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June 2024

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**PERIPHERAL
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Treatable Condition**

**CELEBRATE MEN'S
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“Your Smile is the Most Powerful Thing You Own”

By Dr. Mat Mouritsen

Just as an artist's brush creates beauty and emotion, our smiles serve as the canvas through which we express ourselves to the world. Dr. Mathew Mouritsen is both a dentist and an artist. Dr. Mouritsen understands the profound connection between artistic vision and the transformative power of your smile in both personal and professional realms, particularly in business. Beyond the aesthetic benefits, improving your smile can boost your confidence, enhance your professional prospects, and elevate your overall well-being.

Our smiles are often the first impression we make. They are silent ambassadors, conveying volumes about our self-perception and confidence. Your smile speaks not only of the care you invest in yourself but also of your capacity to extend that care to those around you. Just as an artist's paintings reflect meticulous attention to detail and creation of beauty, your radiant smile can reflect your commitment to self-care and your dedication to meeting the needs of others, thereby enhancing your personal and professional relationships. It can be the key to unlocking new opportunities and boosting your confidence in the business arena.

Understanding the transformative power of a radiant smile is at the heart of Dr. Mouritsen's practice. He has witnessed firsthand how changing a patient's smile can change their entire outlook on life.

Steve Halverson's story is a testament to the personal connection Dr. Mouritsen establishes with his patients. Steve, the President and CEO of Halverson Company, a fourth-generation family business owner and large-scale construction project manager, felt self-conscious about his smile during client presentations. He shares, “My teeth were holding me back, and I would think about NOT smiling instead of focusing on the words I needed to say. Then, during a regular annual dental visit, I mustered the courage to ask Dr. Mouritsen if there was any way to fix my smile. Dr. Mouritsen not only gave me options and encouragement but also listened attentively to my needs. He was able to show me images of what the transformation would look like, and we made a plan that day. I will always be grateful for his work and the personal touch he brought to my journey.”



Steve chose to have his top front six teeth replaced with crowns and dental implants. “I never thought about the quality of work a dentist does. In my business, quality, and customer satisfaction are the pillars of growing your business and reputation. I never thought about it being that way for a doctor or dentist. But Dr. Mouritsen's ability to use technology to show me what my smile COULD look like sealed the deal. After seeing my new smile, I feel so powerful and confident in the boardroom. Your smile really is the most powerful thing you own.”

Are you ready to see what is possible with your smile? Schedule a consultation with Dr. Mathew Mouritsen, your trusted dental partner. His mission is to empower you to achieve optimal oral health and unlock your smile's full potential. Together, you can embark on a journey toward a brighter, healthier future—one smile at a time. Greater confidence, vitality, and well-being have the power to change your life. Dr. Mouritsen and Park Family Dental offer a wide range of services, including cosmetic dentistry, teeth replacement, orthodontics, dental implants, dentures, sedation dentistry, emergency dental treatments, pediatric treatments, and dental surgery.



Before



After



Meet Dr. Mathew Mouritsen

With a dentist for a father and an artist for a mother, Dr. Mathew Mouritsen was raised with a unique combination of gifts. Combining the talents he received from both of his parents into a profession in which he can serve others daily has been one of his greatest blessings. He loves the ripple effect of improving his patients' oral health. With his work helping them smile more confidently or eat more comfortably, Dr. Mouritsen appreciates the reward of having truly impacted the lives of his patients. In particular, he enjoys placing dental implants and the immediate transformation possible with same-day implants.

Having grown up in California, just steps from the beach, Dr. Mouritsen loves living in Naples where he can smell the ocean and ride his bike every day. He also enjoys off-road motorcycling, hiking, paddle boarding, and scuba diving. Dr. Mouritsen and his wife have four grown children, one of whom is a dentist also, and 11 grandchildren.

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BEYOND TRADITIONAL BREAST CANCER SCREENING:

Exploring Additional Options for Women's Health

Breast cancer remains a significant concern for women's health, with millions of individuals affected by this disease worldwide. While traditional screening methods, such as mammography, play a crucial role in early detection, recent research suggests that they may not be sufficient for specific populations. As we strive to raise awareness about breast cancer screening, it's essential to explore additional options that can provide comprehensive care and improve outcomes for all women.

Organizations like the United States Preventive Services Task Force recommend breast cancer screening to start with annual or biennial mammograms for women aged 50 to 74. Mammography is a valuable tool for detecting breast cancer in its early stages, allowing for timely intervention and improved prognosis. However, studies have shown that mammography may not be as effective in detecting cancer in specific populations, including women with dense breast tissue or those at high risk due to family history or genetic factors.

One of the limitations of mammography is its reduced sensitivity in women with dense breast tissue. Dense breast tissue appears white on mammograms, making it challenging to distinguish between normal breast tissue and potential tumors, which also appear white. As a result, cancers may be missed or detected at later stages in women with dense breasts. According to the *American Cancer Society*, women with dense breast tissue have a slightly higher risk of breast cancer compared to women with less dense breasts, and additional screening methods may be necessary to improve detection rates.

The USPSTF recommended screening guidelines may not adequately address the needs of women at high risk of breast cancer due to family history or genetic predisposition. While mammography is still recommended for these individuals, additional screening modalities, such as magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) and ultrasound, may be recommended in some instances. MRI is beneficial for detecting breast cancer in women with a known genetic mutation, such as BRCA1 or BRCA2, who are at significantly higher risk of developing the disease.



Recent research published in the *Journal of the American Medical Association (JAMA)* highlights the importance of personalized breast cancer screening strategies tailored to individual risk factors and breast density. The USPSTF Evidence Report and Systematic Review on Screening for Breast Cancer emphasizes the need for healthcare providers to consider alternative screening methods for women who may not benefit fully from mammography alone. By incorporating additional screening modalities, such as MRI or ultrasound, clinicians can improve detection rates and provide more comprehensive care for women at increased risk of breast cancer.

Women must advocate for their health and discuss their risk factors with their healthcare providers. By engaging in shared decision-making and exploring additional screening options, women can take proactive steps to detect breast cancer early and improve their chances of successful treatment. While mammography remains a cornerstone of breast cancer screening, it's essential to recognize its limitations and explore complementary screening methods that can provide a more comprehensive assessment of breast health.

As we strive to improve outcomes for all women, exploring additional screening options that can complement mammography and provide a more comprehensive assessment of breast health is essential. By advocating for personalized screening strategies and engaging in proactive discussions with healthcare providers, women can take control of their breast cancer risk and improve their overall health and well-being.

