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May 2024

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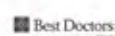
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AVOID WEIGHT GAIN WHEN QUITTING TOBACCO

When tobacco users set out to quit using tobacco, they may be faced with the obstacle of weight gain. Although it is possible to gain weight when you quit, it is not inevitable. There are many things you can do to keep the weight gain in check.

When an individual quits tobacco, there may be a slight change in metabolism – how fast the body burns calories. Nicotine in tobacco products is an appetite suppressant which means individuals may feel hungrier when they quit. Food is also going to smell and taste better as the tar that coats the nasal cavity and taste buds starts to break down. Lastly, some individuals may want to eat to keep from using tobacco.

Check out these tips for managing weight gain when you quit:

Pay attention to your plate:

- Eat plenty of fruits and vegetables.
- Choose fat-free or low-fat snacks like pretzels.
- Use sugar-free hard candy as an alternative to tobacco.
- Choose foods low in sodium, trans fat and added sugar. Read food labels and choose healthful options.
- Drink lots of water!

Incorporate physical activity:

- Physical activity helps to release stress.
- Physical activity can help control your appetite.
- Being active can improve your mood.
- Physical activity burns calories and can help you lose weight if you take in fewer calories than you use up.

Find other activities to stay busy or prevent boredom:

- Play with a pencil, stress ball, paper clip or marbles.
- Munch on carrots, apples, celery and sugarless gum.
- Brush your teeth often and keep a fresh taste in your mouth.
- Keep your hands busy — wash the car, garden, knit, do crossword puzzles, write letters, cook.
- Try a new sport.

So, if you are avoiding quitting smoking for good because you are afraid of weight gain, do not let it get in the way of kicking the habit to the curb once and for all! The most important thing you need to remember is that tobacco does not make you thin and quitting does not make you fat. Focus on what you will “gain” when you quit – a healthier body and outlook.



Help quitting tobacco is free! Gulfcoast South Area Health Education Center (GSAHEC), as part of the Group Quit option of Tobacco Free Florida's Quit Your Way program—offers free group quit sessions to help someone quit all forms of tobacco. These group sessions held virtually and in-person, provide information about the benefits of quitting, managing stress and triggers, and will assist you with developing your own customized quit plan. **Free** nicotine replacement therapy in the form of patches, gum, or lozenges (if medically appropriate and while supplies last) is provided with the session. Attendees will also receive a participant workbook, quit kit materials, and follow up support from a trained tobacco treatment specialist. Contact us today at **866-534-7909** or visit www.tobaccofreeflorida.com/groupquitcalendar to schedule a class or learn more about the program!

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1. How can I avoid weight gain when I stop smoking? American Heart Association, http://www.heart.org/HEARTORG/HealthyLiving/QuitSmoking/YourNon-SmokingLife/How-Can-I-Avoid-Weight-Gain-When-I-Stop-Smoking_UCM_307852_Article.jsp#.V2gwNNjBYU. Accessed June 20, 2016.



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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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UNDERSTANDING AND PREVENTING MELANOMA IN THE FOOT AND ANKLE

By Eileen Rivero, DPM, ABPM

Melanoma in the foot or ankle is often overlooked as a majority of people tend to neglect their feet. For these reasons, melanoma in the foot usually goes unnoticed during its earliest stages. When melanoma is diagnosed in the foot or ankle, it typically presents in a more advanced stage. Melanoma is cancer that develops in the cells that produce skin color (melanocytes). Treatment is easiest during the early stages and becomes more difficult as the melanoma advances. It's also important to know that melanoma can develop in the toenail. This is called subungual melanoma. Melanoma does not always have to be pigmented and can be amelanotic (unpigmented).

So who is at risk for melanoma? Anyone can have melanoma, including people with dark skin. However, there are characteristics that increase your risk of developing melanoma these include but are not limited to: having a fair complexion (people with freckles, light colored eyes or red hair), being exposed to natural sunlight or artificial sunlight; being exposed to certain factors in the environment (solvents, vinyl chloride, and PCBs); having a history of repeated sun burns; having several large or many small moles; having a family history of skin cancer; having a history of skin cancer; and having genetic predisposition.

Since early detection is crucial it's important for you to know what to look for. Performing routine foot exams will reduce the risk of your melanoma on the foot or ankle going undiagnosed. There are four signs to look for when examining your feet or other parts of your body for melanoma. These four signs are known as the ABCDs of melanoma (asymmetry, border, color, and diameter). These signs will help you when performing self-inspection of moles and other unusual spots on your feet. When performing self-inspection of the foot make sure you examine your toe nails for discoloration as well as between your toe. You may even want to take pictures to have as a way to compare their appearance overtime. If any of these signs are present on the foot, it is important to see a specialist right away.

In addition to performing routine self-inspection there are other precautionary measures one may utilize to reduce the risk of melanoma these include: wearing water shoes or socks with shoes,



using adequate sunscreen including on the soles and top of your feet, inspect all areas of the feet daily, including the soles, underneath toenails and between the toes, remove nail polish to examine underneath your nail, avoid UV radiation during the sun's peak hours (10:00am to 4:00pm) beginning at birth (sun exposure is especially damaging to children and adolescents), wear sunglasses that block 100 percent of all UV rays (UVA and UVB), and wear a wide-brimmed hat.



Asymmetry -- Melanoma is usually asymmetric, which means one half is different in shape from the other half.

Border -- Border irregularity often indicates melanoma. The border, or edge, is typically ragged, notched or blurred.

Color -- Melanoma is typically a mix of colors or hues, rather than a single, solid color.

Diameter -- Melanoma grows in diameter, whereas moles remain small. A spot that is larger than 5 millimeters (the size of a pencil eraser) is cause for concern.

Remember, early detection is crucial with malignant melanoma. If detected and treated before it spreads, the 5-year survival rate is over 95%. If you see any of the ABCD signs or if you have discoloration beneath a toenail be sure to visit a foot and ankle surgeon as soon as possible.

Eileen Rivero, DPM, ABPM

Eileen Rivero, DPM, ABPM, is a Podiatrist at Family Foot & Leg Centers in Port Charlotte, FL. She is a Fellow of the American College of Foot & Ankle Surgeons. Call 239-430-3668 or visit www.NaplesPodiatrist.com to make an appointment. Visit FootHealthFacts.org to learn more about foot and ankle conditions.



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The Healing Power of Journaling: A Journey to Mental and Emotional Wellness

Robert Hummer, M.D.

In the hustle and bustle of everyday life, it's easy to feel overwhelmed, stressed, and disconnected from our inner selves. Amidst this chaos, finding a sanctuary for our thoughts and emotions becomes crucial for maintaining overall well-being. Enter journaling – a simple yet profoundly effective tool that offers many health benefits for the mind, body, and soul.

Mental Clarity and Emotional Release - Journaling serves as a safe space where you can pour out your thoughts, fears, dreams, and frustrations without fear of judgment or repercussion. Putting pen to paper allows you to untangle the web of thoughts swirling in your mind, bringing clarity to your emotions and experiences. By externalizing your internal dialogue, you gain perspective and insight into your own thought patterns and behaviors, empowering you to make positive changes in your life.

Journaling also acts as a form of emotional release, providing an outlet for pent-up feelings and stress. Research has shown that expressing emotions through writing can reduce symptoms of anxiety, depression, and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), promoting emotional healing and resilience.

