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Health & Wellness MAGAZINE

February 2024

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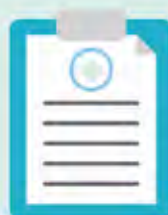
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Restless Legs

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Varicose Veins vs. Spider Veins

By Dr. Lackey

Varicose veins are large, swollen, protruding blood vessels that twist and turn beneath the surface of your skin. Because they're raised and large, they're clearly visible. They will often cause swelling making your legs feel heavy or uncomfortable. They can also lead to more severe health conditions, like blood clots and leg ulcers.

Several patients who suffer from varicose veins often complain of a cramping or aching sensation near the veins. Other typical symptoms include fatigue, itching, throbbing, cramping, burning, and tingling.

Varicose veins, however, shouldn't be confused with spider veins. Spider veins are the much earlier, gentler version of varicose veins. They're best described as tiny, blue, red, or purple vessels near the surface of the skin. Like varicose veins, spider veins also twist and turn, but they don't bulge or swell. Generally, spider veins aren't painful, and they are not associated with blood clots.

While it's possible to have both spider and varicose veins, it's not necessarily true that spider veins will indefinitely lead to varicose veins. However, having varicose veins and spider veins indicates the presence of underlying vein disease, also known as chronic venous insufficiency.

How Varicose and Spider Veins Develop

Varicose and spider veins develop naturally when blood flow issues are present. A healthy vein will carry blood to the heart through valves that allow blood to flow in only one direction keeping the blood moving through the right pathways and preventing backflow. These healthy veins do their job by effectively delivering blood from superficial veins to deeper ones that eventually lead to the heart.

However, when veins don't function properly, it can cause blood to collect inside your veins. When this happens, the blood pushes



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up against the walls within your vein, creating pressure weakening the vessel wall. Ultimately, this pressure is what causes veins to twist and bulge.

Depending on how large the vein is and how swollen it gets, it will result in spider veins or varicose veins.

Treatment Options for Vein Disease

If you're eager to rid your legs of varicose and spider veins and regain your quality of life, there are several proven medical treatments for you to consider.

Polidocanol Injectable Foam (Varithena®) is a minimally invasive, nonsurgical treatment doesn't require incisions. The injection site is usually numbed, but no additional anesthesia is required. A catheter is inserted into the malfunctioning vein or sometimes a direct injection is used. The foam fills up the targeted part of the vein, and the diseased vein collapses. (For smaller branches with vein reflux, foam is injected directly into the vein to eliminate it.) Blood flow shifts to healthier veins nearby.

The VenaSeal™ Closure System uses an advanced medical adhesive to close and seal varicose veins. VenaSeal™ treatment minimizes patient discomfort and reduces recovery time, making it a good choice for many people. It's the only procedure approved for use in the United States that doesn't use heat, tumescent local anesthesia, or a sclerosant. Instead, VenaSeal™ uses a medical grade "glue" to shut down diseased veins.

Thermal Ablation, with this procedure, a small catheter is placed into the problematic vein, usually longer and larger veins. This catheter delivers radiofrequency into the vein wall, causing it to grow hot, collapse and close. It is an outpatient procedure that requires the administration of local anesthesia.

Ultimately, remember that vein disease is progressive and will get worse without treatment, so when you see signs of it, seek treatment.

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Finding Pacemaker Peace After Multiple ER Visits

Karen Moon feels lucky to be alive, because it wasn't until David Buck, DO FACC, a cardiologist at Bradenton Cardiology Center, saw first-hand what was happening to Karen's heart in real-time that her cardiac team was able to put a care plan into place.

In early 2023, Karen, the 78-year-old female who resides in Bradenton, felt immense pressure on her chest and couldn't catch her breath. An ambulance was called, and she was transported to Manatee Memorial Hospital in Bradenton. Karen ended up needing a heart catheterization and several stents to keep her heart pumping properly. After the procedure, Karen was still experiencing bouts of a relatively low heart rate.

In July 2023, Karen found herself back in the ER with similar symptoms again. This time, however, things were different. "In [Karen's] case, we were having a hard time figuring out what exactly her symptoms were coming from, until we happen to have caught her getting very bradycardic, meaning slow heart rate, in the ER, right while I was standing bedside," remembers Dr. Buck. "Her diagnosis jumped off the page for us, because she happened to have symptoms in front of me while I had telemetry monitoring it." Karen was rushed into surgery and a pacemaker was inserted to regulate her heartbeat.

The procedure was handled by Jared Collins, DO, a cardiologist specializing in Nuclear Cardiology and Electrophysiology with Bradenton Cardiology Center. Karen only had to stay in the hospital for just a few short days following her procedure.

"Even if you are frustrated, keep going back to your doctor with your complaints," Dr. Buck stresses. After a pacemaker is implanted, he emphasizes how important it is to continue to self-report issues when you feel that something isn't right so adjustments to the device can be made.



Karen Moon, 78-years-old, resides in Bradenton.

For someone who experienced three trips to the hospital's ER and cardiac unit within a short period of time, Karen cannot say enough good about the people she encountered. She explains that everybody took excellent care of her, she had no problems, and was relieved that she did not have to wait a lengthy amount of time for anything. "I am perfectly satisfied with Manatee Memorial Hospital for cardiac care," says Karen.

She also found comfort in Dr. Buck's bedside manner. "He has the human touch, and this puts patients at ease," Karen says.

Karen's recovery has gone very well since her pacemaker was implanted. One of the biggest benefits she has seen post-procedure is having a consistent sleep schedule. Prio to her procedure, she was very anxious and agitated. "I would sleep for an hour and then be up for two hours. I think it was because my body felt bad, and I did not know what was wrong." Now with her pacemaker, she can sleep soundly!

In less than two weeks after her procedure, Karen was driving again, too. "I feel 10 to 15 years younger than I am. I can do anything I want to do," Karen says. She tries to go someplace every day, whether it's running an errand or going to a church function. "I feel good, so I get out. I think when people get to my point in life physically, the worst thing I can think of is not being able to have my own freedom and my ability to do for myself."

Karen feels lucky to be a patient of Bradenton Cardiology Center and Dr. Buck, having seen him multiple times since the procedure. "I love Dr. Buck and I am so grateful. I was in the right place at the right time," she recalls.

Not too long ago, Karen struck up a conversation with a woman who was standing behind her in line at her local grocery store. The two got to talking and it turns out the woman's husband had a pacemaker implanted by Dr. Collins as well. The two shared their experiences, and both agreed that they were in the best hands.

To make an appointment with Bradenton Cardiology Center, please call 941-748-2277.

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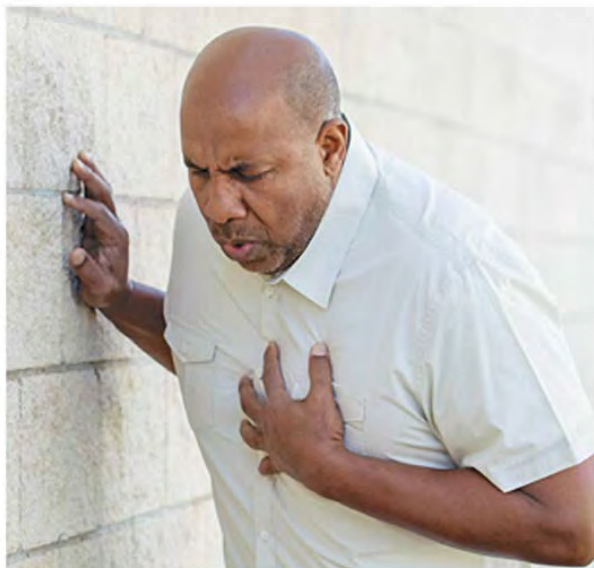
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Heart Disease in Seniors: Understanding the Silent Threat

Hearth disease is the leading cause of death for all genders, races, and ethnicities in the United States. According to the CDC, it claims a life every 34 seconds. That makes it so that roughly one out of every five deaths is a direct result of heart disease. That's a statistic that's hard to swallow. Are you at risk?

With the advancement of modern-day medicine, doctors can look at various known risk factors and determine with some degree of accuracy what your odds of developing heart disease will be. Heart attacks and strokes can be catastrophic, but 80 percent of premature heart disease is preventable. That's why it's important to know and understand your risk.

Heart disease is a significant health concern for people of all ages, but it poses an even greater risk to seniors. As we age, our cardiovascular system undergoes various changes that can contribute to heart disease. Arteries can become less flexible, leading to atherosclerosis (hardening of the arteries), and blood vessels may lose their elasticity. The heart's pumping efficiency may decrease, which can result in reduced blood flow. These age-related changes can raise the risk of heart disease, such as coronary artery disease, heart failure, and arrhythmias.



In addition to an aging heart, older adults often have a higher prevalence of heart disease risk factors, including hypertension, high cholesterol, diabetes, and obesity. Additionally, lifestyle factors like a sedentary lifestyle, poor diet, and smoking can exacerbate the risk of heart disease in seniors.

While heart disease is a significant concern for older adults, several strategies can help prevent or manage the condition.

Regular Medical Check-ups: You should schedule regular check-ups with your healthcare providers. These visits can help identify risk factors and early signs of heart disease, allowing for prompt intervention.

Healthy Lifestyle: Maintaining a healthy lifestyle is crucial. This includes a balanced diet, regular exercise, and avoiding smoking and excessive alcohol consumption.

Medication Management: Seniors with established heart disease may need medications to manage their condition. It's essential to follow the prescribed treatment plan and monitor any potential side effects.

Stress Management: High stress levels can contribute to heart disease. You should explore stress-reduction techniques like meditation, yoga, or counseling.

Heart disease is a critical health issue that demands attention and proactive management. You can reduce your risk through healthy living and regular medical care. Understanding the unique challenges and strategies for prevention and management is key to ensuring a longer and healthier life. Take action now and get on the road to Better Health and a healthier heart.

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DIABETIC FOOT INFECTIONS AND PREVENTING AMPUTATION

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

The prevalence of diabetes in the United States continues rising at an alarming rate. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) an estimated 30.3 million people have been diagnosed with diabetes with another 7.2 million adults undiagnosed in the United States. By 2030, the CDC expects there to be over half a billion diabetics in the U.S ("National Diabetes Statistics", 2017). An increase in the prevalence of diabetes, unfortunately, leads to a rise in lower extremity amputations. The good news, the majority of lower extremity amputations are preventable if patients take the appropriate care.

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

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

References:

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. National Diabetes Statistics Report, 2017. Atlanta, GA: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, US Department of Health and Human Services; 2017.



In addition to routine foot screenings, self-inspection should be performed daily. Check your feet daily for blisters, cuts, sores, redness, swelling or any other abnormal changes. Make sure to also look between your toes. Many podiatrists recommend the use of white socks to their patients. White socks make it easier to notice blood or drainage coming from the foot. Patients should wear socks that pull moisture away from the skin like cotton or special acrylic fibers, avoiding nylon. Avoid socks with seams that irritate your skin. If you can't reach your feet, ask someone for assistance or try using a foot mirror. Do not try to remove calluses or other foot lesions yourself and avoid walking barefoot. Other suggested recommendations include: avoiding worn down shoes, shoes that are too small or too narrow for your foot, and quit smoking. If you notice any abnormalities, contact your podiatrist or medical provider right away.

Together, we can change lives by saving limbs.

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.

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ORTHOPEDIC SPECIALISTS RESPOND TO PICKLEBALL INTEREST

PREVENTION IS KEY | EXPERT CARE IS ESSENTIAL

Did you know that pickleball has become the fastest growing sport in the U.S.? It's a fun sport that requires low-impact aerobic exercise, and the fact that it requires four players makes it an enjoyable, social event. However, with all of this fun-filled activity, injuries are bound to happen. Orthopedic surgeons and sports medicine physicians often report that pickleball and other racket sports result in numerous injuries.

