governments-medical-marijuana-program/#:~:text=The%20Compassionate%20Investigational%20New%20Drug,be%20of%20very%20low%20quality.>

BANNER HARVEST

At Banner Harvest, we are passionate about CBD and believe it is a great natural alternative for many people. We strive to offer the highest quality options, unsurpassed in efficacy and consistency. All our products are farm to table which means grown, formulated, and made here in-house from scratch. We take great pride in our quality control; each individual product and batch is tested by ACS an accredited 3rd party laboratory. We test not only for potency, but also the full panel, which includes pesticides, residual solvents, microbials, and heavy metals. Each product includes a QR code which has the COA (certificate of analysis) which is the lab analysis report listing test results. It is critical for the consumer to understand and demand access to a product's test. Many CBD brands being sold are white labeling or private labeling their products from unregulated overseas sources or huge corporate distributors who do not have any quality or efficacy standards and worst of all, supply an altered COA or no testing at all. Trust your source.

With over 40 years of combined experience in the legal cannabis industry, our team at Banner Harvest strives not only to educate but also to create the highest quality Hemp and CBD products in the market. We conduct full panel lab testing at a 3rd-party DEA lab in Florida to ensure accuracy in formulation and labeling, ensuring you can trust the purity, safety, and efficacy of every product. With over 15 years of experience in patient advocacy and education, Banner Harvest stands as the 1st and only CBD company in the state accredited by the Better Business Bureau. Passionate about our work, we aim to share our knowledge. Education is our tool to undo over 100 years of propaganda against this God-given natural plant medicine. Through education, consumers can make the best decisions for themselves, their families, and their pets.

These statements and the products of this company are not intended to diagnose, treat, cure or prevent any disease.



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Slowing the Pace of Your Life

By Pastor Timothy Neptune

Remember the old merry-go-rounds on the playground when you were a kid? You would spin in circles until you felt like you were going to fly off. That's how life can feel if you don't make some necessary changes.

You live a much faster lifestyle than your parents did. Your children will live an even faster lifestyle than you did. As we enter a new year, perhaps it is a good time to evaluate the pace of your life and make some necessary adjustments. The Psalmist tells us:

2In vain you rise early and stay up late, toiling for food to eat—for he grants sleep to those he loves.
Psalm 127:2

If you are getting up early and staying up late but still don't feel like you can get everything done... you are probably trying to do too much.

Living at a hectic pace comes at a price. You end up feeling more stressed because you are trying to cram too many things into your day. You end up having no margin in your life. As the margins get tighter the stress goes higher.

You have to take time to recharge your batteries. Here's a lesson I learned years ago: You have just enough time to do the will of God. If you can't get everything done on your "to do" list, maybe there are things on the list you shouldn't be doing.

I want to share with you two simple strategies to help you slow down the pace of your life so that you can enjoy life.

The first strategy is to learn to be content. If you're serious about slowing down, you don't start with your schedule—you start with your heart.

The Apostle Paul said this about contentment. ***21I am not saying this because I am in need, for I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances. 22I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want. 23I can do everything through him who gives me strength.***
Philippians 4:11-13

If you're going to slow down your life, you have to learn contentment. Paul also said this about contentment: ***6But godliness with contentment is great gain. 7For we brought nothing into the world, and we can take nothing out of it.*** 1 Tim. 6:6-7

What he is saying in these passages is that we need to understand that life isn't about things.

Contentment means this: I don't need more in order to be happy.

I'm not waiting for *more* in order to be happy. I'm happy right now. I have dreams and I have goals but I don't need *more* in order to be happy. That's contentment.

Contentment will come easier when you realize two things: life is not a competition with other people and having *more* will not make you happier. This is not the message promoted by our culture, but it is true.

Jesus said it like this, ***25Then he said to them, "Watch out! Be on your guard against all kinds of greed; a man's life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions."*** Luke 12:15

If you find yourself making statements like this:

- **My life is a rat race.**
- **I don't know how I'm going to get it all done.**
- **I am just so exhausted.**
- **I don't know how much more of this I can take.**
- **I just want to escape.**

These phrases are all warning signs that you are on the road to burn out. You need to slow down the pace. Perhaps as we begin this new year, taking an honest evaluation of your life and determine if some changes are necessary. Are you content in your life right now?

As the merry-go-round spins faster it is only a matter of time before you either get sick, or fall off. Or, better yet, just slow down, be content, and enjoy the ride.

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Does Taking Fish Oil Lower Cholesterol?

By Bo Martinsen, MD

Many people believe that incorporating omega-3s into their diet will solve their cholesterol woes. But the truth is much more nuanced; it's not as simple as taking a daily fish oil capsule or drinking a teaspoon of cod liver oil.