Stress Reduction and Improved Mental Health - In today's fast-paced world, chronic stress has become a pervasive problem that can wreak havoc on our mental and physical health. However, studies have demonstrated that regular journaling can significantly reduce stress levels by lowering cortisol, the body's primary stress hormone.

Furthermore, journaling has been linked to improved mood, self-esteem, and overall mental well-being. By acknowledging and processing your thoughts and feelings on paper, you cultivate greater self-awareness and self-compassion, fostering a sense of acceptance and inner peace.

Enhanced Creativity and Problem-Solving Skills - Journaling isn't just about introspection and self-reflection – it's also a powerful tool for stimulating creativity and innovation. Through free-flowing writing, you unleash your imagination



and tap into your subconscious mind, unlocking new ideas, insights, and perspectives. Whether you're grappling with a creative block or seeking solutions to life's challenges, journaling can serve as a gateway to inspiration and breakthroughs.

Cultivation of Mindfulness and Gratitude - In a world inundated with distractions and obligations, practicing mindfulness and gratitude has become essential for nurturing a sense of inner peace and contentment. Journaling offers a sacred space to cultivate mindfulness by anchoring your awareness in the present moment. Whether you're jotting down sensory observations, recording gratitude lists, or practicing mindful breathing exercises, journaling can deepen your connection to the here and now, fostering a greater sense of serenity and gratitude.

The health benefits of journaling extend far beyond mere pen and paper – it's a transformative journey of self-discovery, healing, and growth.

Feeling overwhelmed or struggling to cope? You don't have to face it alone. Take the first step towards better mental health by scheduling an appointment with a VIPcare primary care provider today. Call 941-541-4812.

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Shedding Light on Stroke Awareness Month: Unveiling the Link Between Strokes and Vision

Jesse T. McCann, M.D., Ph.D.

May marks Stroke Awareness Month, a crucial time to highlight the importance of understanding strokes and their potential impact on various aspects of health, including vision. While strokes primarily affect the brain, their repercussions can extend to the eyes, often serving as early indicators or resulting in lasting visual impairments. As we delve into the connection between strokes and vision, it becomes evident that raising awareness about this correlation is essential for early detection, prevention, and holistic stroke management.

Strokes, often referred to as "brain attacks," occur when blood flow to the brain is interrupted or reduced, leading to the deprivation of oxygen and essential nutrients. This interruption can result from a blockage in the blood vessels (ischemic stroke) or the rupture of blood vessels (hemorrhagic stroke). While strokes can manifest in various ways, including sudden numbness or weakness in the face, arm, or leg, difficulty speaking, and severe headaches, their impact on vision is less commonly understood.

The eyes serve as windows to the brain, and changes in vision can often indicate underlying neurological issues, including strokes. One of the most common visual symptoms associated with strokes is sudden vision loss or changes, which can range from partial blindness to double vision. These changes may occur abruptly and affect one or both eyes, depending on the location and severity of the stroke. Additionally, individuals may experience visual disturbances such as blurred vision, tunnel vision, or difficulty focusing, all of which warrant immediate medical attention.

The connection between strokes and vision lies in the intricate network of blood vessels that supply oxygen and nutrients to the eyes and the brain. When a stroke occurs, these blood vessels may become compromised, leading to decreased blood flow and potential damage to the optic nerve or retina. The optic nerve, responsible for transmitting visual information from the eyes to the brain, is particularly vulnerable to the effects of strokes, often resulting in vision loss or impairment.

Furthermore, strokes can indirectly impact vision through their effects on cognitive function and mobility. Cognitive impairments resulting from strokes, such as memory loss or difficulty processing information, can hinder a person's ability to interpret visual stimuli effectively. Similarly, mobility issues stemming from stroke-related paralysis or weakness can limit a person's field of vision and spatial awareness, increasing the risk of falls or accidents.

Early detection and intervention are crucial in mitigating the visual consequences of strokes. Regular eye exams, including assessments of visual acuity, peripheral vision, and eye movement, can help detect subtle changes indicative of underlying neurological issues. Additionally, imaging tests such as magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) or computed tomography (CT) scans can provide valuable insights into the extent and location of brain damage caused by strokes.

Preventive measures play a pivotal role in reducing the risk of strokes and preserving vision. Lifestyle modifications, including maintaining a healthy diet, engaging in regular exercise, managing stress, and avoiding smoking and excessive alcohol consumption, can significantly lower the risk of stroke occurrence. Moreover, managing underlying health conditions such as hypertension, diabetes, and high cholesterol through medication and regular monitoring can further decrease the likelihood of stroke-related complications.

In conclusion, Stroke Awareness Month serves as a poignant reminder of the multifaceted nature of strokes and their potential impact on vision. By understanding the connection between strokes and the eyes, individuals can take proactive steps to safeguard their visual health and reduce the risk of stroke-related visual impairments. Through increased awareness, early detection, and comprehensive stroke management, we can strive towards a future where strokes no longer cast a shadow on vision and overall well-being.



Jesse T. McCann, M.D., Ph.D.

Originally from New York, Dr. McCann trained as a materials chemist with an undergraduate degree in chemistry from Dartmouth College followed by a Ph.D. from the University of Washington in materials chemistry. In graduate school, he worked on designing advanced nanoscale materials used in the aerospace and biomedical fields. He completed his medical degree (Alpha Omega Alpha) from the Albert Einstein College of Medicine in the Bronx and residency training in ophthalmology at New York University. His interest in ophthalmology was cemented after volunteering to help prevent night blindness caused by Vitamin A insufficiency in the Thar Desert region of India.

Dr. McCann is currently an active member of the American Academy of Ophthalmology, the European Society of Retina Specialists, and the Alpha Omega Alpha Honor Medical Society.

Since becoming a retina specialist, Dr. McCann has volunteered internationally to expand eye care and diabetic retinopathy care in Bolivia with Retina Global. In his free time, Dr. McCann enjoys kayaking, swimming, rescuing parrots, and spending time outdoors in the Florida sunshine.

Education: Dartmouth College, University of Washington, Albert Einstein College of Medicine (Alpha Omega Alpha), Greenwich-Yale New Haven Health, New York University, Manhattan Eye, Ear, and Throat Hospitals, Columbia University

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The Dangerous Link Between Infective Endocarditis, Intravenous Drug Use, and Heart Complications

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

Infective endocarditis (IE) is a serious infection of the inner lining of the heart chambers and valves. While it can affect anyone, it is strongly linked to intravenous (IV) drug use. This link not only poses immediate health risks but also presents long-term heart complications, highlighting the urgent need for prevention and intervention strategies.

Intravenous drug use, particularly involving substances like heroin, cocaine, and methamphetamine, has been identified as a significant risk factor for IE. The process of injecting drugs directly into the bloodstream can introduce bacteria and other pathogens into the body, increasing the likelihood of infection. Moreover, repeated injections can cause damage to the blood vessels and compromise the immune system, further facilitating the entry of harmful microorganisms.