SOME OF THE MOST COMMON INJURIES ARE:

Wrist Injuries

Due to the constant torquing of the arm and wrist in pickleball, wrist injuries are common. Often these are tendonitis issues, which is where the tendons become inflamed and swell.

A wrist sprain happens when stretching or tearing of the ligament occurs. The wrist ligaments are strong bands of connective tissue that connect the end of the hand and wrist bones. Your wrist ligaments stabilize and support the joints. When injured in sports such as pickleball, the sport should be halted and avoided until you are healed. Stabilization, rest and anti-inflammatory medications often help patients recover within a few weeks.

Shoulder Injury

With pickleball, the shoulder is under a great deal of stress. Often, shoulder pain is due to small tears that occur in the rotator cuff. These tears can progress and may require conservative or surgical treatment. Overuse or injury that might dislocate the humerus bone from the socket can be a more severe diagnosis. With overuse or trauma, fractures or hairline fractures can occur in the bones that make up the shoulder. These will typically need to be stabilized in order to heal correctly. Arthritis can also exacerbate shoulder injury and pain.

Ankle Injuries

Ankle injuries are very common in individuals who play pickleball due to the ballistic motions and torquing in the ankle that cause instability and tears. Achilles's tendon tears and ruptures are an example of this type of injury.

Achilles Tendon Rupture

Although the Achilles tendon can withstand great stresses from running, twisting, and jumping, it is extremely vulnerable to injury. A rupture of the tendon is a tearing and separation of the tendon fibers, so that the tendon can no longer perform its normal function. It is a painful injury and often patients describe hearing a popping sound when it happens.



The Achilles tendon is the largest tendon in the body and connected to both the calf muscle and the heel bone and is a fibrous tissue that somewhat resembles twine. It is used when you walk, run, stand, jump, and is especially stressed when you move quickly from side to side. A rupture of the tendon is a tearing and separation of the tendon fibers, so that the tendon can no longer perform its normal function.

Knee Pain

We put constant strain on our knees daily. If you weigh 180 pounds, then 540 pounds of pressure are on your knee joints with every step. When you're doing ballistic or jumping movements the weight and wear and tear on the knees is exacerbated and can lead to pain, injury and osteoarthritis. If you have knee pain, take a break, and give your knees a rest. Wear knee braces or kinesiology tape if necessary, and if your knee pain doesn't get better, you need to see an orthopedic surgeon to alleviate any progressive injuries or wear and tear.

When the feet, ankles, and knees are injured, it's not uncommon for hip and back pain to follow due to the body's misalignment. Don't ignore your pain. Seek help from experienced, board certified and fellowship trained orthopedic surgeons and sports medicine physicians.

PREVENTING PICKLEBALL INJURIES:

Warm Up

Warming up your ankles, knees, hips, wrists, and shoulders is essential before playing pickleball. Taking a pre-pickleball walk is a great way to get your muscles warm. Additionally, doing a few gentle ballistic movements, such as jumping side to side and front to back, or doing an invisible jump rope for a few seconds before stretching can help.

Stretching

Doing rotational exercises and stretching will help to prevent injuries as well. After you are properly warmed up, stretching from your feet up to your neck are critical to avoid injury. Rotating the ankles, hips, wrists, and shoulders is helpful, as are deep runners stretches and side stretches to name a few.

Hydrate

Drinking plenty of water throughout the day is imperative to stay hydrated. If you are thirsty or parched during pickleball or any exercise, you were most likely dehydrated beforehand. Drinking before and after is essential to replenish fluids and electrolytes. Sports drinks and electrolyte enhanced water is important after sweating.

Protective Gear

Wearing supportive gear and clothing such as the correct footwear with good arch support and ankle support. Wearing back supports, knee or wrist braces are also especially important if you have any injuries or need to protect certain areas from reinjury.

To alleviate your pain and get you back to doing what you love, Dr. Sforzo, Dr. Christopher Dillingham, Dr. Charles Stewart, and Dr. Philip Meinhardt specialize in both non-surgical and surgical treatment for the shoulders, hand, wrists, elbows, hips, knees, ankles spine and neck. This includes unparalleled expertise in fracture care, sports injuries, tendonitis, arthritis, bursitis, joint replacement, rotator cuff repair, carpal tunnel syndrome, reverse shoulder replacement, ACL reconstruction, reconstruction of spinal deformities, fusion procedures, knee replacement, total hip replacement both traditional and anterior approach. Additionally, the doctors offer the latest in regenerative treatments helping many patients eliminate the need for surgery.

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Emerging Treatments for Age-Related Macular Degeneration: A Beacon of Hope for Adults Over 50

George Skopis, M.D.

Age-related macular degeneration (AMD) remains a prevalent concern for individuals over 50, affecting their vision and quality of life. This progressive eye condition gradually damages the macula, the central portion of the retina, leading to blurred or distorted vision and, in severe cases, vision loss. The impact of AMD on daily life can be profound, affecting activities like reading, driving, and recognizing faces.

However, in recent years, significant advancements in treatment options have sparked hope for those grappling with AMD. Traditional treatments, such as anti-VEGF injections, remain crucial in managing AMD. These injections target the abnormal blood vessel growth that characterizes the more severe form of the disease, known as "wet" AMD. They have been successful in slowing down vision loss and, in some cases, even restoring vision.

Yet, the landscape of AMD treatments is evolving rapidly, offering new avenues beyond the conventional approaches. One such promising development involves the use of gene therapy. This cutting-edge treatment aims to address the underlying genetic factors contributing to AMD, potentially offering more targeted and long-term solutions.

Another groundbreaking area is stem cell therapy. While still in the experimental stage, researchers are exploring the potential of stem cells to replace damaged cells in the retina, thereby restoring vision. Although this avenue requires further extensive research, it holds immense promise for revolutionizing AMD treatment in the future.

Furthermore, innovative drug therapies are under investigation to supplement or even replace current treatments. These therapies focus on different aspects of the disease, such as inflammation or oxidative stress, offering a multi-pronged approach to combating AMD and potentially reducing the frequency of invasive treatments.

In addition to these medical interventions, lifestyle modifications and nutritional supplements are gaining attention for their role in managing AMD progression. A diet rich in antioxidants, omega-3 fatty acids, and specific vitamins and minerals has been associated with a reduced risk of AMD advancement. Furthermore, lifestyle changes like quitting smoking, maintaining a healthy weight, and protecting the eyes from harmful UV rays may contribute to slowing the disease's progression.

While these advancements are promising, it's important to note that not all treatments might be suitable for everyone, and their effectiveness can vary from person to person. Consulting with an eye care professional is crucial for proper diagnosis and personalized treatment plans.

Moreover, the cost and accessibility of these emerging treatments remain important considerations. As these innovative therapies continue to evolve, ensuring their availability and affordability to a broader population becomes a significant concern for healthcare systems worldwide.

In conclusion, the landscape of AMD treatment is witnessing a remarkable transformation, offering newfound hope for individuals over 50 facing this debilitating condition. From gene therapy and stem cell research to innovative drug therapies and lifestyle modifications, the spectrum of options for managing AMD is expanding. While these advancements hold immense promise, continued research, accessibility, and personalized care are essential to harness the full potential of these emerging treatments and improve the lives of those affected by AMD.

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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.

Exploring the Role of Medical Marijuana in Enhancing Sleep Quality

In recent years, there has been a growing interest in the potential benefits of medical marijuana, particularly in its ability to improve sleep quality. As an alternative remedy for sleep-related issues, medical marijuana has sparked conversations within both the medical and wellness communities. This article delves into the relationship between medical marijuana and better sleep, exploring its potential advantages and considerations.

Understanding the Components: THC and CBD

Medical marijuana contains two primary components that play a crucial role in its effects on sleep—tetrahydrocannabinol (THC) and cannabidiol (CBD). THC is known for its psychoactive properties, inducing relaxation and sedation. On the other hand, CBD is non-psychoactive and is believed to have calming and anti-anxiety effects. The combination of these cannabinoids contributes to the potential sleep-improving properties of medical marijuana.

Addressing Insomnia and Sleep Disorders

One of the most prominent reasons individuals turn to medical marijuana for sleep is to address insomnia and other sleep disorders. Studies suggest that THC can help reduce the time it takes to fall asleep, particularly in cases of chronic insomnia. Moreover, the calming effects of CBD may alleviate symptoms of anxiety, a common contributor to sleep disturbances.

Pain Management for a Restful Night

Chronic pain can significantly impact sleep quality, leading many individuals to seek alternative pain management solutions. Medical marijuana, with its analgesic properties, has shown promise in providing relief from pain conditions such as arthritis or neuropathy. By alleviating pain, it not only improves overall well-being but also contributes to a more restful night's sleep.

Regulating Sleep Cycles: The Endocannabinoid System

The endocannabinoid system (ECS) plays a crucial role in regulating various physiological processes, including sleep. Both THC and CBD interact with the ECS, influencing its ability to maintain balance within the body. This modulation of the ECS may contribute to the regulation of sleep-wake cycles, potentially offering a natural remedy for those struggling with irregular sleep patterns.



Dosage and Timing: Key Considerations

While medical marijuana shows promise in promoting better sleep, finding the right dosage and timing is paramount. Individual responses to cannabinoids vary, and excessive THC intake may lead to adverse effects such as heightened anxiety or impaired cognitive function. Consulting with a healthcare professional experienced in medical marijuana is essential to determine the optimal dosage and administration method tailored to individual needs.

Potential Risks and Considerations

Despite its potential benefits, medical marijuana is not without risks. Side effects, such as dry mouth, increased heart rate, or short-term memory impairment, may occur. Additionally, long-term use of THC-rich strains may lead to dependency or impact cognitive function. It is crucial for individuals considering medical marijuana for sleep to weigh the potential benefits against these risks and make informed decisions.

Legal Landscape and Accessibility

The legal status of medical marijuana varies globally and within different regions. Some areas have embraced its medicinal use, allowing patients to access it with a prescription, while others maintain strict regulations or prohibit its use entirely. Understanding the legal landscape and accessibility in one's location is crucial for those considering medical marijuana as a sleep aid.

Conclusion: Navigating the Path to Better Sleep

As interest in medical marijuana for better sleep grows, it is essential to approach it with a nuanced understanding of its components, potential benefits, and associated risks. The interplay between THC and CBD, coupled with their impact on the endocannabinoid system, offers a unique avenue for addressing sleep-related issues. However, individuals should prioritize consultation with healthcare professionals to determine the most suitable approach for their specific circumstances.

In navigating the path to better sleep with medical marijuana, an informed and cautious approach ensures that individuals can explore its potential benefits while minimizing potential risks. As research in this field continues to evolve, the conversation surrounding medical marijuana's role in sleep improvement will likely gain further insights, providing individuals with additional tools to enhance their overall well-being.

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THE INTRICATE CONNECTION

TMJ, TMD, Tinnitus, Eustachian Tube Dysfunction, and the Crucial Role of the Neck

By Dr. Drew Hall

In the intricate web of human anatomy, the temporomandibular joint (TMJ), temporomandibular dysfunction (TMD), tinnitus, and Eustachian tube dysfunction form a complex interplay, often closely correlated to the delicate mechanics of the neck. Understanding this interconnected relationship sheds light on the multifaceted nature of these conditions and opens avenues for comprehensive treatment strategies.