Reference:
United States Preventive Services Task Force. (Online First). Screening for Breast Cancer: US Preventive Services Task Force Recommendation Statement. *JAMA*. doi:10.1001/jama.2023.18828

Tam T. Mai, MD, FACS, FSSO
Board Certified Breast Surgical Oncologist



Dr. Tam T. Mai is a board-certified fellowship-trained breast surgeon certified by the American Board of Surgery and the Society of Surgical Oncology. She completed her oncoplastic breast surgery training at the University of Southern California, Hoag Breast Fellowship

Program, under the world-renowned Dr. Melvin Silverstein, a pioneer of oncoplastic breast surgery. This approach utilizes plastic surgery techniques and principles to reshape the breast immediately following breast-conserving surgery for breast cancer to preserve the aesthetics of the breasts.

Before her move to Naples, Dr. Mai served as Medical Director of the Springfield Clinic Breast Health Center, an NAPBC-accredited multidisciplinary breast health center in central Illinois. During this time, she also participated in training the next generation of surgical residents in the General Surgery and Plastics Residency Programs at Southern Illinois University. Dr. Mai is passionate about practicing evidence-based medicine and bringing high-level breast care to serve patients with breast diseases. She strongly believes in exercise as a treatment to improve overall wellness, breast cancer survival, and reduce the risk of cancer recurrence.

In her free time, Dr. Mai enjoys traveling, cooking, exercising, weight training, yoga, reading, and spending time with her family.



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AQUALANE'S COMMITMENT TO ADVANCING MEDICAL THERAPIES THROUGH CLINICAL TRIALS

Aqualane Clinical Research is a comprehensive group that advances medical therapies in various human disease states. We allow patients to participate in discovering treatments where none currently exist or where there is an unmet need for safety and more effectiveness. By collaborating with our patients, their care partners, and industry sponsors, we focus on the safe and ethical study of these emerging therapies.

At Aqualane, we always put our patients first.

We promise to educate each potential participant and their family members on all available options and support them in their decision-making process. Striving to make clinical trials practical healthcare, we provide a comfortable, caring, and compassionate environment.

Our founders, Dr. William Justiz, Dr. Matthew Baker, and Kelly Calistri, are passionate about their contributions to the advancement of medicine and the opportunities they provide to people searching for new treatment options. With expertise and experience in research and the central nervous system, you can trust our team of neurologists and researchers to provide the best possible opportunity for you or your loved one.

Multiple Sclerosis (MS) is a chronic autoimmune disease that affects the central nervous system (CNS), including the brain and spinal cord. In MS, the body's immune system mistakenly attacks the myelin sheath, the protective covering of nerve fibers, causing inflammation and damage. This damage disrupts the normal flow of electrical impulses along the nerves, leading to a wide range of symptoms, including muscle weakness, fatigue, vision problems, and difficulties with coordination and balance.

According to the National Multiple Sclerosis Society, MS affects approximately 2.8 million people worldwide, with around 1 million individuals affected in the United States alone. It is more common in women than men, with onset typically occurring between 20 and 40, although it can occur at any age.

Remyelination is the process by which damaged myelin is repaired or replaced. This process is crucial in MS because it can help restore nerve



function and alleviate symptoms. Research into remyelination has been a focus of much scientific interest and holds promise for developing new treatments for MS.

Clinical research studies are vital in advancing our understanding of MS and developing new treatments. Here are some reasons why a newly diagnosed patient might want to consider participating in a clinical research study:

1. Access to New Treatments: Clinical trials offer cutting-edge treatments that may not be available to the general public. By participating in a trial, patients can receive innovative therapies that could potentially improve their condition.

2. Contribution to Science: By participating in a clinical trial, patients contribute to advancing medical knowledge and developing new treatments for MS. Their involvement helps researchers gather data and evaluate the effectiveness and safety of potential therapies.

3. Comprehensive Care: Clinical trials often provide participants with comprehensive care and close monitoring by medical professionals. This can include regular check-ups, diagnostic tests, and access to experts in MS care, ensuring that participants receive high-quality medical attention throughout the study.

4. Personalized Treatment: Some clinical trials focus on personalized medicine approaches, tailoring treatments to individual patients based on their unique characteristics. Participating in such trials may allow patients to receive personalized care specifically tailored to their needs.

5. Hope for the Future: By participating in a clinical trial, patients become part of a community working towards finding better treatments and, ultimately, a cure for MS. This can provide a sense of hope and empowerment, knowing that they are contributing to a cause that may benefit future generations of MS patients.

Patients considering participating in a clinical research study should discuss the potential risks and benefits with their healthcare provider and carefully weigh their options. Additionally, patients should ensure they fully understand the study protocol, including any potential side effects or inconveniences associated with participation.

Aqualane Clinical Research has trials open for people with:

- Alzheimer's Disease
- Parkinson's Disease
- Multiple Sclerosis
- Myasthenia Gravis
- Essential Tremor
- Multiple System Atrophy
 - Migraine
 - Depression
 - Anxiety
- Other Neuropsychiatric Conditions



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Enhancing Men's Health

GYNECOMASTIA TREATMENT

Men's Health Month is a time to focus on the unique health challenges men face and to promote wellness and preventative care. One significant yet often overlooked issue is gynecomastia, the enlargement of breast tissue in men. This condition can cause considerable emotional and physical discomfort, but fortunately, effective treatments are available. Dr. Kiran Gill at Naples Aesthetic Institute offers specialized gynecomastia treatments, providing hope and improved quality of life for many men.

Understanding Gynecomastia

Gynecomastia is a condition characterized by the enlargement of breast tissue in males, often due to hormonal imbalances, genetics, obesity, or the use of certain medications. It can affect one or both breasts, sometimes unevenly, and is most common in adolescents and older men. While gynecomastia is typically not a serious health issue, it can lead to significant psychological distress and self-consciousness.

Benefits of Gynecomastia Treatment

Treating gynecomastia can yield numerous benefits, both physically and emotionally:

- 1. Enhanced Physical Appearance:** Reduction of excess breast tissue results in a more traditionally masculine chest contour, boosting confidence and self-esteem.
- 2. Improved Posture and Comfort:** Alleviating the weight of excess tissue can improve posture and alleviate associated discomfort or pain.
- 3. Increased Self-Confidence:** Many men feel more comfortable in their own skin and in social or intimate settings following treatment.
- 4. Better Physical Fitness:** With reduced breast size, men may find it easier and more enjoyable to engage in physical activities, promoting overall health and fitness.

Are You a Candidate?

Candidates for gynecomastia treatment are typically men who are:

- Experiencing persistent breast enlargement for at least a year.
- In good general health without serious medical conditions.
- At a stable weight, as significant weight loss can sometimes reduce the appearance of gynecomastia.
- Emotionally stable and realistic about the outcomes of the surgery.