One of the primary concerns regarding IE in IV drug users is the potential for bacteremia, where bacteria from an infected site enter the bloodstream. This bacteremia can lead to the colonization of heart valves, particularly those already compromised due to pre-existing conditions or drug-related damage. Once established, the bacteria can multiply rapidly, forming vegetations that interfere with the normal functioning of the heart valves. Without prompt treatment, these vegetations can cause valve dysfunction, leading to heart failure, stroke, or other life-threatening complications.

The symptoms of IE can vary widely, ranging from fever, chills, and fatigue to more severe manifestations such as heart murmurs, shortness of breath, and signs of embolization, where infected material travels to other parts of the body. However, diagnosing IE in IV drug users can be challenging due to overlapping symptoms with drug-related effects and the reluctance of some individuals to seek medical attention. As a result, cases of IE in this population may go undetected or be diagnosed at a later stage when complications have already developed.

In addition to the immediate risks posed by IE, IV drug use can also have lasting effects on heart health. Chronic drug abuse can lead to cardiomyopathy, a condition characterized by the weakening of the heart muscle, which can increase the risk of



arrhythmias, heart failure, and sudden cardiac death. The stimulant effects of drugs like cocaine can also trigger acute cardiovascular events, such as myocardial infarction (heart attack) and aortic dissection, further exacerbating heart complications in this vulnerable population.

Addressing the complex interplay between infective endocarditis, IV drug use, and heart complications requires a multifaceted approach. Prevention efforts should focus on harm reduction strategies, including needle exchange programs, supervised injection sites, and access to addiction treatment services. Education campaigns aimed at raising awareness about the risks of IV drug use and the importance of seeking medical care for symptoms of infection are also crucial in preventing the spread of IE among this population.

Furthermore, healthcare providers need to be vigilant in screening IV drug users for IE and providing timely intervention to prevent progression to severe complications. This may involve implementing protocols for early detection, such as blood cultures and echocardiography, as well as offering comprehensive care that addresses both the infectious and cardiovascular aspects of the disease. Collaboration between medical professionals, addiction specialists, and community organizations is essential to ensure a coordinated approach to managing IE in IV drug users.

In conclusion, the link between infective endocarditis, intravenous drug use, and heart complications underscores the urgent need for proactive measures to address this public health challenge. By implementing effective prevention strategies, improving access to healthcare services, and fostering collaboration across sectors, we can mitigate the impact of IE on individuals, families, and communities affected by IV drug use while promoting heart health and overall well-being.

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

INVASIVE CARDIOLOGY AND ADVANCED HEART FAILURE MANAGEMENT

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.

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AESTHETIC TREATMENTS: How Science and Philosophy Combine to Rejuvenate the Human Body

By Diana De Lorenzo - Corrospended by Dr. Jai Grewal

The Covid-19 pandemic has brought about significant changes in our daily lives, including increased stress and accelerated aging. As we all strive to comfort ourselves and achieve recovery from all these stressors, it's best to make sure we have good self-esteem. One way to achieve this is by presenting ourselves the best way we can. We have new styles of clothing, more gym memberships to keep us healthy, and many cosmetic products to enhance our natural beauty. This era is more appreciative of what we have. But that doesn't mean we all want to accept the aging process that COVID-19 has sped up for many of us. There are ways now to turn back time with aging without surgical procedures or even changing the look of who we are. What are these magical procedures? Well, its neurotoxins (aka Botox, Dysport, Xeomin, and Daxxify), dermal fillers (Restylane, Juvederm), biostimulators (Sculptra, Radiesse) and Microneedling (SkinPen, SkinPen with Platelet-Rich Plasma). These products give consumers control of their aging process without changing their identity.

Aesthetics is a branch of philosophy that is concerned with the principles of beauty, art, and taste. With advances in science and technology, the field of aesthetics has developed state-of-the-art techniques that enable the rejuvenation of the human body, while maintaining a natural appearance. This approach is critical in restoring balance, movement, and proportion to the body without altering one's identity.

The goal of aesthetics is beauty, art, and taste. Combined, they produce a philosophy of capturing what is essential to aesthetics. Aesthetics has a history that goes back to Ancient Greece and is considered one of the main branches of philosophy. This has been held throughout time. We as humans have enjoyed and preserved many things such as art and traditional costumes without changing the true value of the subject. This is also true in today's world.

With the science that we have today, it empowers us to have more control over so many things. The science that has gone into aesthetics is state-of-the-art. We now can rejuvenate an already established art of the human body and make the effects look natural, just as "Mother Nature"



intended. The need to look natural and feel like ourselves is essential for bringing back proportion, movement, and balance to what was already once there. The effects that this can have on us emotionally can bring dramatic improvement to our self-esteem and confidence.

The injection of neurotoxins, such as Botox, Dysport, Xeomin, and Daxxify, relaxes specific muscles in the body to create a smooth appearance on the skin. Originally developed for therapeutic medical use, these products have been approved for aesthetic purposes, including the treatment of moderate to severe frown lines. Dermal fillers, such as Restylane and Juvederm, are made from hyaluronic acid, a natural substance that occurs in the skin. They are used to restore volume, fill in lines, and lift areas to create a youthful and natural appearance.

While some may argue that these injections alter one's appearance, the majority of patients seek to restore their youthful appearance, rather than change it. The use of these products requires skilled injectors who can analyze and compare form and style to achieve the desired results. The primary objective is to achieve a natural look that restores youthfulness without changing one's identity.

Injectors today are very skilled in analyzing and comparing form and style so patients can be themselves. This form of non-surgical rejuvenation has become increasingly popular, as it can achieve significant improvements with minimal downtime and less risk than surgical procedures. Patients who seek aesthetic treatments are no longer limited to celebrities or those with significant financial resources. Advances in technology and techniques have made these treatments more accessible and affordable to the general public. More importantly, the increasing demand for these treatments is driven by the desire to improve one's self-esteem, confidence, and overall well-being.

However, it is essential to note that these treatments are not a substitute for a healthy lifestyle. Proper nutrition, exercise, and stress management are critical for maintaining overall health and well-being. Aesthetic treatments can enhance one's natural beauty, but they cannot replace good health habits.

In conclusion, aesthetic treatments have become an essential part of our daily lives, especially during the Covid-19 pandemic. They offer a non-surgical approach to rejuvenating the human body, restoring balance, movement, and proportion, and enhancing one's natural beauty. With advances in technology and techniques, these treatments have become more accessible and affordable to the general public. However, it is crucial to seek out skilled injectors and prioritize good health habits to achieve the best results and overall well-being. By combining science and philosophy, aesthetic treatments have revolutionized the way we approach aging and beauty, empowering us to take control of our appearance and feel confident in our own skin.

As we continue to navigate the challenges of the pandemic, it's essential to prioritize our mental health and well-being. Aesthetic treatments can play a significant role in this by improving our self-image and confidence. By embracing the philosophy of aesthetics and the science of modern technology, we can achieve a natural and youthful appearance that reflects our inner beauty and vitality. With proper care and attention to our health, we can maintain this appearance for years to come, living our best lives with confidence and grace.

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Breaking the Silence: A COMPREHENSIVE GUIDE TO MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS

By Steven Stein, MD - Board-certified Psychiatrist

Mental health awareness has become increasingly important in today's society, as individuals and communities strive to break the stigma surrounding mental illness and promote open discussions about mental well-being. By addressing key points such as recognizing signs and symptoms, overcoming stigma, and accessing available services, we can collectively work towards fostering a culture of understanding and support.