TMJ and TMD, commonly used interchangeably, refer to issues affecting the jaw joint and its surrounding muscles. These conditions can manifest in jaw pain, difficulty in chewing, and even headaches. Surprisingly, they frequently coincide with tinnitus, the perception of noise or ringing in the ears, and Eustachian tube dysfunction, which involves problems with the tube connecting the middle ear to the back of the nose.

The neck, a powerhouse of support and mobility, plays a pivotal role in this intricate dance of symptoms. When the neck's biomechanics are compromised, it can amplify the impact of TMJ, TMD, tinnitus, and Eustachian tube dysfunction. This correlation emphasizes the importance of considering the neck in the evaluation and treatment of these interconnected conditions.

Research suggests that a misalignment in the cervical spine or tension in neck muscles can contribute to TMJ and TMD symptoms. The nerves and blood vessels that traverse the neck are closely linked to the temporomandibular joint, influencing its function. Addressing neck-related issues becomes paramount for a holistic approach to managing TMJ and TMD.

Similarly, the connection between tinnitus and neck issues is gaining attention in the medical community. The auditory pathway is intricately linked with the cervical spine, and disruptions in neck function can contribute to the development or exacerbation of tinnitus. Understanding and addressing neck-related factors may thus be a key aspect of managing tinnitus.



Eustachian tube dysfunction, responsible for ear pressure and related issues, is not exempt from this correlation. The Eustachian tube's alignment and function are influenced by the surrounding structures, including those in the neck. A holistic evaluation that considers the neck's role in Eustachian tube function can offer valuable insights into treatment strategies.

Effective management of these interconnected conditions often involves a multidisciplinary approach. Dentists, ear, nose, and throat specialists, and chiropractors may collaborate to address the diverse facets of TMJ, TMD, tinnitus, and Eustachian tube dysfunction. A comprehensive assessment that includes an evaluation of the neck's biomechanics can guide targeted interventions.

Therapeutic interventions may encompass physical therapy, chiropractic adjustments, and exercises to enhance neck mobility and strength.

In some cases, lifestyle modifications, stress management, and relaxation techniques may also be beneficial. Customized treatment plans tailored to the individual's specific combination of symptoms can yield more effective results.

Patient education is a crucial component of managing these conditions. Empowering individuals with knowledge about the intricate links between TMJ, TMD, tinnitus, Eustachian tube dysfunction, and the neck encourages active participation in their well-being. Awareness of lifestyle factors, posture, and stress management can significantly contribute to symptom relief and prevention.

In conclusion, the correlation between TMJ, TMD, tinnitus, Eustachian tube dysfunction, and the neck underscores the complexity of these conditions. A comprehensive understanding of their interconnected nature is essential for devising effective treatment strategies. By recognizing the role of the neck in influencing these conditions, healthcare professionals can offer more targeted interventions, providing patients with a pathway towards improved quality of life.

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Intranasal Esketamine (Spravato®)

A Promising Treatment Modality for Treatment-Resistant Depression

By Steven Stein, MD - Board-certified Psychiatrist

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

Understanding Treatment-Resistant Depression

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

The Rise of Intranasal Esketamine

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

The Evidence and Efficacy of Intranasal Esketamine

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

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

Safety and Considerations

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

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

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

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

Steven Stein, MD

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

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

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

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Implantable Devices that Power the Heart

Implantable medical devices aimed at monitoring and treating heart-related conditions are not new, but these technologies play a crucial role in enhancing patient care, providing real-time data to healthcare professionals, and improving overall outcomes for patients with cardiovascular issues. There are many avenues a patient would want to investigate with their cardiologist that may improve their overall cardiovascular outcome and life expectancy.

Once a device is selected and implanted, it continuously collects information about the heart's rhythm. This information may be transmitted wirelessly to a cardiac device team either automatically, through prescheduled transmissions, or manually, when a patient experiences symptoms. For some devices, remote monitoring provides a designated cardiac team data concerning the heart's electrical activity as needed, without requiring a doctor's visit.

According to David Buck, DO, FACC, a nuclear cardiologist with Bradenton Cardiology Center (BCC), the device implanted would depend on the latest guidelines from the American College of Cardiology, current research, and the symptoms the patient is experiencing.

For rhythm control, there are devices that monitor the heart rate. **Pacemakers** are a small battery-operated device implanted in the chest that send electrical impulses to the heart to maintain a steady beat. These devices are the most well-known for controlling cardiovascular conditions. Today, modern pacemakers come with the ability to be responsive to one's heart rate, allowing it to adjust to the heart rate and activity level of a person so the device can function at optimal levels.

Recovery time varies for every device, but for pacemakers, a patient is looking at four to eight weeks, with no extreme movements of their arm, or lifting of heavy items. "I have seen a variety of treatment plans based on personal preference, research, and what the patient needs," says Dr. Buck.

When the heart beats much faster or in an irregular pattern, an **Implantable Cardioverter Defibrillator**, or ICD, can send an electrical shock to the heart and bring the rhythm back to normal. This is crucial for patients at risk of life-threatening arrhythmias. Some devices have wires which are implanted into the heart tissue that can deliver electrical shocks and others incorporate leadless devices that remove traditional electrode wires and reduce the risk for complications.

To support the heart and blood circulation, the **Left Ventricular Assist Device** or LVAD, is chosen when an individual's left ventricle can't pump enough blood to the body on its own. Typically, LVAD is used for patients on the heart transplant list who have advanced heart failure, where the heart may deteriorate and become unable to pump enough blood to sustain life. This battery-powered device can also be used in patients with end-stage heart failure where transplantation is not an option.

Because these devices are all battery-powered, patients do need to be aware of their activity levels and what role the device performs. "There is a huge range, and the reason for that depends on what the patient is doing," says Dr. Buck. "There are devices that are used if they go into heart block or slow heart rates, those devices that purposefully resync a patient's heart, all the way up to pacemaker dependent." A battery typically lasts about eight years, but it can be as short as five years and as long as 10 years, and they can be replaced in about an hour through same-day surgery.

Many of these implantable devices now come equipped with remote monitoring, which allows the cardiac or healthcare team to access real-time data and make treatment plans and adjustments to those plans without the need for in-person visits to the doctor's office. This can prove beneficial for patients living in remote areas or have mobility issues. Overall, these implantable medical devices not only improve patient outcomes and quality of care, but also contribute to a more personalized and proactive approach to cardiovascular care.

If you are experiencing chest pains, call 9-1-1 immediately.

* Some information gathered from the American Heart Association (heart.org).



Dr. David Buck

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When you breathe air in, the lungs take the oxygen and deliver it to the heart, which then pumps the oxygen-rich blood to the rest of the body. When you breathe in cigarette smoke, the blood that is delivered to the rest of the body is heavily concentrated with carbon monoxide. Carbon monoxide decreases the blood's ability to carry oxygen which requires the heart to work much harder to pump oxygen through the body. The extra stress on the heart can cause damage to the heart and blood vessels and can lead to cardiovascular disease (CVD). CVD is responsible for 800,000 deaths annually and, consequently, is the leading cause of all deaths in the United States.¹

In addition to causing damage to the heart and blood vessels directly, cigarette smoke can also cause CVD by changing the blood's chemistry, which results in thickened blood and plaque build-up in the walls of arteries. When this happens, it becomes difficult for blood to flow through the arteries and for blood vessels to get to the vital organs, such as your heart or brain, which can result in blood clots and ultimately lead to a heart attack or stroke.¹

The best way to protect your heart from smoking-related disease and death is to never start using cigarettes, but if you are a smoker, the earlier you quit, the better. Quitting smoking benefits your heart and your cardiovascular system now and in the future:

- Twenty minutes after you quit smoking, your heart rate drops.
- Just 12 hours after quitting smoking, the carbon monoxide level in the blood drops to normal, allowing more oxygen to vital organs like your heart.
- Within four years of quitting, your risk of stroke drops to that of lifetime nonsmokers.¹

Although quitting smoking is difficult, it is certainly achievable, and cessation aids such as nicotine replacement therapy (NRT) may be able to help you on your quit journey. Many addicted smokers find that NRT helps them get through the hardest parts of quitting by lessening cravings and symptoms of withdrawal.¹ Gulfcoast South Area Education Center (GSAHEC) provides NRT for free to every individual who attends a tobacco cessation class (if medically appropriate and while supplies last).



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Reference:

¹ <https://www.fda.gov/tobacco-products/health-information/how-smoking-affects-heart-health>



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Exploring Senior Living Options: 55+ Communities vs. Independent Living

Unless you're one of the rare people who enjoys mowing the lawn, unclogging a drain, or doing other household upkeep and maintenance, you're probably exploring your senior living options. As you've done your research, you have likely come across terms like "active senior living," "55+ communities" and "independent living." While they may all sound similar, there are quite a few differences between 55 plus and independent living communities.

WHAT IS A 55+ COMMUNITY?

55+ communities, also called active adult communities, are like typical residential communities except they have a minimum age requirement and are designed with a retirement-friendly, low-maintenance lifestyle.

This type of community can be made up of single-family houses, duplexes, condominiums, or townhomes, with units that are owned by the residents. Interior maintenance and daily upkeep are the responsibility of the homeowner, but exterior maintenance is usually covered by your monthly Homeowners' Association (HOA) dues. Other than the HOA dues (and possible mortgage payment), there are no other monthly fees required for residents in an active adult community.

PROS AND CONS OF 55+ COMMUNITIES

Since these types of communities are residential neighborhoods designed to attract active adults who want to downsize from a bigger home, they offer an array of opportunities for enjoying life to the fullest.

Pros include:

- **Social life:** You'll live around people close in age with similar interests and goals.
- **Resort-style amenities:** Some outside maintenance may be provided, and community services and amenities — such as a tennis court, golf course, swimming pool, fitness center, etc. — may be available as part of your monthly service fees.

Cons include:

- **Selling your 55+ residence:** Since there's a limited number of people who can buy a home in a 55+ community, it may take you awhile to sell it. Rising interest rates and cost of homeowner's insurance also may contribute to difficulty selling your home in the future.
- **Taxes and utilities:** You're responsible for real estate taxes, insurance, garbage collection, inside maintenance, appliances, utilities, internet service and cable/satellite TV.

- **No on-site healthcare options:** If you or your spouse needs higher levels of care, you could have to move again or pay for both the 55+ community and any needed care.

WHAT IS INDEPENDENT LIVING?

An independent living community is often called a retirement community for the simple reason that most of the people who live there are retired. However, they offer an active lifestyle and freedom from the hassles of home maintenance. You'll find residence options like senior apartments and villas in a variety of floor plans and sizes.

At a senior living community, you'll find helpful services and amenities to make things easier and more convenient. Housekeeping, linen service, dining plans, transportation services and security are common. Amenities often include a fitness center, heated indoor pool, multiple dining venues, full-service salon and barber shop, woodworking shop, arts and craft studio, and more.

PROS AND CONS OF INDEPENDENT LIVING

Independent living that's part of a Life Plan Community is ideal if you're in good health. You can continue to live life as you do now but without the concerns of maintaining a home and the worries about future health care if something were to happen to you or your partner.

Pros include:

- **Maintenance-free lifestyle:** Independent living communities have a knowledgeable team to take care of all your home's needs, inside and out.
- **One and done:** Your monthly fee covers a wide variety of services, amenities, wellness programs, indoor and outdoor maintenance, a calendar full of activities and a dining program.
- **Social opportunities:** Scheduled parties, happy hours, special events, and outings with friends and neighbors who share your interests ensure you're never at a loss for things to do.
- **On-site senior care:** If you or your spouse needs long-term health care, you won't have to make another move, and you'll be close to people you already know.
- **Tax savings:** A portion of your entrance and monthly fee could be tax-deductible. Consult your tax adviser to be sure.