In this article, we'll uncover how these essential fatty acids impact your lipid profile – plus look at how much omega-3 you need to reap the benefits.

Cholesterol Is More Than One Thing

The term “cholesterol” often gets tossed around as though it were a single concept. But really, cholesterol includes several measurements. When you take a lipid test, the results are broken down into a few main components:

Triglycerides: Our bodies convert the extra calories, fat and sugars we eat into triglycerides. Having too high triglyceride levels is bad.

LDL: LDL, or low-density lipoproteins, is commonly referred to as the “bad” cholesterol. It builds up plaque in the arteries. LDL can be further analyzed by particle size. Small, dense particles are considered more harmful than large, fluffy particles.

HDL: HDL, or high-density lipoproteins, are the “good” cholesterol. Having a higher number is better.

Total Cholesterol: Your total cholesterol number is based on the other three components. Here's the formula: HDL + LDL + 20% triglycerides = total cholesterol.

Omega-3s impact these numbers in different ways. Let's take a closer look at what the science shows.

Triglyceride Levels

Studies show that taking omega-3s will consistently lower triglyceride levels. But the effect depends on how much you consume.

Higher doses of EPA and DHA omega-3s are needed to significantly reduce triglyceride levels. For example, a 2020 review from researchers in Norway highlighted the following trend:

- 850 mg of EPA/DHA lowered triglycerides by only 3.4%.

- 2400 mg of EPA/DHA lowered triglycerides by 16%.
- 5100 mg of EPA/DHA lowered triglycerides by 27%.

On average, studies report that taking between 3000 – 4000 mg of EPA/DHA will translate to a 25% drop in triglyceride levels.

Of course, the actual impact for any individual will depend on many factors, like genetics, age, gender, and your baseline triglyceride levels. There's also the quality of the omega-3 product to consider, including the freshness level of the oil.

Can Fish Oil Pills Lower Triglyceride Levels?

Most regular fish oil capsules contain only 300 mg of EPA/DHA. With that serving size, you would need to take 10 or more capsules every day to get an adequate dose.

Concentrated omega-3 products can deliver higher doses of EPA and DHA in fewer servings. But even with prescription omega-3 oils aimed at managing hyperlipidemia, you have to take at least 4 capsules daily.

At Omega3 Innovations, we offer 3000 mg EPA/DHA in a pre-measured, drinkable single serving. This liquid form makes it easier for people to meet their omega-3 needs and experience beneficial effects.

LDL Cholesterol

While the benefits of omega-3s for triglyceride levels are widely known and accepted, their effects on LDL levels are more complex.

Again, there are different types of LDL cholesterol. On a lipid panel, people typically pay the greatest attention to the LDL-C value. Most studies show that omega-3s don't really impact LDL-C. However, one exception seems to be for people with very high triglyceride levels (>500mg/dl). For these people, omega-3s may increase LDL somewhat.

There's also Lp(a), or a type of low-density LDL that can create plaque in your arteries. Most studies (but not all) note a modest decrease in this value with omega-3s, which is good.

Finally, omega-3s seem to facilitate a shift from small dense LDL particles to bigger and lighter large buoyant LDL. This is positive, since small dense LDL is more likely to create arterial plaque. Indeed, shifting from small dense to large buoyant LDL is associated with lower heart disease risk.

HDL Cholesterol

When it comes to HDL cholesterol, research suggests that omega-3s have little effect in general.

The exception is again for people with very high triglycerides. In these cases, omega-3s may increase the HDL levels by more than 10%. This is positive, since HDL is the “good” cholesterol.

What's the Best Measure of Heart Disease Risk?

Many studies show that your ratio of triglycerides to HDL may be a more important number than looking at your total cholesterol. Having a high triglyceride:HDL ratio is associated with heart disease, insulin resistance, and low testosterone levels in men. Interestingly, the risk seems to be independent of bad cholesterol numbers or medication use.

Taking sufficient doses of omega-3s will typically reduce the triglycerides to HDL ratio. This improvement could be one of the reasons for the purported heart health benefits of these fatty acids.

For the full article and references, please visit:

<https://omega3innovations.com/blog/does-taking-fish-oil-lower-cholesterol/>

Bo Martinsen, MD

Dr. Martinsen is an omega-3 specialist, innovator, and advocate for natural foods. As co-founder and CEO of Omega3 Innovations, he has created several medical food products that combine effective doses of omega-3s with fibers and other nutrients. Before Omega3 Innovations, Dr. Martinsen practiced medicine in Norway for over 20 years.



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- Skip & Gail Sack




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Above: (Left) Dr. Stellos Rekkas - Bariatrics and General Surgery, (center) Dr. Stacey South - Women's Oncology, and (right) Dr. Jose Erbella - General Surgery

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