1. Open discussion of mental health issues:

The first step towards promoting mental health awareness is initiating open and honest conversations about mental health issues. This involves creating a safe space where individuals feel comfortable sharing their experiences without fear of judgment or discrimination. Whether it's through support groups, community forums, or social media platforms, encouraging dialogue helps reduce the stigma associated with mental illness and fosters empathy and understanding among peers.

Additionally, education plays a crucial role in raising awareness about various mental health conditions, their causes, and treatment options. By providing accurate information, we can dispel myths and misconceptions surrounding mental illness, empowering individuals to seek help and support when needed.

2. Signs and symptoms:

Recognizing the signs and symptoms of mental health issues is essential for early intervention and treatment. While symptoms may vary depending on the specific disorder, common indicators include persistent feelings of sadness or hopelessness, changes in sleep or appetite, withdrawal from social activities, difficulty concentrating, and mood swings.

It's important to note that mental health issues can affect anyone regardless of age, gender, or background. By familiarizing ourselves with these warning signs, we can offer support to those in need and encourage them to seek professional help.

3. Overcoming stigma/why people don't seek help:

Despite growing awareness, stigma remains a significant barrier to seeking help for mental health

concerns. Many individuals may feel ashamed or embarrassed about their symptoms, fearing judgment or discrimination from others. Cultural and societal norms can also perpetuate stigma, leading individuals to minimize their struggles or avoid seeking help altogether.

Additionally, misconceptions about mental illness, such as the belief that it is a sign of weakness or moral failing, further contribute to stigma and deter people from seeking treatment. Addressing these misconceptions through education and advocacy can help break down barriers and encourage individuals to prioritize their mental health.

4. The services that can help and what they provide:

Fortunately, there are a variety of services available to support individuals experiencing mental health challenges. These services encompass a range of interventions, from traditional therapy and psychiatry to holistic approaches such as diet, exercise, yoga, meditation, and mindfulness.

Therapy, whether individual, group, or family-based, provides a safe and confidential space for individuals to explore their thoughts, feelings, and behaviors with the guidance of a trained professional. Psychiatric care may involve medication management for conditions such as depression, anxiety, and bipolar disorder, in conjunction with therapy or other forms of support.

In addition to clinical interventions, self-help strategies can also play a valuable role in promoting mental well-being. Engaging in regular physical activity, maintaining a balanced diet, practicing relaxation techniques such as yoga and meditation, and cultivating meaningful connections with others are all effective ways to support mental health.

Furthermore, incorporating spiritual practices into one's routine can provide comfort and guidance during difficult times. Whether through prayer, meditation, or participation in religious rituals, spirituality can offer a sense of purpose and connection to something greater than oneself.

In conclusion, promoting mental health awareness requires a multifaceted approach that addresses various aspects of mental well-being. By fostering open discussions, recognizing signs and symptoms, overcoming stigma, and accessing available services,

we can create a more supportive and compassionate society where individuals feel empowered to prioritize their mental health and seek help when needed. Together, we can break the silence surrounding mental illness and pave the way for greater understanding and acceptance.

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. I also offer intranasal esketamine (Spravato) treatments for treatment-resistant depression. 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 master's degree 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 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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Connecting SWFL to Support Older Adults

FGCU's Shady Rest Institute on Positive Aging aims to transform opportunities for living well while living long

The Shady Rest Institute on Positive Aging is a regional hub to connect Florida Gulf Coast University with community organizations supporting the older adult community in Southwest Florida.

Faculty, staff and students from FGCU's Marieb College of Health & Human Services and from across the university's academic disciplines pursue this mission through education, service, research and advocacy.

"This is going to be transformative for Southwest Florida," says Shawn Felton, dean of Marieb College. "The region has a vast need to enhance services for older adults. FGCU is committed to providing educational services and research for older adults. We are confident this institute will become the hub to connect seniors to all the services they need."

What is positive aging?

Positive aging is about a positive view of aging as a healthy, normal part of life.

A Yale University study looked at the long-term health consequences of ageism on seniors. Researchers determined that age discrimination has the potential power to shorten seniors' lives. Among the study group, seniors with more positive views about aging lived 7.5 years longer than people who perceived aging negatively.

Additional studies indicated that positive thinking could result in an 11-15% longer life span and can increase the likelihood of living to age 85 or beyond.

Investing in eldercare

A group long known for working with older adults made a significant investment in launching this institute. The Shady Rest Foundation, a name synonymous with eldercare in Lee County, pledged \$5 million to Marieb College to aid in the institute's creation and operation. The foundation previously gave \$4.1 million for scholarships to Marieb College undergraduate and graduate students who plan to pursue healthcare careers involving older adults.



Thomas Felke, associate dean of Marieb College and the institute's executive director, says while it won't be a brick-and-mortar center at first, he expects its impact to be palpable.

"Something like this is needed here," he says. "We don't want it to be a place where people are coming to us. We want to be able to meet people where they are."

The longtime FGCU social work professor has been active in community efforts to improve the lives of older residents and individuals experiencing food insecurity and homelessness. Through his many community connections and previous research, he knows this about older people: "Despite being the largest segment of the population, they feel like a forgotten segment and have a hard time finding and accessing services."

An umbrella organization

The Shady Rest Institute will coordinate the many agencies offering help to older adults and aim to form a central clearinghouse through which people can locate and access services. It will also provide educational outreach for those working with older residents or who want to but need additional training; advocate for policies beneficial to this age group; and help develop an adequate workforce to provide services for the burgeoning 65+ population.

The last part is essential since it's expected that this population segment will increase more than 50% in Lee and Collier counties and 37% in Charlotte County by 2040.

Investigating issues critical to older adults

Felke says the institute will also do what FGCU researchers do best: community-impact research. He envisions it as a multidisciplinary entity, much like The Water School at FGCU, where researchers from various disciplines come together to address problems. This makes sense, he says, in a state that leads the nation in the share of people over 65.

He foresees involving Marieb College experts, such as social workers, occupational and physical therapists and nurses, as well as bringing in the college's Exercise is Medicine program. From the Lutgert College of Business, experts in wills, trusts and estate planning would be valuable. U.A. Whitaker College of Engineering experts could focus on home modifications and livable communities. From the College of Arts & Sciences, music therapy and art therapy could be included.

And that's just the beginning. Felke sees many possibilities for the institute, which he is approaching with this mantra: "Aging is not a disease; it is an opportunity."

Learn more

Explore FGCU's Marieb College of Health & Human Services and the Shady Rest Institute on Positive Aging at fgcu.edu/marieb.



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Menopause and UTIs: What Every Woman Should Understand

Menopause marks a significant transition in a woman's life, signaling the end of reproductive years. While it's a natural process, menopause comes with its own set of changes and challenges, including the increased risk of urinary tract infections (UTIs). The chance of recurrent UTIs increases as a person progresses through menopause. A 2019 study found that 19–36% of premenopausal females experience recurrent UTIs and that the rate of recurrence increases to 55% after menopause. Understanding the relationship between menopause and UTIs is crucial for women's health and well-being.

1. Overview of Menopause

Menopause typically occurs around age 51, though it can vary widely among individuals. It is defined as the cessation of menstrual periods for 12 consecutive months, marking the end of a woman's reproductive phase. During menopause, hormonal changes, particularly the decline in estrogen levels, lead to various symptoms such as hot flashes, night sweats, mood swings, and vaginal dryness.