Cons include:

- **Decisions, decisions:** With an activity calendar full of classes, events, committees and clubs, you may find it hard to squeeze everything in.
- **Unneeded care:** You could pay for care you don't end up needing. However, according to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 70% of seniors 65 or older will need some type of long-term care for an average of three years.

WHAT DOES "A CONTINUUM OF CARE" MEAN?

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RELIEF FROM DRY EYES

Understanding Ocular Surface Disease

Ocular surface disease (OSD) is a common yet often misunderstood condition that can wreak havoc on your eyes, causing pain, redness, swelling of the eyelids, photophobia, blurred vision, and a perpetual sense of tiredness. Many individuals are quick to dismiss these symptoms as mere dryness and resort to artificial tears, but the truth runs deeper. OSD encompasses various underlying factors, such as meibomian gland dysfunction, blepharitis, rosacea, allergies, and immunological conditions like Sjogren's Syndrome. To find effective solutions, it's essential to delve into accurate diagnoses and treatments that target the root causes of OSD.

Meibomian gland dysfunction is a frequent culprit in OSD, where blocked glands lead to reduced tear production. This can be distressing, but the good news is that LipiFlow, a painless 12-minute treatment, can help unblock the glands and restore normal tear production. It's a game-changer for those suffering from this condition, offering a path to relief.

Blepharitis, on the other hand, arises from an overgrowth of bacteria at the base of eyelashes. This chronic issue demands diligent management with oral antibiotics, antibiotic/anti-inflammatory eye drops, and heat and eyelid antibacterial scrubs. Once stabilized, ongoing maintenance treatment becomes vital to keep blepharitis in check.

Ocular rosacea adds another layer of complexity to OSD. Inflammation of the eyelids and conjunctiva reduces tear production, intensifying discomfort. Fortunately, treatments like Intense Pulsed Light (IPL) and Low Light Level Therapy (LLLT) offer lasting relief and can reduce dependence on medications. These treatments hold the promise of significantly improving the quality of life for those affected.

For individuals who continue to struggle with insufficient tear production, punctum plugs offer a viable solution. These plugs block the drainage system for tears, allowing natural tears to remain in the eyes longer. Many patients find significant relief through this approach.

It's crucial to understand that leaving OSD untreated can lead to corneal compromise, a much more serious issue. The cornea is a critical component of our eyes, and when it's compromised due to a lack of tears, the consequences can be severe. To avoid such complications, early diagnosis and appropriate treatment are paramount.



Ocular Surface Disease is a multifaceted condition with various underlying factors that demand individualized diagnosis and treatment. Once identified and addressed, individuals with OSD can expect not only relief from discomfort but also improvements in their appearance, overall well-being, and vision. By exploring the latest advancements in OSD management and seeking help from eye care professionals, those affected can look forward to a brighter, more comfortable future. ***Don't let OSD leave you in the dark – seek accurate diagnosis and personalized treatment to look better, feel better, and see better.***

Gulf Coast Eye Center, established by Dr. Steven Bovio in 1999, is a trusted provider of primary eye care for individuals of all ages in Sarasota. With over 23 years of dedicated service, our team, including Dr. Cameron Jones, who completed her residency in ocular disease and low vision at the Jesse Brown Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Center and the Edward Hines, Jr. VA Hospital in Chicago, IL, is committed to your eye health. Our practice features a stylish optical offering a wide range of frames and lens customization options, including NeuroLens. We are also experts in contact lenses and low vision solutions, ensuring your eyecare needs are met with precision.



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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 developed Gulfcoast Eye Center in Sarasota. He loves Sarasota and has always had the goal of practicing in this community. Dr. Bovio treats patients of all ages. Dr. Bovio feels he can help his patients the most by specializing in the following areas: Ocular Surface Disease, Dry Eye Syndrome, Early Detection and Treatment of Retinal Disease, Emergency Eye Care, Specialty Contact Lenses, and Low Vision.

Dr. Bovio is committed to assisting others in the industry and has helped educate and train Optometric Assistants through internships. Dr. Bovio is committed to having his practice give back to those in need. Learn more about how he and his team have supported local and global charities.



Dr. Cameron Jones received her undergraduate degree from the University of Central Florida in Orlando majoring in Molecular Biology and Microbiology. She went on to receive her Doctor of Optometry degree from Nova Southeastern University in Fort Lauderdale in 2014 where she graduated with honors. While attending optometry school she was part of the international honor society, Beta Sigma Kappa, which required a GPA of 90% or better to be a member. After graduating, Dr. Jones went on to complete a residency in ocular disease and low vision at the Jesse Brown Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Center and the Edward Hines, Jr. VA Hospital in Chicago, IL. Dr. Jones is thrilled to be back in Florida after practicing optometry in the DC and northern Virginia area for 7 years. Dr. Jones is passionate about the health of the eye and her specialties include ocular disease, geriatric eye care, dry eye syndrome, contact lenses, and low vision. She enjoys attending optometric conferences hosted by the American Academy of Optometry to continue her education and keep up with the latest ocular technologies. When she is not taking care of eyes, she enjoys spending time with her family including her toddler son and daughter. As a former gymnast, she stays active playing pickleball with her parents and her husband.

EMBRACING SELF-LOVE:

Thoughtful Self-Care Gifts for a Blissful Valentine's Day

Valentine's Day is often associated with romantic gestures and expressions of love towards others. But here's a thought. In addition to expressing your love and appreciation for others, you should also celebrate the most important relationship of all – the one with yourself. Embracing self-love is a powerful and empowering act, and what better way to do it than by giving yourself thoughtful self-care gifts?

Below, we've highlighted some Valentine's Day gift ideas for you and your loved ones to pamper the mind, body, and soul.



A Relaxing Spa Day at Home: Enjoy a self-care moment by creating a spa-like atmosphere from the comfort of home. Try aromatic bath salts, scented candles, and luxurious body oils. Treat yourself or someone you love to a long, relaxing bath, and let the stress of daily life melt away. This simple yet indulgent self-care ritual can be a perfect way to unwind and relax.



Mindfulness and Meditation Tools: Gift yourself and your loved ones the tools to cultivate mindfulness and inner peace. Consider items like a meditation cushion, a guided meditation app subscription, or a beautiful journal for reflective writing. Engaging in mindfulness practices can help someone connect internally, reduce stress, and promote a sense of overall well-being.

Comfortable Loungewear or Pajamas: There's something undeniably comforting about slipping into cozy loungewear or pajamas. Treat yourself or special someone to a set of high-quality, comfortable clothing to feel pampered and relaxed. This simple act can make a significant difference by encouraging restfulness and peace.

Nourishing Skin Care: Show your skin (or theirs) some love with nourishing, natural skin care products. Invest in a good quality face mask, moisturizer, and serums that cater to specific skin needs like wrinkle-care, acne prevention or sensitive skin. Taking care of the skin is not only a physical self-care practice but can also contribute to a boost in confidence and self-esteem.

Fitness and Wellness Accessories: Prioritize physical well-being by purchasing fitness and wellness accessories. This could include a new yoga mat, resistance bands, or a fitness tracker. Regular exercise is not only beneficial for the physical body, but it also has positive effects on mental health.

A Good Book or Personal Development Course: Feed the mind with knowledge and inspiration. Give yourself or a friend a captivating book or enroll in a personal development course that aligns with your (or their) interests. Continuous learning and personal growth are essential aspects of self-care, contributing to a sense of fulfillment and purpose.

Mind-Body Practices: Consider activities that integrate both the mind and body, such as yoga, tai chi or pilates. These practices not only enhance physical flexibility but also promote mental clarity and emotional balance. Investing time in mind-body activities can be a holistic approach to happiness and joy.



This Valentine's Day, let's skip the traditional chocolates and roses and focus on self care. Whether it's a spa day at home, mindfulness tools, comfortable loungewear, skin care products, fitness accessories, a good book, or mind-body practices, the options for creating and gifting self-love are limitless. Remember, self care is not a luxury. Go ahead and shower yourself and your loved ones with thoughtful self-care gifts. Happy Valentine's Day!



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Promoting Heart Health: Facts, Infusions, and Lifestyle Tips

February is National Heart Health month, a time dedicated to raising awareness about cardiovascular well-being. At Paragon Healthcare, we are committed to providing you with crucial information to help you prioritize your heart health. As February unfolds, we embark on a journey to prioritize heart health during National Heart Health Month. In the United States, the stakes are high, with cardiovascular diseases claiming a staggering number of lives each year. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), heart disease remains the leading cause of death, responsible for approximately 697,000 deaths annually. These statistics underscore the urgent need for awareness and action. At Paragon Healthcare, we stand at the forefront of the battle against heart disease, arming you with essential facts, innovative treatments like Evkeeza and Leqvio injections, and empowering lifestyle tips to fortify your heart against the challenges it may face. Join us in this vital crusade for heart health.

FACTS AND STATISTICS:

1. Prevalence of Heart Disease:

- Heart disease remains a leading cause of mortality globally.
- According to the World Health Organization, an estimated 17.9 million deaths occur annually due to cardiovascular diseases.

2. Cholesterol and Heart Health:

- Elevated cholesterol levels are a major risk factor for heart disease.
- Evkeeza and Leqvio injections are cutting-edge treatments designed to lower cholesterol effectively.

Evkeeza Infusions: Evkeeza is a groundbreaking medication designed to address high cholesterol, specifically in patients with homozygous familial hypercholesterolemia (HoFH).

1. Mechanism of Action:

- Evkeeza works by blocking an enzyme called ANGPTL3, which plays a crucial role in lipid metabolism.
- By inhibiting this enzyme, Evkeeza helps lower LDL cholesterol levels, reducing the risk of cardiovascular events.



2. Clinical Efficacy:

- Clinical trials have demonstrated the effectiveness of Evkeeza in significantly reducing LDL cholesterol levels in patients with HoFH.

Leqvio Injections: Leqvio is another innovative injection therapy designed to lower cholesterol levels. It belongs to a class of medications known as PCSK9 inhibitors. Here's what you need to know about Leqvio:

1. PCSK9 Inhibition:

- Leqvio works by inhibiting the PCSK9 protein, a key regulator of LDL cholesterol receptors.
- By blocking PCSK9, Leqvio enhances the liver's ability to remove LDL cholesterol from the bloodstream.

2. Reducing Cardiovascular Risk:

- Clinical studies have shown that Leqvio effectively reduces the risk of cardiovascular events in patients with hypercholesterolemia.

Heart-Healthy Lifestyle Tips: In addition to advanced medical treatments, a heart-healthy lifestyle is crucial for overall cardiovascular well-being. Consider incorporating the following habits into your daily routine:

1. Balanced Diet:

- Consume a diet rich in fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and lean proteins.
- Limit the intake of saturated and trans fats and added sugars.

2. Regular Exercise:

- Aim for at least 150 minutes of moderate-intensity aerobic exercise per week.
- Include strength training exercises to improve overall cardiovascular fitness.

3. Manage Stress:

- Practice stress-reducing techniques such as meditation, deep breathing, or yoga.
- Prioritize adequate sleep to support overall mental and physical well-being.

4. Quit Smoking:

- Smoking is a major risk factor for heart disease. Seek support to quit smoking and improve heart health.

As we observe National Heart Health month, Paragon Healthcare is dedicated to providing you with the tools and information needed to prioritize your cardiovascular well-being. From innovative infusions like Evkeeza and Leqvio injections to heart-healthy lifestyle tips, taking proactive steps towards a healthier heart is within reach. Always consult your healthcare provider for personalized advice tailored to your unique health needs.