Comprehensive Plastic Surgery Services

Beyond gynecomastia treatment, Dr. Gill offers a wide range of plastic surgery services to enhance patients' aesthetics and overall wellbeing. These include:

- **Body Contouring:** Procedures such as liposuction, tummy tucks, and body lifts to refine body shape and remove excess fat or skin.
- **Facial Rejuvenation:** Including facelifts, eyelid surgery, and non-surgical treatments like Botox and fillers to address signs of aging.
- **Breast Surgery:** Breast augmentation, reduction, and lifts to meet the diverse needs of patients seeking breast aesthetic improvements.
- **Reconstructive Surgery:** Services such as breast reconstruction post-mastectomy, skin cancer removal, and trauma reconstruction.

Commitment to Excellence

Dr. Gill's approach combines state-of-the-art technology with a compassionate and personalized patient care philosophy. Her commitment to excellence ensures that every patient receives individualized attention and the highest standard of care.

Men's Health Month is an ideal time to address and take action on health concerns like gynecomastia. With expert treatment options available at Naples Aesthetic Institute, men can regain confidence, comfort, and a renewed sense of wellbeing. If you or someone you know is struggling with gynecomastia, consider a consultation with Dr. Gill to explore the transformative options available.



Dr. Kiran Gill

Board Certified Plastic Surgeon

Dr. Kiran Gill is a Board Certified Plastic and Reconstructive Surgeon with specialty fellowship training in aesthetic surgery of the face, breast and body. Her surgical career commenced in her hometown of Chicago, Illinois, where she completed four years of General Surgery training at Rush University Medical Center.

Following this rigorous training, Dr. Gill carried out her Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery training at Cleveland Clinic, where she developed a keen interest in aesthetic surgery of the face, breast and body. To further hone her skills, Dr. Gill accepted the Aesthetic Surgery Fellowship at the prestigious Fein Institute in Chicago. She is an active member of the American Society of Plastic Surgeons and American Society of Aesthetic Plastic Surgeons.

As the one of the only female plastic surgeons in Naples, FL, Dr. Gill has garnered the respect of her patients, colleagues, and community. Her professional integrity, compassionate care, precise surgical technique and creative innovation along with her passion for style, artistry, and beauty has quickly elevated her into one of Naples premier plastic surgeons.



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General cardiologists serve as primary care physicians for matters of the heart

Heat attack symptoms typically come to mind when you mention heart disease - chest pain, shortness of breath, radiating pain in the left arm, etc. Due to robust education, we all know to call 911 if these symptoms appear.

But what about occasional shortness of breath, a random feeling that your heart “skips” a beat, or other related symptoms that aren’t necessarily emergencies, but need to be evaluated?

That’s where general cardiologists like Physicians Regional Medical Group’s Thinn Hlaing, M.D., come into play.

Hlaing, who is board certified in cardiovascular disease and echocardiography, is often the front-door for cardiovascular care, as he evaluates, diagnoses and either treats patients, or coordinates their care with other cardiology specialists.

General cardiologists can be thought of as primary care providers for matters of the heart - addressing chronic heart diseases like heart failure, valve problems, abnormal heart rhythms, and more.

“I find helping patients with cardiovascular issues fascinating,” Hlaing says. “Understanding the complexities of the heart and the critical role it plays within the human body can be challenging, and it’s an honor to be able to diagnose and treat patients.”

His interests include heart rhythm disease, cardiac imaging, coronary artery disease screening, and preventive medicine including managing high cholesterol and blood pressure. Board certification in echocardiography means Hlaing is recognized as having extensive training and expertise in echocardiograms, a diagnostic echo (image/video) of the heart that helps identify any structural or functional issues.



Hlaing earned his medical degree from the University of Medicine in Mandalay, Myanmar, and completed residency at Lankenau Medical Center in Wynnewood, Pennsylvania. For more advanced training, Hlaing completed a fellowship at Georgetown University Hospital and Washington Hospital Center Program in Washington, DC.

He sees patients in Bonita Springs in addition to Physicians Regional Pine Ridge. Learn more at PhysiciansRegionalCardioCare.com or by calling (239) 326-0493.





HEALTHY AGING FOR YOUR BRAIN BEGINS WITH YOUR DIET

By Greer Burcky, MS, RDN/LDN, CPT - Registered Dietician/Performance Coach

Maintaining brain health as we age is paramount for preserving cognitive function and overall well-being. While genetics certainly plays a role in the aging process, it's crucial to understand that lifestyle factors such as nutrition significantly impact brain health and the risk of age-related cognitive decline and neurodegenerative diseases. This understanding empowers us to make informed dietary choices that can positively influence our brain health. It involves delving into the intricate relationship between nutrition and brain function, including the influence of macronutrients and micronutrients on the microbiota-gut-brain axis.

Our digestive system takes part in hormone production and regulates our mood and appetite! Many believe our GI tract communicates directly to our brain and vice versa to ensure homeostasis.

1. Macronutrients and Brain Health: Macronutrients, including carbohydrates, fats, and proteins, are essential for providing energy and supporting various physiological functions, including brain health. Keeping a balance of each macronutrient is vital in controlling stable blood sugar and energy levels. Something we need to consider as we age is blood sugar control. PET scans have been used to show impaired glucose transport in neurons of older adults suffering from Alzheimer's in the temporal, parietal, and frontal lobes. Also, the greater variability in our glycemic control the worse our cognitive dysfunction. This is caused by the oxidative stress and neuroinflammation from high glucose levels and insulin resistance. It is vital to prioritize complex carbohydrates such as starchy vegetables and fruits as they provide sustained energy release and essential nutrients.

Something we need to consider as we age is blood sugar control. PET scans have been used to show impaired glucose transport in neurons of older adults suffering from Alzheimer's in the temporal, parietal, and frontal lobes. Also, the greater variability in our glycemic control the worse our cognitive dysfunction. This is caused by the oxidative stress and neuroinflammation from high glucose levels and insulin resistance.

2. Fats and Brain Function: Healthy fats, such as omega-3 fatty acids found in fatty fish, nuts, and seeds, play a crucial role in maintaining brain structure and function. Studies have shown that omega-3 fatty acids are associated with a reduced risk of cognitive decline and may help protect against neurodegenerative diseases like Alzheimer's. Additionally, monounsaturated fats found in olive oil and avocados have been linked to improved cognitive function.

Olive oil contains a monounsaturated fatty acid, oleic acid, which is neuroprotective!

3. Proteins and Cognitive Health: Protein is essential for building and repairing tissues, including brain tissue. Adequate protein intake supports neurotransmitter function, vital for communication between brain cells. Including lean protein sources such as chicken, turkey, grass fed beef, bison, pasture raised pork, salmon, shrimp, scallops, eggs, and good quality protein powders/supplement in the diet can help maintain cognitive function and muscle mass, especially in older adults.

4. Microbiota-Gut-Brain Axis and Nutrition: Emerging research has highlighted the importance of the microbiota-gut-brain axis in brain health and cognitive function. The gut microbiota, composed of trillions of microorganisms, plays a crucial role in regulating inflammation, neurotransmitter production, and nutrient metabolism, all influencing brain health. Consuming a diverse range of fiber-rich foods, fermented foods, and prebiotics supports healthy gut microbiota, which in turn benefits brain function.