2. Connection between Menopause and UTIs

The drop in estrogen levels during menopause plays a significant role in the increased susceptibility to UTIs. Estrogen helps maintain the health of the urinary tract by supporting the growth of beneficial bacteria and maintaining the integrity of the vaginal and urinary tissues. As estrogen levels decline, the vaginal pH becomes less acidic, creating an environment conducive to the growth of harmful bacteria like *E. coli*, which can ascend the urinary tract and cause infections.

3. Managing and Preventing UTIs during Menopause and Beyond

Managing UTIs during menopause involves a combination of preventive measures and treatment strategies. It's essential for women to:

- **Stay hydrated:** Drinking plenty of water helps flush out bacteria from the urinary tract.
- **Practice good hygiene:** Wiping from front to back after using the toilet helps prevent the spread of bacteria from the anus to the urinary tract.
- **Urinate frequently:** Emptying the bladder regularly helps prevent bacteria buildup.
- **Avoid irritants:** Certain products such as douches, feminine sprays, and harsh soaps can disrupt the natural balance of vaginal flora and increase the risk of UTIs.

In addition to these measures, incorporating cranberry products into the diet has been shown to help prevent UTIs. Cranberries contain compounds called proanthocyanidins (PACs) that prevent bacteria from

adhering to the urinary tract walls, thus reducing the risk of infection. Utiva Cranberry PACs, with a clinically effective dose of 36mg PACs, offer a convenient and natural way to support urinary tract health during menopause and beyond.

Utiva Webinar: Navigating Menopause

To further explore the topic of menopause and its associated challenges, Utiva is hosting a free live webinar/Q&A session titled "Navigating Menopause." This informative event will feature guest speakers Dr. Susan Oakley, a Urogynecologist, and Shirley Weir, a Menopause Educator.

Event Details:

- Date: Tuesday, May 14th
- Time: 7:30 pm EST
- Format: Live Q&A session on menopause

Don't miss this opportunity to gain valuable insights and advice on managing menopause-related issues. Register now to reserve your spot and empower yourself with the knowledge to navigate this transformative phase of life.

For more information and to register for the webinar, visit Utiva's webpage.

<https://www.utivahealth.com/menopause>

Sources:

- Utiva Health. "Everything You Need to Know About UTIs During Menopause." Retrieved from Utiva Health Blog: https://www.utivahealth.ca/blogs/resources/everything-you-need-to-know-about-utis-during-menopause?_pos=2&_sid=4140b6639&_ss=r
- Utiva Health. "Pelvic Health Issues in Women: Navigating Challenges at Every Age." Retrieved from Utiva Health Blog: https://www.utivahealth.ca/blogs/resources/pelvic-health-issues-in-women-navigating-challenges-at-every-age?_pos=4&_sid=d5a2c02aa&_ss=r

The graphic is a red and white promotional banner for a webinar. At the top left is the 'utiva' logo. To the right, it says 'FREE WEBINAR' with a circular icon. The main title 'NAVIGATING MENOPAUSE' is in large white letters. Below it, in a white rounded rectangle, is the subtitle 'ALL THINGS VAGINAL HEALTH, SEXUAL HEALTH & BLADDER WELLNESS'. On the right side, it says 'JOIN US — TUE MAY 14, 7:30 PM EST'. At the bottom, there are two circular portraits of women. The one on the left is Dr. Susan Oakley, a Urogynecologist, and the one on the right is Shirley Weir, a Menopause Educator. Between the portraits, it says 'LIVE Q&A'. At the very bottom, it says 'Register at www.utivahealth.com'.

CBD And Ways to Manage MENTAL HEALTH

Mental health is a universal concern in today's fast-paced world. The demands of work, family, and daily life often leave us feeling overwhelmed and depleted. Amidst the chaos, it is crucial to prioritize self-care to prevent burnout and maintain overall well-being. As we explore avenues for healing and restoration, let us not overlook the profound connection between nature and mental health. Our ancestors understood this connection intimately, drawing upon the healing properties of the earth to nourish their bodies and souls. The scripture says in: Proverbs 12:25 (NKJV) "Anxiety in the heart of man causes depression, But a good word makes it glad."

Recognizing the Symptoms of Stress and Anxiety:

- Trouble concentrating or making decisions.
- Feelings of irritability, tension, or restlessness.
- Physical manifestations such as nausea, heart palpitations, sweating, or trouble sleeping.
- Sense of impending danger, panic, or doom.

The Mind-Body Connection:

Emotions play a significant role in our physical health, with each emotion linked to specific organs in the body. Understanding these connections can provide valuable insights into how we care for ourselves and our well-being non-pharmaceutically.

Examples:

- Stress weakens the heart.
- Worry affects digestion and can lead to ulcers.
- Fear impacts the kidneys, often causing urinary urgency.
- Grief is linked to shallow breathing and lung health.
- Anger can overload the liver, leading to toxicity and illness.

Harnessing Nature's Healing Power:

One remarkable example of nature's healing power is found in Hemp and its compounds, such as CBD. At the heart of its efficacy lies the endocannabinoid system (ECS), a complex network of receptors and neurotransmitters found throughout the body. The ECS plays a crucial role in regulating a wide array of physiological processes, including neuroprotection, mood, appetite, pain sensation, and immune response.



When properly stimulated, the ECS helps to maintain balance within the body, promoting overall health and wellness. CBD interacts with the ECS to help alleviate inflammation, anxiety, depression, and much more.

Take proactive steps towards understanding and improving your mental health. We now offer Bio resonance scanning to help you assess your nutritional deficiencies, hormones, emotions and more.

Please call us today to schedule a scan and consultation at 352-350-0200. Understanding what is going on in your body is key to being able to make positive changes. When you know better you can do better. Even small changes can make a huge difference in how you feel physically, mentally and spiritually. We look forward to working with you to become the best version of yourself and who God made you to be.

Seeking Support: If you are struggling with mental health issues, remember that you're not alone. Reach out for support from friends, family, or professional resources.

Call: 988 is confidential, free crisis service that is available to everyone 24 hours a day, seven days a week. The Lifeline connects people to the nearest crisis center in the Lifeline national network. These centers provide crisis counseling and mental health referrals.

Source:
<https://www.floridahealth.gov/programs-and-services/prevention/mental-health/links.html>



1. Sunlight Therapy: One of nature's most potent healing agents is sunlight. Exposure to natural sunlight helps regulate our circadian rhythms, boosts mood, and promotes the production of vitamin D, essential for bone health and immune function. Make it a priority to spend time outdoors each day, soaking in the rejuvenating rays of the sun.

2. Hydration: Water is life, and staying adequately hydrated is essential for overall health and vitality. Opt for clean, filtered water whenever possible, and aim to drink at least eight glasses a day. Consider adding lemon and a pinch of salt to your water for added flavor and nutrients.

3. Grounding: Connecting with the Earth's electromagnetic field, known as grounding has been shown to have numerous health benefits, including reduced inflammation, improved sleep, and stress relief. Take time each day to walk barefoot on grass, sand, or soil, allowing your body to absorb the Earth's healing energy and discharge negative energy in your body.