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UNLOCKING RELIEF:

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

By Dr. Jai Grewal

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

About Dr. Grewal

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

About the Clear Aesthetics Team

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

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REVITALIZING SUN-DAMAGED SKIN:

Exploring Innovative Solutions with PRX Chemical Peel and ProCell's Advanced Microchanneling

Sun-damaged skin is a common concern for many individuals, with prolonged exposure to harmful UV rays leading to premature aging, uneven pigmentation, and fine lines. In the pursuit of effective treatments, two cutting-edge options have emerged – the PRX chemical peel and ProCell Therapies' Microchanneling. Let's delve into these advancements that offer renewed hope for those seeking to restore their skin's health and vitality.

UNDERSTANDING SUN DAMAGE:

A Persistent Challenge

Before exploring the novel solutions, it's crucial to grasp the impact of sun damage on the skin. Ultra-violet (UV) rays from the sun can cause significant harm, triggering the breakdown of collagen and elastin, leading to sagging, wrinkles, and a loss of skin elasticity. Additionally, UV exposure can result in hyperpigmentation, creating uneven skin tone and dark spots. Over time, these effects contribute to the overall aging of the skin.

INTRODUCING PRX CHEMICAL PEEL:

A Transformative Approach

PRX, a revolutionary chemical peel, has gained prominence as an effective solution for sun-damaged skin. Unlike traditional peels, PRX focuses on a unique combination of trichloroacetic acid (TCA)

and hydrogen peroxide. This potent blend penetrates the skin, promoting cellular turnover and stimulating the production of collagen and elastin.

One of PRX's notable advantages lies in its minimal downtime. Patients can experience visible improvements in skin texture, tone, and firmness without the prolonged recovery associated with some traditional peels. This makes PRX an appealing option for those with busy lifestyles who seek noticeable results without extensive interruption.

PROCELL'S MICROCHANNELING:

Elevating Microneedling to New Heights

Microchanneling, an advanced form of microneedling from ProCell Therapies, represents another groundbreaking approach to address sun-damaged skin. This technique involves the use of a specialized device equipped with fine, disposable needles that create microchannels in the skin's surface. What sets ProCell's Microchanneling apart is its integration of stem cell-based serums, which enhance the rejuvenation process.

The microchannels created during the procedure stimulate the skin's natural healing response, promoting collagen and elastin production. The addition of stem cell serums amplifies these effects, fostering a more robust regeneration process. As a

result, individuals can experience improved skin texture, reduced fine lines, and a more youthful complexion.

COMPARING PRX AND MICROCHANNELING:

Tailoring Solutions to Individual Needs

While both PRX chemical peel and ProCell's Microchanneling target sun-damaged skin, they offer distinct advantages catering to diverse skin concerns. PRX excels in delivering a rapid revitalization with minimal downtime, making it an appealing choice for those seeking immediate improvements.

On the other hand, ProCell's Microchanneling, enriched with stem cell serums, presents a more comprehensive approach to skin rejuvenation. The integration of advanced skincare technology ensures a holistic treatment that goes beyond surface-level enhancements, addressing underlying issues for enduring results.

CHOOSING THE RIGHT OPTION:

Consultation and Expert Guidance

Deciding between PRX chemical peel and Microchanneling requires careful consideration of individual skin types, concerns, and desired outcomes. Consulting with skincare professionals, dermatologists, or licensed practitioners is essential to determine the most suitable treatment plan. These experts can assess skin conditions, discuss expectations, and tailor a personalized approach for optimal results.

In conclusion, the battle against sun-damaged skin has found new allies in the form of PRX chemical peel and ProCell's Microchanneling. As these innovative treatments continue to reshape the landscape of skincare, individuals now have powerful tools to combat the effects of UV damage and embrace a rejuvenated, healthier complexion.

South Osprey Dermatology Associates offers a wide range of services including PRX and Microchanneling for patients. From general skin concerns to younger looking skin to skin cancer and everything in between. We are here to help and we are accepting new patients! Call us today at 941-957-7804 to schedule your appointment.

HOW MICROCHANNELING WORKS COMPARED TO MICRONEEDLING: THE 3 STAGE PROCESS



MICRO-NEEDLES CREATE MICRO-CHANNELS

Precision micro-needles are tapped into the skin creating uniform micro-channels. A single pass over the face using the ProCell system will create hundreds of thousands of micro-channels.



STIMULATION OF A HEALING RESPONSE

Each micro-channel is surrounded by healthy tissue, which enhances the healing process. In response to each micro-injury, an inflammatory healing process begins which initiates the formation of new collagen.



SMOOTHING OF SKIN

Over time, the repeated healing process will build new collagen, creating healthier skin, improving the surface texture and the overall appearance of the skin.



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Cleerly Heart Scan Analysis

For more than half a century, the cardiology field has primarily operated as "sick-care," concentrating on addressing symptoms of heart disease rather than delving into the core issue—atherosclerosis. Remarkably, over a decade of clinical trial data has underscored the paramount importance of the type of atherosclerotic plaque buildup in understanding and managing cardiovascular health. The prevailing approach of waiting for signs of reduced blood flow or blockages is being redefined. It is imperative to take a proactive stance, assess the underlying disease precisely, and pioneer a new era of cardiovascular care that targets the root cause before symptoms manifest. This paradigm shift brings forth the transformative potential of technologies like the Cleerly heart scan, enabling a more comprehensive and forward-thinking approach to heart health assessment and management.

The Cleerly heart scan represents a groundbreaking advancement in cardiovascular imaging technology, offering unprecedented insight into the intricacies of atherosclerotic plaque composition. Unlike traditional methods focusing solely on identifying blockages, this innovative scan provides a detailed analysis of the type of plaque in the arteries. By characterizing plaques based on their composition and vulnerability, medical professionals can tailor interventions more precisely, addressing the specific nature of the atherosclerotic disease. This shift from a symptom-centric to a disease-focused approach marks a significant leap forward in cardiac care, empowering healthcare providers and patients with the knowledge needed to initiate targeted and proactive treatment strategies.

Cleerly goes beyond conventional cardiovascular assessments by furnishing your physician with a comprehensive analysis of your heart scan, delivering a profound understanding of your specific heart disease and individual risk factors. This invaluable insight equips your heart care team with the knowledge to make informed decisions tailored to your unique condition. By guiding them toward a more effective and personalized treatment plan, Cleerly transforms the landscape of heart health management. The innovative Track Your Plaque™ feature enables physicians to monitor the progression of the disease over time, facilitating a dynamic and adaptive approach to care.



Moreover, Cleerly recognizes the significance of empowering individuals in their journey to heart health. The Cleerly Patient Report is a user-friendly resource, offering straightforward educational materials about heart disease and presenting analysis results in understandable language. This accessible platform ensures that you receive the correct information at the right time, aiding you in adhering to the treatment plan crafted by your physician. Cleerly's commitment to patient-centric care is reflected in its ability to demystify complex medical data, fostering a collaborative and informed approach to managing heart health.

The rationale behind embracing the Cleerly heart scan is rooted in compelling statistics that underscore the limitations of traditional methods in identifying and preventing heart attacks. Shockingly, 50% of individuals who suffer a heart attack do so without exhibiting any prior symptoms, emphasizing the elusive nature of cardiovascular risks that may go undetected. Moreover, a staggering 70% of heart attack victims are categorized as low risk by conventional methods of assessing heart disease, highlighting the inadequacy of existing risk evaluation strategies.

Traditional stress testing methods also face significant shortcomings, as 75% of lesions responsible for heart attacks only result in a mild narrowing of the arteries, making them easily overlooked. This critical insight underscores the importance of adopting a more sophisticated and precise approach to cardiovascular assessment.

In response to these challenges, Cleerly offers rapid reporting of non-invasive Coronary Computed Tomography Angiography (CCTA) with turnaround times of less than one hour, available 24 hours a day. This unprecedented efficiency makes crucial diagnostic information accessible, enabling timely interventions and personalized treatment plans. Cleerly's commitment to providing rapid and accurate insights directly addresses the limitations of traditional methods, offering a transformative solution to enhance the early detection and management of heart disease.

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Promoting Vision Health:

Age-Related Macular Degeneration Awareness Month in Home Healthcare

Age-Related Macular Degeneration (AMD) is a prevalent eye condition that affects millions of individuals worldwide, particularly as they age. In an effort to raise awareness and promote proactive eye care, the month of February has been designated as Age-Related Macular Degeneration Awareness Month. For home healthcare providers, this observance serves as a crucial opportunity to educate, support, and empower individuals in their homes.

AMD is a progressive eye disease that primarily impacts the macula, the central part of the retina responsible for sharp, central vision. As the population ages, the incidence of AMD rises, making it essential for home healthcare professionals to play a proactive role in its prevention and management.

In the home healthcare setting, the focus extends beyond traditional medical care. It involves creating an environment that fosters eye health awareness and offers practical strategies for maintaining good vision. One key aspect is education—informing both patients and their families about the risk factors associated with AMD and the importance of regular eye examinations.

Regular eye check-ups are crucial for early detection of AMD, enabling timely intervention to slow its progression. Home healthcare providers can facilitate these examinations, ensuring that individuals receive comprehensive eye care without the need to leave the comfort of their homes. By incorporating preventive measures, such as promoting a healthy diet rich in vitamins and antioxidants, home healthcare professionals contribute significantly to AMD management.

In addition to clinical care, emotional support plays a vital role in addressing the challenges associated with AMD. Vision loss can significantly impact an individual's quality of life, and home healthcare providers are uniquely positioned to offer empathetic support. This may include assisting with adaptive technologies, coordinating support groups, or providing resources that enhance independence and well-being.



Beyond the immediate care of those affected, home healthcare professionals can advocate for AMD awareness at a broader level. Collaborating with community organizations, participating in outreach programs, and utilizing digital platforms for educational campaigns are effective ways to amplify the importance of vision health during AMD Awareness Month.

Moreover, embracing technological advancements in telehealth allows home healthcare providers to extend their reach and deliver specialized eye care services. Through virtual consultations and remote monitoring, they can ensure that individuals with AMD receive ongoing care, fostering a holistic approach to managing this condition.

In conclusion, Age-Related Macular Degeneration Awareness Month serves as an opportunity for home healthcare providers to shine a spotlight on vision health. By combining education, preventive care, emotional support, and technological innovation, these professionals play a pivotal role in enhancing the lives of individuals affected by AMD. This month-long observance is not only a reminder to prioritize eye health but also a call to action for home healthcare to be at the forefront of promoting comprehensive care for those at risk of or living with AMD.

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NAVIGATING THE LANDSCAPE OF SEXUAL HEALTH AND VAGINAL REJUVENATION WITH FEMILIFT BY ALMA

By Dr. Pamela Chapman, The Beauty and Wellness Institute

In a world where women's health is gaining increasing attention, the realm of sexual well-being remains a vital yet often overlooked aspect. This article explores the multifaceted dimensions of women's sexual health, shedding light on the significance of understanding and addressing concerns in this domain. Among the innovative solutions available, FemiLift by Alma emerges as a cutting-edge technology contributing to vaginal rejuvenation.

Unlocking the Dialogue on Women's Sexual Health

Women's sexual health encompasses various physical, emotional, and psychological components. From hormonal fluctuations to societal expectations, navigating this intricate landscape is crucial for overall well-being. Establishing open dialogues surrounding topics such as desire, satisfaction, and comfort is fundamental to breaking down stigmas and fostering a healthier perspective on sexuality.

Understanding Vaginal Rejuvenation

Vaginal rejuvenation has become a noteworthy aspect of women's healthcare, addressing issues such as laxity, dryness, and urinary incontinence. FemiLift, a non-invasive laser technology developed by Alma, is at the forefront of this revolution. The procedure involves the precise delivery of thermal energy to the vaginal tissues, stimulating collagen production and promoting increased elasticity.