Some great fermented foods to include are kefir, plain yogurt, sauerkraut, and kimchi!

5. Micronutrients and Brain Aging: Micronutrients, including vitamins and minerals, are essential for various biochemical processes in the brain. For example, antioxidants such as vitamin C, vitamin E, and beta-carotene help protect brain cells from oxidative stress, which is implicated in neurodegenerative diseases. B vitamins, including folate, vitamin B6, and vitamin B12, are crucial for cognitive function and the production of neurotransmitters. Adequate intake of micronutrients through a balanced diet can support brain health and slow mental decline with age.

Eating a variety of colorful foods is a great way to ensure you are getting as many micronutrients as possible. Things like Brussel sprouts and purple cabbage have a compound present called sulforaphane which has antioxidant, antimicrobial, and anti-inflammatory properties. Beets and blueberries have anthocyanins present which have antioxidant properties and help with inflammation!

Another nutrient pack food is liver! Liver has B12, folate, iron, magnesium, selenium, zinc, and vitamin A. 3.5 ounces of beef liver contains 860% of your daily intake for Vitamin A!

6. Nutrition and Neurodegeneration: Poor dietary habits characterized by excessive intake of processed foods, sugars, and unhealthy fats are associated with an increased risk of neurodegenerative diseases. Conversely, adherence to a Mediterranean-style diet rich in fruits, vegetables, whole grains, fish, and olive oil has been linked to a lower risk of cognitive decline and neurodegenerative conditions like Alzheimer's disease. The Mediterranean diet's emphasis on healthy fats, and protein intake provides a wealth of nutrients that support brain health and reduce inflammation.

The relationship between nutrition and brain health is multifaceted, with various macronutrients and micronutrients playing critical roles in maintaining cognitive function and reducing the risk of neurodegenerative diseases. Individuals can support their brain health as they age by prioritizing a balanced diet rich in whole foods. However, consulting with a healthcare provider or registered dietitian for personalized nutrition recommendations based on individual health status and dietary needs is essential. Aging well involves nurturing the body and nourishing the mind through informed nutritional choices.

Sources:

Melzer TM, Manosso LM, Yau S-y, Gil-Mohapel J, Brocardo PS. In Pursuit of Healthy Aging: Effects of Nutrition on Brain Function. *International Journal of Molecular Sciences*. 2021; 22(9):5026. <https://doi.org/10.3390/ijms22095026>



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Chronic Limb Ischemia: Many Physicians Want to Amputate, While They Should Be Focusing on Advanced Interventional Treatment

By Julian J. Javier, MD, FSCAI, FACC, FACP and Leandro Perez, MD, FACC, FSCAI, RPVI

Individuals with peripheral arterial disease (PAD) have blood flow disruptions due to narrowed or damaged blood vessels. Peripheral artery disease is a growing condition that puts patients at high risk for heart attacks and other cardiovascular events due to atherosclerosis (buildup of plaque), and the risk of plaque sloughing off and creating clots.

Advanced PAD often Leads to CLI

In the early stages of PAD, patients may show no symptoms, or they are often ignored. PAD is progressive; symptomatic disease progression and cardiovascular morbidity are high as it evolves. The advanced stages of PAD, which occludes blood flow, especially in the tibia and foot arteries, causing ulcerations, gangrene, and tissue loss, is known as Chronic Limb Ischemia (CLI).

Approximately 2 million people in the U.S. have CLI, but that number is probably much higher as it often goes undiagnosed until the disease is severely advanced. CLI is an occlusive disease state that doesn't provide adequate perfusion to complete the body's metabolic demands. CLI is increasingly escalating. Few other diseases have as high of a mortality rate as CLI.

Numerous Amputations Should be Prevented

In south Florida, we are seeing record numbers of people that were recommended amputation. In most of these cases, it is unfounded. Many physicians resort to amputation to try and save their patients' lives, but it's unfortunately often performed unnecessarily, and it puts patients at a higher risk of death. Amputation severely reduces a person's survival rate. Because CLI is increasing in record numbers, patients' survival rates are much worse than that of many deadly cancers, yet there is no clear strategic protocol in place by the government to help patients survive and better prepare and mandate their physician's treatment plans.

In-Depth Imaging is Crucial to Avoid Unnecessary Amputation

Patients with CLI almost always have comorbidities such as diabetes, hypertension, high cholesterol, kidney disease, and extensive atherosclerosis throughout their bodies. Angiography is a critical tool to understand the patient's vascular health overall. Sadly, many patients with CLI are never offered any in-depth imaging studies. With the proper testing,

physicians can decide how to best treat the patient and avoid amputation through revascularization procedures. Patients who undergo amputation have double the risk within the year of death.

Many physicians see gangrene as a clear sign for amputation, yet amputation doubles the death rate in patients. Vascular and surgical revascularization treatment as opposed to amputation, are the optimal treatment options to provide better outcomes and survival rates.

It's unfair to not educate patients on their options. And it's unethical to not properly diagnose and offer advanced treatment options.

Angiography lowers a patient's risk of amputation by 90% compared to those who do not receive it. However, only one in four patients are offered an angiography.¹ Managing the numerous comorbidities that coincide with CLI is essential. Unfortunately, less than one third of patients are prescribed medications to manage disease states such as diabetes, lipid disorders or hypertension.²

Symptoms of PAD

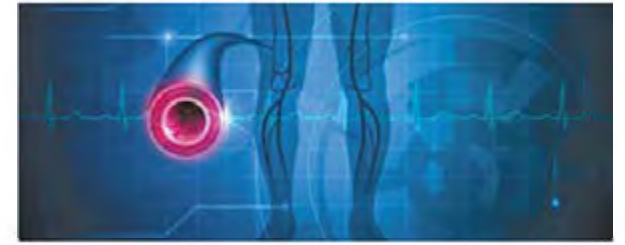
- Claudication (leg and calf pain while walking)
- Weak pulse on ankle or foot
- Hair loss on legs and feet
- Leg pain while standing or sitting, which subsides after resting for an extended period of time
- A sensation of tightness & burning may occur in the leg or foot
- Swelling of the calves, which dissipates after elevation
- Dark veins
- Dry, itchy skin
- Ulcers can occur near the ankle and are often painless, but may have a dark rim
- Shortness of breath

Symptoms of Advanced PAD/CLI

- Ischemic rest pain
- Non-healing wounds
- Gangrene
- Multiple systemic comorbidities

References:

1. Henry AJ, Hevelone ND, Belkin M, Ngyren LL. Socioeconomic and hospital-related predictors of amputation for critical limb ischemia. *J Vasc Surg.* 2011;53:330-339.e1.
2. Chung J, Timaran DA, Modrall JG, et al. Optimal medical therapy predicts amputation-free survival in chronic critical limb ischemia. *J Vasc Surg.* 2013;58:972-980.