4. Mindful Movement: Incorporating regular exercise into your routine is vital for maintaining physical and mental well-being. Whether it's pickleball, golf, or walking, find activities that bring you joy and make movement a priority in your daily life.

5. Diet: Fuel your body with CLEAN whole foods that are rich in vitamins, minerals, and antioxidants. Incorporate grass-fed and fish proteins, and healthy fats into your diet, and minimize processed foods and sugars.



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EARLY DETECTION SAVES LIVES:

WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW ABOUT THE LATEST LIFE-SAVING TECHNOLOGY

The best way to conquer, fight and overcome any disease state is to have early diagnostic testing at the onset of symptoms, or as a preventative measure. Individuals with high-risk factors for coronary artery disease, or certain cancers are highly encouraged to have annual screenings for their specific disease states potentials.

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CT Lung Screening: If you have been a heavy smoker, then you are at significantly increased risk of developing lung cancer. CT can find small lung nodules that might be cancer before any other test can detect them. If you are between the ages of 55 and 75, then national experts recommend you undergo low dose CT screening for lung cancer. These recommendations come from many groups of medical experts including the National Lung Screening Trial Research Team, the American College of Chest Physicians, and American Society of Clinical Oncology.

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THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN MRI AND CT SCANS

MRI uses a strong magnetic field, radio waves and a computer. This enables MRI to make very detailed pictures of bone, organs, soft tissues and any other body structures. Differences between normal and abnormal tissue is often clearer on an MRI image than a CT.

CT uses a very thin unique X-ray beam to produce detailed, cross-sectional views of the area being studied. CT is often the preferred method of diagnosing causes of pain and many different forms of cancer.

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- Atherosclerosis
- Family History
- Shortness of Breath
- Lethargy
- Chest pain
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- Non-invasive Vascular Testing



To find out if you're a candidate for CT Lung Cancer Screening, you can use the Lung Cancer Risk Calculator at <http://www.shouldiscreen.com>.

For more information on early diagnostic testing and screenings, please visit their website at www.RaveRad.com



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GIVE MOM THE GIFT OF **LIP FILLER** FOR MOTHER'S DAY

By Christine King, PA-C

Lip fillers are one of the most popular types of dermal filler. They increase the volume of your lips, giving fullness to thin lips and erasing the lines around the mouth that make us look older. They can be used to smooth out "smoker's lines" or pursed lines produced by age and/or smoking and straw use.

Lip filler injection is a minimally invasive cosmetic procedure that is performed at a doctor's office with minimal downtime. They are injectable treatments that can add volume and definition to the lips, improve lip symmetry and treat vertical lip lines.

Fillers are generally made from natural or biocompatible compounds such as hyaluronic acid (HA), which is a natural substance in the body. Due to their ease of administration and instant results, lip fillers have boomed in popularity over the past few decades. There are many different brands of lip fillers, including Juvederm®, Restylane® and Perlane®.

Who gets lip fillers and why?

Getting lip fillers is a personal decision. Pursuing your wants and desires for your body can be empowering.

To be considered for lip fillers, you should:

- Be in good physical health.
- Have realistic expectations.
- Not have an active oral infection, including canker or cold sores.

Many people who get lip fillers want to increase the size of their lips. You might want to enlarge the size of your lips for many reasons, including:

- Restoring a previous lip size. As you age, your lips may get smaller or thinner, your philtrum (the groove between your upper lip and septum) may get longer and flatter and the distance between the corners of your mouth (intercommissural distance) may increase.
- Correcting the shape of your lips. It's common for your lips to be different sizes or shapes (asymmetrical).



- Smoothing wrinkles. When you smile or laugh, wrinkles sometimes develop on the sides of your mouth.
- Boosting confidence. Lip fillers can help improve your self-esteem and body image.

Lip fillers restore or add volume to your lips. Over time, you may lose volume in your lips, which may be a result of genetics, smoking, or sun damage. And although they don't stop the aging process, they might help delay the need for a more invasive surgical lip augmentation, like lip implants or a lip lift.

What happens during my lip filler procedure?

Lip filler injection is a simple procedure performed at a doctor's office with almost no downtime.

Preparation involves marking the treatment area and applying a topical numbing agent such as lidocaine. Some fillers contain lidocaine premixed in the vial.

Using a very fine needle or cannula, your provider will inject the filler under your skin. You may need multiple injections during the same session to achieve the desired results. The procedure, including preparation time, should take 15 to 30 minutes.

Aftercare

Following the procedure, you may experience some swelling and bruising for up to two weeks. You should follow some simple instructions and precautions to speed up recovery and avoid any complications:

- Apply an ice pack to the lips to reduce swelling.
- Avoid vigorous exercise and direct sun exposure for 48 hours.
- Avoid massaging or unnecessarily touching of the injection site.

- Avoid aspirin or nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs) such as ibuprofen, as they may cause bleeding.

Lip filler injections can help you add volume, plumpness and symmetry to your lips. Most modern lip fillers are temporary and last months and will need to be repeated to maintain the results. More permanent options do exist but they come with additional downsides that make them a less attractive option.

For more information on this and other aesthetic treatments, contact the office of John Devine 941-457-7700 to set up a free consultation with physician assistant, Christine King, PA-C.



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Navigating Weight Management:

Prime Health Urgent Care's Medically Supervised Services

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

Prime Health Urgent Care's Weight Management Services:

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

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

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

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

Some studies suggest that semaglutide drugs may have additional cardiovascular benefits beyond weight loss. This can be particularly relevant for



individuals with obesity who may also have cardiovascular risk factors. For some individuals, starting a prescribed medication for weight management can serve as a motivating factor. Knowing that they have a medical intervention and support from healthcare providers may encourage adherence to lifestyle changes.

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

1. Wegovy (Semaglutide Injection 2.4 mg):

CLINICAL TRIALS:

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

Glycemic Control:

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

Administration and Adherence:

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

2. Mounjaro (Weekly Injection):

Clinical studies have supported its effectiveness in promoting weight loss and improving glycemic control.

Real-World Data:

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

Gastrointestinal Effects:

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

Wegovy and Mounjaro are all semaglutide drugs that have shown efficacy in weight management and, in some cases, glycemic control. Individual responses may vary, and the choice between these medications should be made in consultation with a healthcare provider. Please see our website to schedule an appointment and see our other services.



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The Sound of Awareness: Celebrating May as Better Hearing Month

By Dr. Noël Crosby, Au.D.

In a world filled with constant noise, the ability to hear clearly is often taken for granted. However, for millions of people around the globe, hearing loss is a reality that significantly impacts their quality of life. That's why May is celebrated as Better Hearing Month, a time dedicated to raising awareness about hearing health and the importance of early detection and treatment.

Hearing loss is more common than one might think. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), over 5% of the world's population – or 466 million people – have disabling hearing loss, and this number is expected to rise to over 900 million by 2050. Despite its prevalence, hearing loss is often overlooked or ignored, leading to social isolation, communication difficulties, and even mental health issues.

Better Hearing Month serves as a reminder that hearing health is an integral part of overall well-being. It encourages individuals of all ages to prioritize their hearing and take proactive steps to protect it. This includes avoiding exposure to loud noises, using ear protection in noisy environments, and seeking regular hearing screenings.