FemiLift: Bridging the Gap

FemiLift stands out as a safe and effective solution for women seeking vaginal rejuvenation without the need for invasive surgeries. The procedure is minimally discomforting and boasts a quick recovery period, making it an attractive option for those looking to enhance their sexual well-being without significant downtime.

Addressing Common Concerns

Many women experience changes in vaginal health due to factors such as childbirth, aging, or hormonal shifts. FemiLift addresses these concerns by promoting tissue regeneration and restoring vaginal tone. It's a versatile treatment that can aid in alleviating issues like stress urinary incontinence and enhancing sexual satisfaction, contributing to a more confident and empowered woman.



Debunking Myths and Misconceptions

Dispelling misconceptions around vaginal rejuvenation is essential to encourage women to consider solutions like FemiLift. Education plays a pivotal role in empowering women to make informed decisions about their bodies. By understanding the science behind FemiLift and its positive impact on vaginal health, individuals can approach the procedure with confidence.

The Role of Alma in Women's Healthcare

Alma, a leading innovator in the medical aesthetics industry, has played a significant role in advancing women's healthcare through technologies like FemiLift. The company's commitment to research and development ensures that women have access to state-of-the-art solutions that prioritize safety, effectiveness, and overall well-being.

The Emotional Impact of Vaginal Rejuvenation

Beyond the physical benefits, FemiLift can have a profound emotional impact on women. Enhanced confidence, improved self-esteem, and a renewed sense of intimacy can contribute to a more fulfilling and satisfying life. As women embrace the opportunity to prioritize their sexual health, they are taking a proactive step towards holistic self-care.

Conclusion: Nurturing Women's Sexual Well-being

In conclusion, women's sexual health is an integral component of overall well-being, deserving attention and understanding. FemiLift by Alma emerges as a beacon of progress in the realm of vaginal rejuvenation, offering a safe and effective solution to empower women in their journey towards sexual well-being. By fostering open conversations, dispelling myths, and

embracing innovative technologies, society can contribute to a future where women feel confident, informed, and in control of their sexual health.

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



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INTIMACY: A Guide to Maintaining Sexual Wellness After Menopause

By John B. Devine, MD

As women transition through menopause, maintaining sexual wellness and intimacy becomes a vital aspect of overall well-being. Embracing this new phase involves understanding the physical and emotional changes while exploring strategies to keep the flames of intimacy alive.

Menopause brings hormonal shifts that can affect libido and vaginal health. To counteract these changes, prioritize communication with your partner. Openly discussing desires, concerns, and expectations fosters understanding and strengthens the emotional connection.

Regular exercise plays a crucial role in promoting sexual wellness post-menopause. Engaging in physical activity increases blood flow, enhances mood, and boosts confidence, all of which contribute to a satisfying intimate life. Aim for a mix of cardiovascular exercises and strength training to promote overall health.

Nutrition is another key factor. A balanced diet supports hormonal balance and overall well-being. Incorporate foods rich in antioxidants, omega-3 fatty acids, and vitamins that benefit sexual health. Staying hydrated is equally important for maintaining vaginal moisture.

Cultivate a positive mindset towards aging and embrace the changes your body undergoes. Self-acceptance and self-love play a significant role in boosting confidence and fostering a healthy body image, contributing to a fulfilling sexual life.

Educate yourself about menopause-related sexual issues. Understanding common concerns like vaginal dryness and loss of libido enables you to explore solutions. Consult with healthcare professionals to explore hormone therapy or other treatments that can address specific concerns and improve overall sexual health.

Experimentation in the bedroom can revitalize intimacy. Explore new forms of stimulation, engage in sensual activities, and prioritize emotional connection. Intimacy is not solely about physical satisfaction; emotional closeness enhances the overall experience.

Invest in sexual wellness products designed for menopausal women. Lubricants, moisturizers, and devices specifically created for this stage of life can

alleviate discomfort and enhance pleasure. Consult with a healthcare professional to find products suitable for your individual needs.

Regular health check-ups are crucial during menopause. Addressing any underlying health issues contributes to overall well-being, including sexual health. Discuss your sexual concerns openly with your healthcare provider to explore tailored solutions.

Prioritize stress management. Chronic stress can negatively impact sexual desire and function. Incorporate relaxation techniques such as meditation, yoga, or deep breathing exercises into your routine to mitigate stress and promote a positive mindset.

Engage in open communication with your partner about changing desires and preferences. Both partners should be willing to adapt and explore new ways to connect intimately. This mutual understanding fosters a supportive and satisfying sexual relationship.

In conclusion, navigating sexual wellness after menopause involves a holistic approach that combines physical, emotional, and relational aspects.

By embracing open communication, prioritizing self-care, and seeking professional guidance, individuals can cultivate a fulfilling and satisfying intimate life.

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

Taking a patient-centric approach to care, Dr. Devine schedules ample time for patient appointments. He also makes himself directly available to his patients to answer any clinical questions.

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

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

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



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Protect Yourself from the Flu and Covid-19 with these TIPS

By Alfonso L. Espinel, MD

Influenza viruses travel through the air in droplets when someone with the infection coughs, sneezes or talks. You can inhale the droplets directly, or you can pick up the germs from an object — such as a telephone or computer keyboard — and then transfer them to your eyes, nose, or mouth.



People with the flu virus are likely contagious from about a day before symptoms appear until about five days after they start. Children and people with weakened immune systems may be contagious for a slightly longer time. If you're young and healthy, the flu usually isn't serious. Although you may feel miserable while you have it, the flu usually goes away in a week or two with no lasting effects. But children and adults at high risk may develop complications. Pneumonia is one of the most serious complications. For older adults and people with a chronic illness, pneumonia can be deadly.

Influenza viruses are constantly changing, with new strains appearing regularly. If you've had influenza in the past, your body has already made antibodies to fight that specific strain of the virus. If future influenza viruses are like those you've encountered before, either by having the disease or by getting vaccinated, those antibodies may prevent infection or lessen its severity. But antibody levels may decline over time. Also, antibodies against influenza viruses you've encountered in the past may not protect you from new influenza strains that can be very different viruses from what you had before.

At first, the flu may seem like a common cold with a runny nose, sneezing, and sore throat. But colds usually develop slowly, whereas the flu tends to come on suddenly. And although a cold can be a bother, you usually feel much worse with the flu.

Common signs and symptoms of the flu include:

- Fever
- Aching muscles
- Chills and sweats
- Headache
- Dry, persistent cough
- Shortness of breath
- Tiredness and weakness
- Runny or stuffy nose
- Sore throat
- Eye pain
- Vomiting and diarrhea, but this is more common in children than adults

If you have flu symptoms and are at risk of complications, see your doctor right away. Taking antiviral drugs may reduce the length of your illness and help prevent more-serious problems. If you have emergency signs and symptoms of the flu, get medical care right away. For adults, emergency signs and symptoms can include:

- Difficulty breathing or shortness of breath
- Chest pain
- Ongoing dizziness
- Seizures
- Worsening of existing medical conditions
- Severe weakness or muscle pain

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends annual flu vaccination for everyone age 6 months or older. The flu vaccine can reduce your risk of the flu and its severity and lower the risk of having serious illness from the flu and needing to stay in the hospital. Flu vaccination is especially important this season because the flu and coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) cause similar symptoms. Flu vaccination could reduce symptoms that might be confused with those caused by COVID-19. Preventing the flu and reducing the severity of flu illness and hospitalizations could also lessen the number of people needing to stay in the hospital. This year's seasonal flu vaccine protects from the four influenza viruses that are expected to be the most common during the year's flu season. This year, the vaccine will be available as an injection and as a nasal spray.

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Alfonso L. Espinel, MD

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

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

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



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Oral Cancer Prevention and Your Annual Dental Visits

By Dr. Amanda Rizner

Oral cancer is a general term for a group of malignant growths that can occur in the mouth or oral cavity and is the most common form of head and neck cancers. It is responsible for about 10,000 deaths each year. Typically, it can affect various parts of the mouth including the lips, tongue, gums, inner lining of the cheeks, roof, and floor of the mouth. Like many other forms of cancer, early detection and preventive measures play a crucial role in managing and reducing the risks associated with the disease.

Depending on the diagnosis, oral cancers can have a fifty percent survival rate after five years. On average, men are more susceptible than women. Even though detection may be more visible to the human eye than other malignancies, oral cancers come with a higher death rate due to diagnosis being made later in its development. This is because the initial stages often present with little to no symptoms that are recognizable until later stages.

Oral cancer can also present in various ways within the mouth and the symptoms may differ based on the specific location. It often manifests as a red or white lesion in the oral cavity that is non wipeable (meaning it cannot be wiped off by gauze or a towel). Its appearance can also include mouth ulcers that do not heal in a two-week period of time, loose teeth, and hard lumps or bumps that may cause difficulty chewing or swallowing. Squamous cell carcinomas are the most common form of oral malignancy and accounts for almost 90% of cases.



Other forms can include salivary gland tumors as well as melanomas.

One of the primary causes of oral cancer is tobacco use, whether it be smoking or chewing tobacco. There has also been an increase in popularity of smokeless tobacco, which has helped decrease lung cancer statistics, but has not yet shown to decrease the prevalence of oral cancers. Additionally, excessive alcohol consumption, prolonged sun exposure to the lips, and certain viral infections such as human papillomavirus (specifically HPV16) are also linked to an increased risk of developing oral malignancy. Cancer due to HPV has been increasing in prevalence in the past few years and is slowly becoming the leading cause in posterior oropharynx related cancer in people under 50. It is important to note that these risk factors are often interconnected, and individuals who engage in multiple risk behaviors face a higher likelihood of developing oral cancer.

Having your dentist check your oral cavity at your annual exam is one way to help diagnose oral cancer early. The dentist will look for any suspicious areas on the soft, hard tissue, and tongue. Routine xrays are also essential in diagnosing certain types of bone malignancy that has metastasized, or spread to other areas of the body. If any lesions are found, the dentist will usually refer you to an oral surgeon who is specialized in doing biopsies on these types of lesions for an accurate diagnosis.

Preventive measures are crucial in reducing a person's risk. The most effective way to prevent oral cancer is to adopt a healthy lifestyle. This includes avoiding tobacco products in any form, moderating alcohol consumption, and practicing safe sun exposure by using lip balm with UV protection. Vaccination against HPV is another preventive measure, as certain strains of the virus are associated with an increased risk.

In summary, regular dental check-ups and screenings are essential for the early detection of oral cancer. Dentists are trained to identify suspicious lesions or abnormalities in the oral cavity during routine examinations. Early detection significantly improves the chances of successful treatment and recovery. Individuals should be proactive in scheduling regular dental visits, especially if they have risk factors such as tobacco or alcohol use.



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Non-Surgical Innovations for Osteoarthritis and Joint Regeneration

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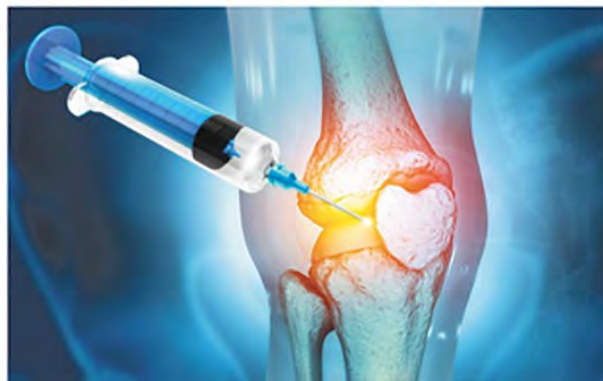
In recent years, the landscape of knee osteoarthritis (OA) treatment has undergone a transformative shift, steering away from traditional surgical interventions towards non-invasive alternatives that prioritize joint preservation and regeneration. Among these groundbreaking approaches, Platelet-Rich Plasma (PRP) therapy and cutting-edge compounds derived from Amniotic and Wharton's Jelly have emerged as promising solutions, offering patients renewed hope and the potential to avoid invasive procedures such as knee replacements.