Diagnosis and Advanced Treatment Options

Once diagnosis is confirmed, there are multiple treatment options that range from conservative to invasive; it all depends on the severity of the condition. For more advanced conditions, invasive treatment is needed. Until recently, invasive treatments were mostly surgical, very traumatic with days of recovery in hospital post-surgery; however, in the last decade, the introduction of percutaneous non-surgical techniques procedures has shifted the treatments from surgery to catheter-based interventions that do not require blades or general anesthesia. The same techniques used to open arteries of the heart without surgeries using catheter-based therapy are now the method of choice for the treatment of venous or arterial disease of the legs. The introduction of catheter-based techniques has now caused a shift from a surgical technique to a percutaneous technique that can be done in the comfort of an office without the need of hospitalization, all done under local anesthesia as an outpatient procedure.

Our goal is to educate patient and improve legislation on imperative CLI protocols and treatment to help individuals avoid unnecessary amputation.



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PERIPHERAL NEUROPATHY

A WIDESPREAD BUT TREATABLE CONDITION

By Richard Hiler, DABCN

Chronic pain is a debilitating issue that impacts millions worldwide. Of the over 116 million people suffering from various chronic pain disorders, an estimated 20 million are afflicted by peripheral neuropathy specifically. However, experts believe this number could be significantly higher due to frequent misdiagnosis and underreporting of the condition.

Peripheral neuropathy results from dysfunction or damage to the peripheral nerves - the vital neural pathways that transmit sensory information from the extremities to the brain and spinal cord. These nerves extend from the central nervous system out to the arms, hands, legs, and feet. When compromised, they can produce distressing and disruptive symptoms.

The Peripheral Neuropathy Puzzle

While peripheral neuropathy is complex, the core issue revolves around impaired nerve signaling caused by nerve damage or degeneration. A variety of potential root causes can initiate this deterioration, including chronically high blood sugar levels, poor circulation reducing oxygenation, vitamin/nutrient deficiencies, toxic exposures, and unchecked inflammation.

As the longest nerves in the body, those serving the lower extremities are often the first to manifest symptoms as the condition progresses. However, if left unchecked, the upper extremities can eventually become affected as well as the neuropathy advances through the peripheral nervous system.

Recognizing the Signs

Peripheral neuropathy can produce a range of troubling sensory, motor, and physiological symptoms, including:

- Numbness, tingling, or "pins and needles" sensations
- Burning pain or aching in the limbs
- Joint swelling, stiffness, and diminished range of motion
- Loss of proprioception (spatial positioning awareness) leading to balance/coordination issues
- Muscle cramping, weakness, and atrophy
- Discolored, thickened, or abnormally textured skin
- Non-healing sores, rashes, or ulcers on the feet and ankles

Avoiding the Pitfalls of Painkillers

Conventionally, nerve pain and numbness are often simply "masked" with prescription narcotic painkillers like opioids. However, this approach fails to address the underlying neuropathy while exposing patients to the grim risks of addiction and potentially fatal overdose. In fact, the opioid crisis has become so severe that certain states now lead the nation in drug abuse and overdose rates.

There is a better way. Pioneering physical medicine clinics are achieving remarkable results in treating peripheral neuropathy through integrative, non-narcotic therapies that can actually regenerate damaged nerves and restore proper functioning.

Regenerative Neuropathy Treatments

At the forefront of this emerging treatment approach is Feel Amazing Spine & Joint Institute in Naples, Florida. Their comprehensive peripheral neuropathy program revolves around advanced regenerative therapies like:

- Red LED and infrared light to stimulate nerve repair
- Gentle electrical nerve stimulation to reduce pain and improve mobility
- Stem cell allografts and platelet-rich plasma injections to accelerate tissue healing
- Therapeutic shockwave to disrupt pain signals
- Targeted supplements to aid remyelination of nerve coatings

In clinical studies, a remarkable 88% of neuropathy patients experienced significant improvements after this multimodal treatment regimen. Reduced pain, numbness, tingling, temperature sensitivity, and restless legs were just some of the benefits reported. Improved sleep quality, balance, coordination, and range of motion were also frequently noted - along with lowered dependence on oral medications.

Most importantly, patients gained greater mobility and reduced fall risk by restoring protective sensation and positional awareness in their feet and ankles. This decreased risk of potentially devastating injuries.

Embracing a Brighter Future

For over two decades, Feel Amazing Spine & Joint Institute has been a trusted leader in pioneering physical medicine solutions in the Naples area. By fusing compassionate care with the latest evidence-based therapies, their team of chiropractic neurology experts is helping countless neuropathy sufferers reclaim their health and vitality.

Feel Amazing Spine & Joint Institute

We proudly serve the Naples area with comprehensive Chiropractic Neurology, Physical Medicine, and Regenerative Medicine services since 1998. Our office strives for excellence, and we are consistently furthering our education and techniques to improve the care you receive in our office. Whether you suffer from chronic pain, are recovering from an injury, or are seeking overall improved health and performance, we have the skills and experience to help you work toward your goals.

If you are looking for a chiropractic Neurologist to treat bulging discs and/or herniations, neck or back pain, knee, shoulder or hip pain, sciatica, or neuropathy (numbness and/or burning and pain in feet and hands), you have found the right place for your health care needs.

When you work with us, you can be sure that we are equipped to diagnose and treat a wide range of conditions that include:

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- Peripheral Neuropathy pain or numbness
- Restless Leg Syndrome
- Headaches, dizziness, vertigo, or balance problems
- Disc bulge or herniation, sciatica, or stenosis
- Auto Accident, Whiplash Injuries

If you are in need of a highly experienced Chiropractic Neurologist in Naples, FL, look no further than **Feel Amazing Spine & Joint Institute**. For more information or to schedule your initial consultation, call us today!



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Dr. Richard Hiler DABCN, is a board-certified Chiropractic Neurologist with more than 27 years of clinical experience. Dr. Hiler and his team offer a complementary telephone consultation. For questions or to schedule an appointment contact the office at 239.330.1000.

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EXPLORING THE SPECTRUM OF NEUROTOXINS IN COSMETICS: ENHANCING BEAUTY SAFELY

In the world of cosmetics, the pursuit of beauty often involves exploring innovative ingredients and formulations. Among these, neurotoxins have gained attention for their potential to reverse the natural signs of aging, when used judiciously. However, the word "toxin" may evoke apprehension, conjuring images of danger and harm. The results of neurotoxin lie in the expertise of your injector, and results can be very natural, allowing you to look like the more relaxed version of yourself.

For those concerned about the safety of toxin, it is important to remember that it is used for medical purposes as well. While Botox may be most commonly known for its usefulness as a cosmetic anti-aging treatment, that was not the original intention for it. More units are injected for medical reasons than cosmetic reasons! Neurotoxin is used to treat neck spasms, sweating, over-active bladder, lazy eye, and migraine headaches.