Early detection is key when it comes to hearing loss. Many people are unaware that they have a hearing problem until it has progressed to a significant degree. By promoting regular hearing screenings,



Better Hearing Month aims to identify hearing issues early on, allowing for timely intervention and treatment. This can prevent further damage and improve outcomes for individuals with hearing loss.

The theme of Better Hearing Month evolves each year to address different aspects of hearing health. From promoting hearing conservation in young adults to raising awareness about age-related hearing loss in seniors, each campaign aims to educate the public and encourage action. Community events, educational workshops, and online resources provide valuable information and support for individuals and families affected by hearing loss.

Technology plays a crucial role in the management of hearing loss. Advancements in hearing aids, cochlear implants, and assistive listening devices have transformed the lives of millions of people with hearing impairment. These devices are now smaller, more discreet, and more effective than ever before, allowing users to communicate with confidence and participate fully in daily activities.

However, access to hearing healthcare remains a challenge for many individuals, particularly in underserved communities. Better Hearing Month

advocates for increased accessibility to hearing screenings, diagnostic services, and affordable treatment options for all. By addressing barriers to care and promoting inclusivity, we can ensure that everyone has the opportunity to enjoy the benefits of good hearing health.

Beyond individual actions, Better Hearing Month also calls for greater societal awareness and support for people with hearing loss. This includes promoting workplace accommodations, advocating for policies that protect the rights of individuals with hearing impairment, and fostering a culture of inclusivity and acceptance.

As we celebrate Better Hearing Month this May, let us remember that hearing health is a precious gift that deserves our attention and care. By raising awareness, promoting early detection, and advocating for accessibility and support, we can create a world where everyone has the opportunity to hear and be heard.

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Using the latest and most sophisticated technology, we determine if you have hearing loss—and, if you do, we determine the degree and type of hearing loss. If your hearing loss requires medical or surgical intervention, we can refer you to a physician (otologist or neurologist) for appropriate treatment. If your type of hearing loss can best be treated with the use of hearing aids and/or other assistive listening devices (which is true in the great majority of cases), we can select any of a wide range of hearing devices and custom fit them to your ear, programmed to augment your hearing at those frequency levels where your hearing loss is greatest.

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Noël Crosby
Doctor of Audiology



Karen Draper
Doctor of Audiology

Compassionate Home Health: Excellence in Promoting, Maintaining, and Restoring Health

In the sphere of home health, a profound dedication to compassion intertwines seamlessly with the pursuit of excellence. It's not merely about administering care; it's a heartfelt commitment to promoting, maintaining, and restoring health for those entrusted to our care. Within this compassionate paradigm lies an unwavering passion for excellence, shaping the very essence of how we serve.

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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All-In-One Dental Visit with CEREC

By Dr. Joseph Farag

New technologies are making our lives simpler and easier everyday and dentistry has certainly not been left behind. Thanks to a great new system called CEREC, you can now have a high-tech smile in a single visit.

In days gone by, you may have needed to visit the dentist two or three times to have a quality, white ceramic restoration. The dentist would need to take a special impression to make a plaster model for the dental laboratory to generate an extra replica of your tooth in order to hand-make your porcelain restoration. The craftsmanship of the laboratory technician is highly regarded, but generally requires a minimum turn-around time of two weeks, leaving you to function with a temporary, generally plastic, restoration.

Instead of multiple dentist appointments and weeks for a complete restoration, CEREC allows the dentist to achieve the same, if not better, results in a single visit.

CEREC is an acronym for Chairside Economical Restoration of Esthetic Ceramics. Translated, it means that a dentist can economically restore damaged teeth in a single appointment using high-quality ceramic material that matches. CEREC uses the latest Computer-Aided Design and Manufacture (CAD-CAM) technology incorporating a camera, computer and milling machine in one instrument to give you perfect, white fillings, veneers or crowns, all in a fraction of the time it used to take.



Here's how it works.

Once your dentist determines that CEREC is the correct course of treatment, your visit will begin by preparing the tooth. Any decay, if present, is removed, leaving as much possible of your healthy tooth to support the CEREC restoration. Next, your dentist will use a specially designed electronic camera that makes a digital 3D model of your tooth in seconds.

You can then watch your dentist design your new restoration on a computer screen, right beside the dental chair using the 3D image created by the camera. The virtual filling is then transferred into reality, again using CEREC. A solid block of porcelain ceramic is inserted into the CEREC milling unit. Special tools then sculpt your restoration to the finest detail based on the restoration designed on the CEREC computer.

The perfect-fit restoration is completed and placed in your mouth with the whole process only taking around an hour!

CEREC fillings are natural looking, smooth, white and hard-wearing, just like the enamel surface of the rest of our teeth. The ceramic material is biocompatible and is not effected by hot or cold.

The office of Dr. Joseph Farag offers CEREC restoration. For more details and CEREC or to schedule an appointment for a check-up please call (941) 764-9555 today.



Before and after: CEREC restorations look and feel better than amalgam (above and gold (below), and can be completed in a single appointment



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ENHANCING MENTAL HEALTH WITH NAD+ INFUSIONS

IV infusions offer advantages over pills due to their rapid absorption, higher bioavailability, precise dosage control, avoidance of gastrointestinal issues, ability to administer higher concentrations, and immediate symptom relief. They deliver substances directly into the bloodstream, bypassing the digestive system and leading to a quicker onset of action.

The IV Infusion method ensures that the total dose of the medication reaches the bloodstream without being affected by stomach acid or liver metabolism. Healthcare providers can adjust infusion rates for precise dosing, which is crucial in emergencies or specific medical procedures. IV infusions are particularly beneficial for individuals with gastrointestinal issues affecting oral medication absorption.

IV infusions offer unique benefits in various medical situations. Nicotinamide adenine dinucleotide (NAD+) infusions have emerged as a powerful tool for promoting mental health and overall well-being.

NAD+ is a coenzyme found in all living cells. It plays a critical role in various cellular processes, including energy metabolism, DNA repair, and cellular signaling. Recent research has highlighted the therapeutic potential of NAD+ in improving mental health through its multifaceted effects on the brain.

1. NAD+ and Mental Health Improvement:

- NAD+ plays a crucial role in neuronal function and neurotransmitter synthesis, which is essential for maintaining optimal brain health.
- Studies have demonstrated that NAD+ supplementation can enhance cognitive function, mood regulation, and overall mental well-being. According to a review published in the *Journal of Neuroscience Research*, NAD+ supports neuronal survival and function, thus potentially benefiting conditions such as traumatic brain injury (TBI), post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), Parkinson's disease, and brain fog.



- Furthermore, NAD+ infusion therapy has shown promising results in reducing symptoms associated with mental health disorders, including anxiety and depression. A study published in the journal *Neuropsychopharmacology* reported significant improvements in depressive symptoms in individuals receiving NAD+ treatment compared to placebo.

2. NAD+ and Brain Health:

- NAD+ is involved in DNA repair mechanisms, crucial for maintaining genomic stability and preventing neuronal damage.
- Research suggests that NAD+ infusion therapy may help the brain recover from injuries such as TBI by promoting neuroplasticity and neuroregeneration. A study published in the *Journal of Cerebral Blood Flow & Metabolism* demonstrated that NAD+ supplementation reduced neuronal death and improved cognitive function in animal models of TBI.
- Additionally, NAD+ has been shown to lower inflammation in the brain, which is implicated in various neurological disorders. By reducing neuroinflammation, NAD+ infusion therapy may alleviate symptoms associated with conditions such as multiple sclerosis (MS), rheumatoid arthritis (RA), and lupus.