Osteoarthritis, a degenerative joint disease characterized by the breakdown of cartilage, has long been a prevalent concern, particularly among aging populations. Traditional treatments often involve pain management, physical therapy, and in severe cases, surgical options like knee replacements. However, the advent of non-surgical alternatives has opened up new possibilities for patients seeking relief without resorting to major surgery.

Platelet-Rich Plasma (PRP) therapy stands at the forefront of non-surgical interventions for knee OA. This innovative treatment involves extracting a small amount of the patient's blood, processing it to concentrate platelets, growth factors, and other bioactive proteins, and then injecting this enriched solution directly into the affected joint. The therapeutic components of PRP work synergistically to stimulate the body's natural healing processes, promoting tissue repair and regeneration.

What sets PRP apart is its ability to target the root cause of knee osteoarthritis – the deterioration of cartilage. The concentrated growth factors in PRP promote the regeneration of cartilage, reducing pain and improving joint function. Many patients have experienced significant relief and restored mobility, delaying or even avoiding the need for more invasive interventions.

In addition to PRP therapy, cutting-edge compounds derived from Amniotic and Wharton's Jelly have emerged as exciting prospects in the field of regenerative medicine. Amniotic fluid and Wharton's Jelly, sourced from the umbilical cord, contain a rich array of growth factors, cytokines, and hyaluronic acid – all essential elements for tissue repair and regeneration.



These compounds are processed into injectable forms that can be administered directly into the affected joint. The regenerative properties of Amniotic and Wharton's Jelly compounds go beyond cartilage repair, addressing inflammation and promoting overall joint health. Patients undergoing these treatments have reported not only pain reduction but also improvements in joint function and flexibility.

One of the key advantages of these non-surgical treatments is their minimally invasive nature. Unlike traditional knee replacement surgeries, PRP therapy and regenerative compounds offer patients a quicker recovery time, reduced risk of complications, and the convenience of outpatient procedures. This is particularly appealing to individuals who wish to avoid the lengthy rehabilitation associated with major surgeries.

Furthermore, the potential to sidestep knee replacement surgeries is a significant benefit for patients. Knee replacements, while effective in relieving pain, are associated with inherent risks and limitations. Non-surgical alternatives provide a viable option for those who may not be suitable candidates for or wish to postpone such invasive procedures.



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As with any medical treatment, it is crucial to consult with healthcare professionals to determine the most suitable approach based on individual needs and conditions. However, the increasing success stories and ongoing research in the realm of non-surgical treatments for knee osteoarthritis signal a promising future for those seeking alternatives to conventional interventions.

In conclusion, the era of non-surgical innovation in knee osteoarthritis treatment is here, offering patients a range of options that prioritize joint preservation and regeneration. PRP therapy and cutting-edge compounds from Amniotic and Wharton's Jelly have demonstrated remarkable success in alleviating pain, improving joint function, and, importantly, preventing or delaying the need for knee replacement surgeries. As these non-surgical treatments continue to evolve, they pave the way for a more patient-centric and minimally invasive approach to managing knee osteoarthritis.

VaxD Spinal Decompression – a groundbreaking non-surgical solution for cervical and lumbar spine pain. Specifically designed to address common issues such as herniated discs, bulging discs, sciatic pain, Degenerative Disc Disease (DDD), and chronic neck and low back pain, VaxD offers patients a transformative alternative to traditional interventions. This innovative treatment utilizes advanced decompression technology to gently and precisely target affected areas, relieving pressure on spinal discs and facilitating the body's natural healing processes. By creating a controlled environment for disc rehydration and repair, VaxD aids in reducing pain, improving mobility, and restoring overall spinal health. Emphasizing a patient-centric approach, VaxD spinal decompression stands as a beacon of hope for those seeking relief from debilitating spine conditions without resorting to surgery, offering a non-invasive path to renewed well-being and a pain-free life.

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We are a leading provider of nonsurgical orthopedic solutions in the Florida. We cater to patients of all ages and lifestyles who are at their wit's end with symptoms of osteoarthritis and other debilitating joint conditions. If you're ready to find meaningful relief from your knee pain, we encourage you to consult with our board-certified physicians about your nonsurgical treatment options – even if other doctors have told you that surgery is the only answer.

The Season of Love:

Give Yourself and Your Partner the Gift of GAINSWave

By Dr. David S. Zamikoff

Is your relationship lacking? It's common to experience lulls in the romance department, especially if you are suffering from erectile dysfunction. ED can not only inhibit performance, but it often takes its toll on men and their partners emotionally and mentally.

With remarkable outcomes, GAINSWave is growing in popularity in regard to treating erectile dysfunction (ED) and Peyronies Disease, yet it's also used as a preventative treatment. GAINSWave treatment is available for any man looking to enhance sexual health and performance. A medical condition like ED or Peyronies disease does not have to be present for men to benefit. In fact, many healthy men without an issue opt for treatment to "biohack" or optimize their performance as a prevention method.¹

How Can GAINSWave Prevent & Treat ED?

The GAINSWave is a revolutionary, non-invasive treatment that addresses the underlying causes of ED. GAINSWave uses scientifically proven technology through soundwaves to stimulate blood circulation, tissue regeneration, and removes plaque build-up. These soundwaves or 'shockwaves' also are beneficial in preventing the buildup of plaque and increasing blood vessel growth and circulation. Traditional treatments for ED, such as pills or injections, lose effectiveness over time and have to be used every time a man wants to engage in sexual activity. GAINSWave helps men to feel like themselves again and to enjoy their lives.



GAINSWave utilizes high frequency, low-intensity soundwaves to improve blood flow to the penis, remove micro-plaque, and stimulates the growth of new blood vessels. GAINSWave uses a specific protocol designed to optimize efficacy, safety, and results. Over 80% of Erectile Dysfunction (ED) issues are caused by reduced blood flow. GAINSWave has developed a protocol to treat ED and Peyronies disease (scar tissue) as well as enhance sexual performance.

Younger Men Should Seek Treatment Early

Men who are just beginning to see ED warning indicators should seek the earliest treatment possible. The reason is that it has been well documented that if early diagnosis and treatment are started when a man is younger (the 30s, 40s, 50s) there is an increased chance that the ED will very likely no longer need medical treatment and their arteriosclerosis can dissipate. There have been multiple peer-reviewed studies that indicate that

GAINSWave treatment can potentially cure ED in some patients. The sooner you intervene with treatment, the better your outcome will be.

Men are Preventing ED with GAINSWave

Many men are now understanding the importance of this technology and how it can benefit them in the long term. GAINSWave offers immediate results that are cumulative. Much like living a healthy lifestyle, starting GAINSWave treatments early is another way men can be proactive about their health.

SEEK EARLY TREATMENT & DON'T JUST MASK YOUR SYMPTOMS—TREAT THE ROOT CAUSE!

Source: GainesWave
<https://www.biospace.com/article/releases/mobility-spine-and-sports-is-helping-men-wave-goodbye-to-erectile-dysfunction-with-cutting-edge-gainwave-treatment/>

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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

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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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The Unseen Connection: Exploring the Link Between Hearing Loss and Heart Health

By Dr. Noël Crosby, Au.D.

In a world filled with constant noise and distractions, the significance of maintaining our sensory health often takes a back seat. While hearing loss is commonly associated with aging or exposure to loud environments, recent research has unveiled a surprising connection between hearing loss and heart health. This intricate relationship sheds light on the importance of holistic well-being and prompts us to reconsider how we perceive and address these seemingly unrelated aspects of our health.

As we delve into the complex interplay between hearing loss and heart health, it becomes evident that the two are more connected than meets the ear. Numerous studies have indicated that individuals with cardiovascular issues may have an increased risk of developing hearing impairment. Conversely, those with hearing loss may face a higher likelihood of experiencing heart-related problems. The question arises: What ties these seemingly distinct conditions together?

One key factor in this connection is blood flow. The inner ear is highly sensitive to changes in blood flow, and a healthy cardiovascular system plays a crucial role in maintaining optimal blood circulation. Conditions like high blood pressure and atherosclerosis can restrict blood flow to the inner ear, leading to damage and eventual hearing loss. This revelation emphasizes the ripple effect that heart health can have on our entire body, reaching even the intricate structures responsible for our auditory senses.



Moreover, the relationship between hearing loss and heart health extends beyond mere physiological connections. Lifestyle factors that contribute to heart issues, such as a sedentary lifestyle, poor diet, and smoking, can also impact hearing health. By adopting heart-healthy habits, individuals may inadvertently be safeguarding their hearing as well. This dual benefit reinforces the idea that our lifestyle choices have far-reaching consequences on various aspects of our well-being.

The role of inflammation cannot be overlooked in understanding the correlation between these health conditions. Chronic inflammation, often associated with heart problems, may contribute to the degeneration of auditory cells and structures. Recognizing and addressing inflammation early on may not only benefit the heart but could also play a preventive role in preserving hearing abilities.

As we navigate this intricate web of connections, it becomes clear that a comprehensive approach to health is imperative. Regular check-ups that encompass both cardiovascular and auditory assessments

can provide a holistic view of an individual's well-being. This integrated approach allows for early detection of potential issues, enabling proactive measures to maintain or improve both heart and hearing health.

In conclusion, the link between hearing loss and heart health highlights the intricate nature of our physiological well-being. Beyond the surface, our body's systems are interconnected, and addressing one aspect can have positive repercussions on others. This newfound understanding emphasizes the importance of a holistic approach to health—one that considers the intricate dance between the heart and the ears. By recognizing and acting upon this connection, we empower ourselves to cultivate a life of well-rounded health, where the symphony of our body functions harmoniously for a fulfilling and vibrant existence.

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Unlocking Heart Health: The Crucial Role of Coronary Artery Disease Screening

By Dr. Aneley Yegezu Hundae, M.D., FACC

Screening for coronary artery disease (CAD) is crucial for early detection and prevention of heart-related issues. During American Heart Awareness month, it becomes even more significant to shed light on the importance of identifying individuals who should undergo CAD screening and the methods employed in the process.

Individuals with risk factors such as age, family history of heart disease, smoking, high blood pressure, high cholesterol, diabetes, and a sedentary lifestyle are prime candidates for CAD screening. Age plays a pivotal role, as the risk of CAD increases with advancing years. Family history provides valuable insights into genetic predispositions, while lifestyle factors contribute significantly to an individual's overall cardiovascular health.

Medical professionals use a variety of methods to screen for CAD. Non-invasive tests like electrocardiograms (ECG or EKG) measure the heart's electrical activity, identifying irregularities that could indicate CAD. Stress tests, which involve monitoring the heart's response to physical activity, help uncover potential issues that may not be apparent at rest. Additionally, coronary calcium scoring, a specialized CT scan, measures the amount of calcium in the coronary arteries, providing an assessment of potential plaque buildup.

Furthermore, advanced imaging techniques such as coronary CT angiography (CCTA) or magnetic resonance angiography (MRA) offer detailed pictures of the coronary arteries, aiding in the visualization of any blockages or abnormalities. Blood tests to measure cholesterol levels and inflammatory markers also play a crucial role in CAD screening.