One of the most widely recognized toxins in cosmetics is botulinum toxin, commonly known as Botox® Cosmetic. Derived from the bacteria *Clostridium botulinum*, Botox is revered for its ability to reduce the appearance of wrinkles by temporarily paralyzing facial muscles. By inhibiting muscle contractions, Botox smoothes out lines and creases, offering a youthful, rejuvenated look. Its effectiveness and FDA approval in treating the crow's feet (laugh or smile lines), forehead furrows (horizontal creases across the forehead), and frown lines (the so called "11's") has made it a staple in cosmetic clinics worldwide. The results of toxin last, on average, 3-4 months in most patients.

There are now a wide variety of neurotoxins available. The differences between toxins are subtle, and all of them deliver a similar effect. The current lineup of toxins available in the United States are Botox, Dysport, Jeuveau, Xeomin, and Daxxify. Letybo, the leading neurotoxin brand in South Korea, is set to launch in the U.S. in the second half of 2024.



An expert injector will also be able to utilize toxin with more advanced techniques in other areas of the face. These off-label injection treatments can target the jelly roll under the eye, the bunny lines on the side of the nose, a gummy smile, the vertically oriented lines around the lips, or a downward turned smile.

These more advanced techniques require an injector with an understanding of complex facial anatomy, but can deliver nice results for these problem areas.

One of the latest trends in toxin injections is the "lip flip," especially for a patient who is apprehensive about getting filler injected in the lips. This technique involves injecting four to six units of Botox above the upper lip at the center and near the corners of the mouth. The primary effect of the lip flip is to relax the muscles that connect to the upper lip, allowing the lip to relax and curl outward, thereby appearing larger and more defined in shape. It is important to note that the results of a lip flip last less than

traditionally injected areas. A lip flip lasts 6-8 weeks, as these muscles are in constant motion from talking and chewing.

Neurotoxin injections are relatively easy to undergo, and have no down-time after the procedure. You may have tiny swollen areas (similar to mosquito bites) in the injected areas that will resolve within five to ten minutes after injections. There may be minor bruising in the injected areas. You should refrain from massaging the injected areas, remain upright for 4 hours after injections, and avoid heavy sweating for 24 hours post-procedure.

Neurotoxin injections can be highly customizable, and results can be tailored to suit your needs. Less toxin will achieve a more natural result, while more toxin will result in a more "frozen" appearance. It is important to express your desired result to your injector.

In conclusion, while the idea of toxins in cosmetics may initially spark concern, their judicious use under professional guidance can yield remarkable aesthetic benefits. From smoothing wrinkles to enhancing hair and nails, toxins play a multifaceted role in the pursuit of beauty. However, it's crucial to prioritize safety and informed decision-making when considering cosmetic treatments involving toxins, ensuring both efficacy and well-being go hand in hand.

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FUNCTIONAL MEDICINE – A BREATH OF AIR IN CONTEMPORARY HEALTHCARE.

By Svetlana Kogan, M.D. IFMCP

In a world where many patients feel like they are being rushed and cornered into a one-size-fits-all algorithmic approach to their health concerns, Functional Medicine has been gaining momentum and winning hearts for the last 30 years. I am proud to be one of the 2 Medical Doctors in Collier County who are practicing Functional Medicine and are Certified by the Institute of Functional Medicine (IFM) – the world’s foremost authority and the founding institution for this outstanding discipline.

To become IFMCP certified, a doctor must undergo 2-4 years of additional live education, taught by some of the world’s best doctors, submit a comprehensive clinical case study, and pass a rigorous certifying exam. I have been practicing the principles of Functional Medicine for many years, but it was very rewarding to commit to the IFM Certification path, which demands that the practitioner learns to apply the highest standards of the art of Functional Medicine and complete this journey in the name of the quality of care my patients are receiving.

Here are the top 3 reasons why I think so many people find Functional approach to best suit their health needs:

1. Functional Medicine is a system-based approach – in other words, it recognizes that a human body is a complex network of organ systems which work in unison. While any one system disruption may be felt like the ripples in the water everywhere in the body, most health concerns result from a combination of imbalances in various body systems. Functional Medicine focuses on the causes which lead to these imbalances, rather than just slapping a patient with “band-aid” treatments which would only address the symptoms. For example, someone complaining of severe fatigue could have simultaneous disruption in their gastrointestinal absorption of specific nutrients. At the same time, this could be accompanied by inflammation. A person could also have a simultaneous disturbed hypothalamic-pituitary axis, to mention just a few possible underlying imbalances. Functional doctors take a



holistic approach where all the body “players” must be considered and healed for the balance to be solidly restored.

2. Functional Medicine is personalized medicine – in that it is patient centered and not just focused on the disease the patient comes in with. Functional Medicine philosophy recognizes that a large percentage of chronic disease is driven by environment – and often not just by genetic composition. This means that chronic disease results from emergence of a disturbed metabolism in the context of environmental trigger on a genetically predisposed person. To heal the disturbed metabolism, Functional approach seeks to remove what creates imbalance and instead to provide that which creates balance. Through expansive and thorough history taking, questionnaires, and nutritionally oriented physical exam – the doctor can put “the pieces of the puzzle together” – so that a picture of disturbed homeostasis appears, with the nodes of potential disturbance to be addressed highlighted for investigation and management. The treatment is custom-tailored to a person’s unique lifestyle. For example, in customizing an intervention for a patient, we personalize it based on what specific antecedents, triggers, and mediators they have been exposed to on their life path,

or perhaps before they were even born. Additionally, we consider whether they are married or single, do or do not have children, are working or retired, are fit or sedentary, preferring a vegan or omnivorous diet etc.

3. Functional approach generates customized natural treatment plans which are simple and sustainable. To put it simply: It takes away the bad stuff and adds the good stuff. And best of all, it treats food as medicine! One of the core postulates of Functional Medicine is that food is information, and it affects gene expression. For example, because chronic inflammation plays a role in most diseases, modifying patient’s diet to include anti-inflammatory foods and exclude the foods which promote inflammation - will positively affect patients’ organ systems on every level, including downregulating by modulation, or avoiding activation of harmful genetic transcription processes, as opposed to by blocking such mechanisms like certain prescription medications do.

These are just some of the highlights of what makes Functional Medicine an indispensable tool in dealing with prevention and treatment of disease in the 21st century. To learn more and to find a Certified doctor in your area, visit IFM.org



Svetlana Kogan, M.D. IFMCP
The author of ‘Diet Slave No More!’, Svetlana Kogan, MD is a Board-Certified Internal Medicine, Holistic & Functional Medical Doctor with 25 years of experience. She has appeared as a health expert on prime-time TV and radio stations and has authored hundreds of holistic health articles for internet and print. She moved her Concierge Practice from Manhattan NYC to Naples in 2019. Her Functional Medicine Primary Care Practice is focused on prevention and holistic approach to illness, and longevity.