3. Clinical Applications of NAD+ Infusions:

- NAD+ infusion therapy holds promise as a complementary approach in managing autoimmune disorders, including MS, RA, and lupus. According to a study published in the *Journal of Clinical Investigation*, NAD+ supplementation modulates immune responses and reduces inflammation, potentially benefiting patients with autoimmune conditions.

- Furthermore, NAD+ infusion therapy has been utilized in integrative medicine settings to support overall health and well-being, offering a holistic approach to disease management.

NAD+ infusion therapy represents a groundbreaking approach to enhancing mental health and promoting overall wellness. By supporting neuronal function, reducing inflammation, and promoting DNA repair, NAD+ infusions offer a comprehensive solution for individuals seeking relief from mental health disorders, neurological conditions, and autoimmune disorders. As a medical provider committed to evidence-based care, Prime IV Hydration is excited to offer NAD+ infusion therapy as part of a comprehensive treatment plan to optimize patient health and well-being.

South Sarasota Prime IV

As a premier IV Hydration Therapy clinic, we formulate IV vitamin therapies that help maximize your overall health and wellness. So whether you are looking to instantly reverse a hangover, boost your immune system through the flu season or are looking for a supplement to other therapies, Prime IV is the answer. We offer a clean, comfortable and relaxed environment and utilize only the latest in cutting-edge IV therapies.

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TAX TIME, DID YOU KNOW WHAT YOUR PARTNER CLAIMED

By James W. Mallonee

When you signed your 1040 form, did you know what your spouse, partner or joint filer entered on the form? Although this should not be a question, the reality is that many joint filers are not fully aware of what was entered and filed on form 1040. It is not uncommon for this to happen when a couple divorces or there is a death of one of the parties. If this is the situation within your family and you get notification from the IRS about an audit, you may be open to considering the innocent spouse relief statute provided by the IRS.

It is hard to imagine that one of the parties signing their 1040 annual tax form has no idea what the other joint party is claiming nor what their income was for the past year. However, when it does happen, the innocent spouse could get caught up in years of litigation to prove their innocence and more importantly stuck with having to pay tax on items they had no idea existed.

There are three relief provisions available under Section 6015 of the IRS code. They are: 1) Full or partial relief; 2) Partial relief for those couples who are divorced or separated; or, 3) Equitable relief which serves as a catchall where nothing fits the typical situation for relief.

Under Full or Partial relief, the filer requesting relief must have filed a joint return; 1) the return has an understatement of tax; 2) the relief requesting spouse did not know nor had any reason to know of

the understatement; 3) it would be inequitable for the innocent spouse to be held liable for a deficiency; and, 4) the innocent spouse's request is timely. No doubt, the innocent spouse will have some heavy explaining to do on how it is he or she was unaware of what was filed with no knowledge of where all the income was coming from. In essence, the innocent spouse would have to prove that they had no reason to know of the understatement of income. The counter claim by the government is usually a duty by the innocent spouse to inquire as to what was filed on the 1040 return.

Under Partial Relief, the innocent spouse must have signed the IRS 1040 form and be divorced or separated at the time relief is being sought; and, it must not be any later than 2 years from the time collection is underway. The beauty of this relief is that it is up to the IRS to prove the innocent spouse had actual knowledge of the circumstances which made an item not allowable or was not reported. If found favorably for the innocent spouse, the IRS will proportionally distribute the liability between the two parties.

The last relief available is equitable, which provides the innocent spouse with relief where no relief is available. To qualify for this relief the following circumstances must be present: 1) the tax liability must be attributable to a taxable item of the non-innocent spouse; 2) relief is not able to be given to the innocent spouse; 3) no assets were

transferred between the spouses in an attempt to create a fraudulent scheme; 4) the requesting spouse did not transfer disqualified assets to the non-requesting spouse; 5) there is no knowledge of participating in the filing of a fraudulent joint return; and, 6) the relief being requested is timely.

Under the last relief available (equitable), the innocent spouse would need to show that the two parties are no longer married, the innocent spouse will suffer economic hardship from their lack of knowledge, nor did they have any reason to know of the filed understatement. Generally speaking, it's always good to remember that the innocent spouse bears the burden of proving they are entitled to relief which can be quite daunting when dealing with the government. As a result, be sure to keep good records of what you knew and what was a surprise to you.

When considering seeking relief under the innocent spouse Section 6051 of the IRS code, you need to think through the cost and time needed to file and seek relief. Seeking such relief may exceed any amounts that you might save. As a result, if you wish to seek relief, seek out the attorney of your choice who deals with the IRS and inquire whether it makes sense.

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

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Health Insurance

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

It is illegal for an insurance agent to call you regarding Medicare.

Do not talk to someone you have not given permission to call. Ask them for their National Producer number and report them to Medicare for an unsolicited call.

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

Many plans have decreased the cost of Insulin which will be a huge savings for so many in 2024. Part D after you, the plan and the pharmaceutical company paid \$8,000 you no longer have a cost for your medications for the rest of the year.

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



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

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

Travel Insurance – Did you know that most health insurance does NOT cover you outside of the country and that includes a cruise, in international

waters (4 miles out). Travel insurance is not just about trip cancellation but most importantly what if you got sick or had an accident on your trip. Medical Trip insurance is very important and most of the time not very costly when you weigh the benefits.

Pet Insurance – Your 4-legged family members need insurance as well, especially for the big sudden emergency room services. The younger the pet the less the cost of insurance and there are unlimited benefits as well.

Life Insurance – You are never too young to have life insurance and many types offer living benefits. As an example, I purchase life insurance for my grandchildren almost as soon as they are born. Their policy continues to build cash value that they can use during their lives, for maybe education, wedding or even a 1st home purchase. The younger you are the lower the cost.

Long Term Care Insurance – Overall, 48.7% of older adults with ADL difficulties (or an estimated 3 million persons aged 70 and older) reported needing some sort of personal assistance with one or more ADLs, and, of those individuals with need, 20.7% (or an estimated 629,000 persons) had an unmet need. Long Term Care Insurance helps pay for in home, or facility-based needs, such as assistance with acts of daily living or help with paying for a facility. Start shopping for this insurance in your 40's, but it's never too late to try. Your overall health will pay a major roll in the cost of the plan's premium. The sooner than later for affordability. Remember Medicare is NOT meant for Nursing Home Care/Skilled Nursing.

Logical Insurance Solutions is a SWFL Insurance Broker that works with most of the carriers, we are happy to help you through the maze. This is what we do daily, it is second nature to us. We offer virtual seminars, one on one WebEx, phone and in person appointments.

To learn more about your options call to schedule an appointment contact: Logical Insurance Solutions for all your insurance needs, I am licensed in 36 states.

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Slowing the Pace of Your Life

By Pastor Timothy Neptune

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

What he is saying in these passages is that we need to understand that life isn't about things. Contentment means this: I don't need more in order to be happy.

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

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



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

If you find yourself making statements like this:

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

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

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

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