During American Heart Awareness month, heightened efforts are made to raise awareness about CAD and the importance of early detection. Public health campaigns encourage individuals, especially those in high-risk categories, to undergo screenings and adopt heart-healthy lifestyles. Educational initiatives aim to inform the public about the risk factors associated with CAD, emphasizing the need for regular check-ups and preventive measures.



Primary care physicians often play a central role in identifying individuals who should be screened for CAD. Regular health check-ups enable healthcare providers to assess risk factors, recommend appropriate screenings, and provide guidance on lifestyle modifications. Patients with symptoms such as chest pain, shortness of breath, or palpitations may also be referred for CAD screening to rule out potential cardiac issues.

In addition to individual screenings, community-based initiatives during American Heart Awareness month often offer free or discounted CAD screenings. These events aim to reach a broader audience and make screening more accessible, particularly for those who may not regularly seek medical attention. Mobile health units and community clinics contribute to extending these services to underserved populations, addressing healthcare disparities in CAD detection.

In conclusion, screening for coronary artery disease is a vital component of cardiovascular health, and American Heart Awareness month serves as a timely reminder of its significance.

Identifying individuals at risk through a combination of risk factor assessment and various screening methods enables early intervention, potentially preventing adverse cardiac events. Collaborative efforts between healthcare providers, public health campaigns, and community initiatives contribute to creating a culture of proactive heart health, ultimately reducing the burden of CAD on individuals and society.



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Dr. Hundae received his Premedical and Doctor of Medicine Degree from Jimma University School of Medicine. He completed his Internal medicine Residency at Mercer University School of Medicine. His Heart Failure/Heart Transplant fellowship at the University of Miami Cardiovascular Fellowship Program. Cardiovascular fellowship at Baylor University Medical Center.

Board certifications

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What's Your Diet?

By Pastor Roger P. Felipe

Weight-watchers. Nutrisystem. Mediterranean diet. Paleo. Living healthy has become a craze, although obesity in our country, rather legitimizes it. For many people it is about looking and feeling better, living longer, stronger and disease-free. These are all important reasons for eating clean, exercising, and learning to rest our bodies sufficiently.

For Christians, however, trying to maintain healthy habits finds its motivation in more than adopting diet fads to longevity and better quality of life. Taking care of our bodies is stewardship. That is, it is a reflection of our recognition of having been created by God, and how our lives can be instruments in his hands to serve and honor him on earth. Of course, God can use both the healthy and the unfit for his purposes, including the sick, feeble, and dying. Human worth and value is not in question.

The reality is that our earthly lives are only a speck in the sands of eternity. However, Christ followers understand that life doesn't belong to them. It is a gift from a Good Father who entrusted them with a brief span of years that should be invested in loving others and making our world a better place. For those who have believed in Christ and experienced God's forgiveness of sin, the reason for taking care of their bodies goes beyond living

longer and healthier. It's about honoring Jesus Christ with all of life, including the way they take care of their bodies.

In his book, *"The Unknown God: Searching for spiritual fulfillment,"* Oxford University professor, Alister McGrath, describes the parable of Plato's Cave, a story about people enslaved inside the cave oblivious to the reality that existed on the outside beyond the flickering shadows which they knew. That is, until the day someone was able to find their way out and discover a world beyond description, a world of beauty and splendor. McGrath writes, "Our desires have become attached to things that are little more than shadows, when they are meant to be attached to something which cannot decay or disappoint" (32).

How does this relate to healthy living? Focusing on living healthier and longer, like any other pursuit we might obsess about, really reveals a spiritual longing in our souls for something more: *eternity*. Whether is it longing for a "perfect" relationship that often disenchant, earthly riches that can quickly vanish, or a healthy and strong body that is suddenly brought to a standstill due to an unexpected medical report, our hearts are longing for something beyond what this world can provide.



McGrath probes us to consider this question: "Suppose our longing for fulfillment points to something we have yet to discover? What if our yearning is a clue to the meaning of the universe?" (10). Taking care of your body and staying healthy is a good thing, but it isn't everything. The truth of the matter is, whatever we pursue in life has a way to deceive us to think that by attaining "it" our lives will be complete. They're not. Deep inside a voice continues to remind us that our longings for fulfillment are like signposts in the sky pointing us to something beyond ourselves. Could that something (Someone) be our Creator?

May you achieve physical well-being and wholeness. But may you also discover the gift of eternal life which Jesus promises to all who believe and trust in him alone. "...I have come that they may have life, and have it in abundance" (John 10:10). I would enjoy exploring with you the meaning of life and God.



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Consider CBD For Your Heart and Your Sweetheart

Love is in the air and if you are looking for a special gift for your sweetheart consider CBD. For couples it should be valentines every day, not just one day of the year. We all get so busy with work and life stresses that we do not often consider what it is doing not only to our relationships but also our overall health. Stress can lead to different health issues such as high blood pressure, insomnia, depressed immune response and yes heart problems... pun intended. CBD can have positive effects on health leading to benefits in improving your relationship. Improving your health can trickle down other aspects of your life so you feel like doing small things together that make a big difference even just taking a walk.

Women and men alike are affected by stress although it can manifest in different ways. Stress can cause anxiety and lack of sleep and even cause physical pain in the body. All of these can decrease desire for intimacy and further damage our relationships. Lack of sleep, pain, feelings of rejection or inadequacy continue to exacerbate the issues and in turn continue to snowball to performance issues leading to further withdrawal from your partner. It is a downward spiral of chain reactions caused by external stresses our body and mind fail to handle appropriately. It is rarely a lack of love or concern for each other that is the cause of this type of heart problem. The heart is an organ but also symbolizes love and passion, so it makes sense that our emotional, mental, spiritual, and relational well-being can affect the physical organ. Women are particularly affected emotionally; it is a known fact that our ability as women to enjoy intimacy is tied to our emotional state. It is sometimes difficult for both men and women to turn off our minds and put away the cares of the day and just be present with our partner in the moment. We get in our heads about it; negative thinking, we are not loved, we are inadequate or at fault for our failing relationships.

How Can CBD Help?

Well, CBD can help in several different ways. CBD can help relieve stress and anxiety giving us the ability to put the stresses that are overwhelming us into perspective. It produces a calming effect by triggering our body to make anandamide which is known as the bliss molecule. Anandamide plays on the reward center of the brain

just like serotonin or dopamine giving you a sense of peace, calm and relaxation. CBD works to regulate all the systems of your body including circulation, digestion, hormones, sleep, anxiety, blood pressure, pain and they are all connected. When you relax you lower your blood pressure and increase circulation which some studies have shown CBD can have a protective effect on the heart and in turn can improve heart health again pun intended.

Increased circulation can help with issues of ED through vasodilation. Cannabis is a vasodilator as well as anti-inflammatory. Depression, anxiety, and blood pressure are also other contributing factors of ED that CBD may be able to improve. You should always talk to your doctor before starting a CBD regimen especially if you are on medications such as blood thinners and anti-depressants which are a few types of medications that can also contribute to ED in men and lack of desire in women. It is important to talk to your partner about the possibilities and find solutions together. Having the difficult and sometimes uncomfortable conversations can also be a step in building the deep intimacy we crave.



Cannabis has been used in many cultures throughout history as far back as 3000 years ago to enhance sexual experiences and increase libido. In a study done in 2023 on Cannabis effects on sexual functioning and satisfaction confirmed the benefits of this natural plant by relaxing muscles, increasing lubrication, stimulating arousal by increasing sensory response to touch and taste in both men and women.

Sources:
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There are different ways to use or consume cannabis products for health. 1st and foremost, ingestion of CBD is how we activate our endocannabinoid system the (ECS) to bring about homeostasis systemically. 2nd, topical application is also helpful. Although topically it is not going to activate the ECS it will help in localized areas to help reduce inflammation and pain. One of my favorite topicals is CBD massage oil. It is the gift that keeps on giving in our home. My husband and I take turns giving each other massages. Massage is important because touch is vital to our physical, mental, and relational health. Massage can help relax the body and the mind, relieve aching muscles, and stimulate blood flow and circulation. Don't underestimate the power of massage in cultivating intimacy with your sweetheart this Valentine's Day and every other day throughout the year.

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Is Your Fish Oil Rancid?

By Anne-Marie Chalmers, MD

Think fish oil. If your gut reaction is “yuck,” you are in good company. Whether it’s from remembering Grandma’s cod liver oil or taking today’s capsules, many people believe fish oil ought to taste bad.

But the truth is that omega-3 supplements shouldn’t taste like yesteryear’s salmon. If your fish oil does, it’s likely rancid.

What Is Rancidity?

If you eat fish regularly, you probably know that fish spoils more easily than other foods if not kept cold or consumed quickly. The same is true of fish oil. The reason fish and fish oil spoil quickly – or ‘oxidize’, as the scientific community calls it – is that they are rich sources of the omega-3 fatty acids EPA and DHA.

EPA and DHA are the main workhorses of the omega-3 family. These fatty acids are known for their anti-inflammatory properties and role in promoting good brain health, to name just a few benefits. But their chemical structure also makes them highly prone to oxidation. If the EPA and DHA molecules oxidize, their molecular structure starts to change and the molecules break down into byproducts. These byproducts, known as lipid peroxides, give off the unpleasant smell and taste of spoiled fish.

How quickly omega-3s oxidize depends on numerous factors: how the fish was caught, how the fish oil was processed, how the final product was distributed, etc. Reducing exposure to oxygen, heat and light, as well as adding antioxidants, will help protect the oil. But if the oil has already started to oxidize, it is just a matter of time before it turns rancid.

How Rancidity Affects Your Health

Besides tasting and smelling bad, rancid fish oil could be harmful. Animal studies indicate that excessively oxidized fatty acids may cause organ damage and inflammation. And one 2013 study from Spain found that oxidized fish oil had negative effects on cholesterol levels. This was in comparison to non-oxidized fish oil, which provided the expected health benefits.



How to Combat Rancidity

Rancid fish oil is unfortunately common. Studies from Canada, New Zealand, Norway and other nations have found that a high percentage of omega-3 supplements exceed acceptable oxidation limits.

Yet fresh fish oil exists and can provide consumers with a relatively inexpensive, safe way to improve health. To ensure you get a fresh omega-3 product, do the following:

1. Evaluate your current product.

The best way to tell whether or not your omega-3 supplement is fresh is to put it through the taste and smell test. If you have capsules, break them open. If your nose gets a whiff of a strong fishy smell, get something else.

2: Make smart purchases.

Fish oil is perishable, just like milk or seafood. Beware of labels that have a two to three year expiration date. These products have likely been sitting on the shelf for years.

You can also ask manufacturers to share their fish oil’s oxidation numbers, better known as the peroxide, anisidine, and TOTOX values. These values will give you a good picture of the oil’s freshness level.

3: Remember that bigger is not always better.

Look for small containers when buying fish oil. The longer a fish oil is stored – even in gelatin capsules – the greater the chance it will turn rancid.

4: Keep it cold.

Buy fish oil that you can store in the freezer or refrigerator. Low temperatures slow down the enzymatic time bomb that is ticking away.

5: Use it or lose it.

All fish oils will turn rancid with time. When you first buy fish oil, remember to use it up.

This article was abbreviated from a longer version published on omega3innovations.com. For the full text and references, visit:

<https://omega3innovations.com/blog/is-your-fish-oil-rancid/>

About Anne-Marie Chalmers, MD

Born and raised in the United States, Dr. Chalmers graduated from Brown University and completed her medical training at the University of Oslo in Norway. Dr. Chalmers practiced emergency, family, and preventive medicine in Norway for many years. Today, she serves as president of Omega3 Innovations.



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