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UNDERSTANDING CATARACTS AND YOUR TREATMENT OPTIONS

Cataracts are a common eye condition that affects millions of people worldwide. As we age, the natural lens in our eyes can become cloudy, causing blurred vision, sensitivity to light and glare, and difficulty seeing at night. Cataracts can significantly impact our daily lives, making it challenging to perform routine tasks such as reading, driving, or engaging in outdoor activities.

What Causes Cataracts?

Cataracts can develop for various reasons, but the most common cause is aging. As we get older, the proteins in our eye lenses can clump together, causing the lens to become opaque and cloudy. Other factors that can contribute to cataract formation include:

1. Exposure to ultraviolet radiation from sunlight
2. Smoking
3. Diabetes
4. Obesity
5. Eye injuries or inflammation
6. Certain medications, such as corticosteroids
7. Genetic disorders

Treatment Options for Cataracts

While cataracts cannot be reversed or treated with medication, the only effective treatment is surgical removal of the clouded lens. Cataract surgery is a safe and effective procedure performed on an outpatient basis, typically taking less than an hour.

During cataract surgery, the clouded natural lens is removed and replaced with an artificial intraocular lens (IOL). At our practice, we offer three types of cataract surgery to meet the diverse needs of our patients:

1. Advanced Cataract Surgery

This option utilizes the latest technology and premium IOLs to provide patients with the best possible visual outcomes. Advanced cataract surgery can correct presbyopia (age-related farsightedness) and astigmatism, reducing or eliminating the need for glasses or contact lenses after surgery.

2. Custom Cataract Surgery

Custom cataract surgery involves precise measurements and customized IOL implants tailored to each patient's unique eye structure and visual needs. This approach aims to optimize visual acuity and reduce visual distortions, providing a personalized solution for those seeking exceptional visual clarity.

3. Basic Cataract Surgery

Basic cataract surgery is the most cost-effective option, involving the removal of the clouded lens and implantation of a standard monofocal IOL. While this option may still require the use of glasses or contact lenses for certain activities, it effectively restores vision clarity and eliminates the cataract.

Choosing the Right Lens Option

When it comes to selecting the appropriate lens option for cataract surgery, several factors should be considered, including your lifestyle, visual demands, and personal preferences. Our experienced ophthalmologists will carefully evaluate your eyes and discuss your goals to help you make an informed decision.

Advanced and custom lens options offer the potential for greater visual freedom and reduced dependence on glasses or contact lenses. However, these options may come with higher costs and may not be suitable for everyone. Basic cataract surgery, on the other hand, provides a more affordable solution while still effectively treating the cataract and improving vision.

Regardless of your lens choice, cataract surgery is a safe and effective way to restore clear vision and improve your overall quality of life. Our team is committed to providing personalized care and guidance throughout your journey to better vision.



JON R. BERLIE, M.D.
LASIK, Cataract & Lens Replacement Surgeon

Dr. Berlie is a board-certified ophthalmologist who specializes in LASIK and premium lens cataract surgery. He has been serving the Naples community for over 20 years. Dr. Berlie achieves superior visual outcomes for his cataract patients by utilizing the latest lens technology combined with state of the art equipment. His expertise in this area has led the Center For Sight Naples office to be recognized as the "Best Eye Center" in Naples, FL for the past 15 years. In addition to laser cataract surgery, Dr. Berlie performs vision correction procedures including All Laser LASIK, Epi-LASEK, Refractive Lens Exchange (RLE) and Implantable Contact Lenses. He is also skilled in reconstructive and cosmetic eyelid surgery. He has been honored as one of America's "Top Doctors" by the prestigious Top Doctors list, published annually by Castle Connolly Medical, Ltd.

Dr. Berlie completed his undergraduate training at the University of Victoria in British Columbia, Canada and the California State University of San Bernardino where he received the California State University of San Bernardino Research Scholarship Award. He then attended Creighton University School of Medicine in Omaha, Nebraska where he graduated Cum Laude, was elected as Class President, and received the Senior of the Year Award. He completed his internship in internal medicine also at Creighton University Medical Center.

Dr. Berlie continued his education at the University of Nebraska Medical Center where he completed his ophthalmology residency and received the awards of Chief Resident and the Resident of the Year Award. Dr. Berlie then went on to Saint Anthony Hospital in Oklahoma City to complete his fellowship training in Oculoplastic and Aesthetic Laser Surgery.

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FGCU Unlocking Cognitive Health Through Innovative Technology

Marieb College of Health & Human Services is on the cutting edge

In the world of healthcare, staying at the forefront of innovation isn't just a choice; it's a responsibility. At Florida Gulf Coast University, Marieb College of Health & Human Services embraces this ethos wholeheartedly. Recently, the college made a significant investment in cutting-edge technology by acquiring five Cognivue units to transform cognitive assessment education at FGCU.

Early detection is paramount in healthcare. Regular health checkups and screenings — such as blood pressure checks, cholesterol tests, colonoscopies and mammograms — enable early detection of conditions like high blood pressure, high cholesterol and cancer. Identifying issues early allows for prompt intervention and management, potentially preventing more severe health complications.

Like those screening tools, cognitive health assessments can help identify symptoms of dementia. Cognivue evaluates four cognitive domains, leveraging a staggering 130,000 data points to provide customized assessments tailored to each patient's unique profile. This empowers individuals to recognize signs of cognitive decline early on, prompting them to seek guidance from their healthcare provider.

Such technology isn't just another assessment tool; it's a game-changer in the field of cognitive health. Traditional cognitive assessments can be susceptible to human bias and environmental distractions, potentially affecting the accuracy of results. Cognivue eliminates these concerns by offering a self-administered assessment using a computerized system with built-in safeguards to minimize distractions.

Patients are tested on memory retention, executive function or attention to detail, visuospatial awareness and their ability to identify letters, words, shapes and motions. The noninvasive, interactive assessment takes about 10 minutes and produces immediate results.



Addressing the healthcare needs of tomorrow

The significance of this investment by Marieb College extends beyond the university's campus. Through clinical internships, rotations and research opportunities, more than 2,500 Marieb College students annually are immersed in real-world experiences. FGCU students collaborate with healthcare providers at institutions like Naples Comprehensive Health (NCH), Lee Health and beyond. With this new cognitive assessment tool, FGCU students, under the guidance of experienced faculty, will administer tests at health clinics in Southwest Florida, reaching out to older adults who may be at risk of dementia.

The older adult population in Southwest Florida is increasing, creating opportunities for Marieb College to be at the forefront of innovation. In the five-county area FGCU serves, 30.1% of the population is 65 and older and population projections for Southwest Florida through 2050 predict the highest growth in this age group.

With an aging population and an ever-evolving technological landscape, staying ahead of the curve is essential. Faculty in Marieb College stay abreast of advancements and trends in health and human sciences. Spearheaded by Marieb College's

dean, Shawn Felton, the acquisition of Cognivue represents a proactive approach to addressing the healthcare needs of tomorrow.

A broad range of healthcare applications

The impact this new assessment tool provides doesn't stop with older adults. It opens doors for other populations, including athletes with traumatic brain injuries.

Graduates of FGCU's Marieb College pursue diverse paths in nursing, physical therapy, occupational therapy, exercise science, health sciences, social work and counseling. The curriculum exposes students to a spectrum of assessment tools, from standard practices to cutting-edge technologies, ensuring they're equipped to meet the evolving demands of the healthcare landscape. Students who learn to use the Cognivue units will have a leg up in any field where early detection of cognitive decline is important. Their exposure to cutting-edge technologies positions them as leaders in their respective fields.

By embracing innovation and fostering a culture of continuous learning, Marieb College isn't just a learning environment; it's a living laboratory where innovation thrives and the future of healthcare is shaped. With a commitment to excellence, Marieb College ensures that students are not just prepared for the challenges of today but are equipped with the skills and knowledge to navigate the complexities of healthcare in the future.



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Experience Relief with Non-Surgical Spinal Decompression

By Dr. Michael Shaffer

Are you seeking relief from neck or back issues but want to avoid surgery? Non-surgical Spinal Decompression might be the solution you've been looking for. This innovative treatment gently lengthens and releases the spine, alleviating pressure on pinched nerves and soft tissue. Why is the non-surgical approach gaining popularity?

1. Gentle Alternative to Surgery

Non-Surgical Spinal Decompression offers a gentle alternative to invasive procedures. By creating negative pressures within the spinal discs, this therapy effectively addresses issues like bulging or herniated discs without possible the need for surgery.

2. Comprehensive Treatment Program

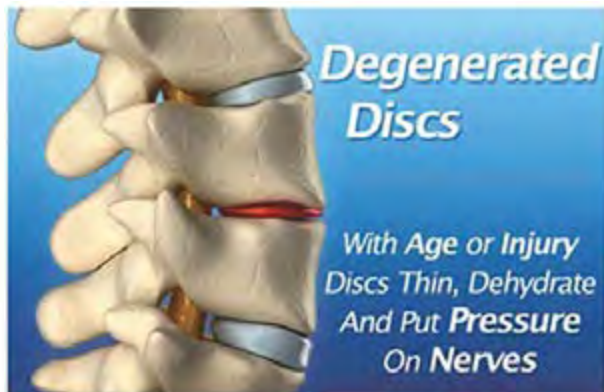
Our state-of-the-art equipment, The Hill DT table, ensures a comprehensive treatment program tailored to your needs. Equipped with advanced sensors and an actuator system, it provides a smooth, comfortable experience while monitoring your progress.

3. Targeted Relief for Various Conditions

Whether you're dealing with degenerative disc disease, facet syndrome, or ongoing pain, Non-Surgical Spinal Decompression can offer targeted relief. It helps draw herniated disc material back into place, rehydrating the discs and promoting healing.

4. Personalized Care Approach

Dr. Shaffer provides personalized care, starting with a complimentary consultation and review of your records. The treatment plan includes a thorough evaluation, pre-treatment therapy, and nutritional recommendations to restore disc health and reduce inflammation.



5. Advanced Technology for Better Outcomes

The Hill DT table sets itself apart with its sophisticated load sensor technology. Constantly monitoring treatment force and patient resistance ensures a low-force, smooth decompression experience. This technology leads to better outcomes by minimizing muscle-guarding and optimizing treatment effectiveness.

Are You a Candidate?

Potential candidates' diagnoses include conditions such as disc bulge/herniation, degenerative joint disease, and sciatica. If you're experiencing ongoing neck or back pain, schedule a consultation to see if Non-Surgical Spinal Decompression is right for you.

Experience the difference with Non-Surgical Spinal Decompression and take the first step towards a pain-free life. If you're interested in exploring spinal decompression therapy further or scheduling a consultation, please don't hesitate to reach out. Your health and well-being are our top priorities, and we're here to support you every step of the way. A personalized approach is crucial in compression treatment. Consulting with a healthcare professional such as Dr. Michael Shaffer, a Chiropractic Physician, will help determine the most practical combination of treatments tailored to an individual's unique condition.

Spinal decompression is gaining popularity as an innovative and practical approach to treating sciatica. This therapy aims to create negative pressure within the disc, reducing nerve root compression. By relieving pressure in the spine, increased circulation

also occurs in the disc, a vital aid in healing. The procedure is noninvasive, and patients typically experience a gentle stretching sensation during the session. Understanding the common causes, recognizing symptoms, and exploring advanced treatment options like spinal decompression can pave the way to a pain-free and healthier life.



Dr. Shaffer has been serving Collier County since 1981. He specializes in spinal care, chronic and acute musculoskeletal conditions, injury, and rehabilitation.

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Pain, Dryness & Irritation: How Women Are Rejuvenating Their Lives

By Joseph Gauta, MD, FACOG

Who doesn't want to feel better and more confident about their sexual health? Many women try to hide their condition from their partner, or suffer in silence because they believe it's "normal" for them. That couldn't be further from the truth. Whether your pain is caused by endometriosis, pelvic conditions, vulvovaginal atrophy, hormonal dysfunction, or from medications, there are answers.

Female Sexual Dissatisfaction Has Many Causes

Natural processes like aging, childbirth and menopause can have deleterious effects on a woman's sexual well-being and sensations. Since we all tend to avoid anything that doesn't feel good, a woman's sexual desires and success in achieving them are inversely related to the atrophy and scarring in the vaginal canal that these life-events can create, like tearing of the vagina during childbirth, dryness of the vaginal tissues after menopause, and the laxity of the vagina causing decreased sexual sensation. Sexual satisfaction can be negatively impacted by hormonal changes after menopause, but many women cannot take vaginal estrogens or do not find this treatment to be effective or convenient enough. This is where laser energy comes in: CO2 laser energy has been proven to regrow normal collagen (a necessary protein found in all of our organs) in the vaginal and vulvar tissues leading to improved "accommodation" and "stretchiness" of the vagina which in turn leads to greater sexual satisfaction and lubrication and a decrease in discomfort during and after sex.

CO2RE Intima

Although, hormone therapy can be used to treat vaginal vulvar atrophy and dyspareunia (painful intercourse), sometimes it isn't enough. The CO2RE Intima procedure has helped countless women enjoy life like they used to. It is noninvasive, nonsurgical and is performed in your physician's office.



You don't have to live with pain and dryness any longer. There is a better way to age well, enjoy intimacy again and regain your life.

CO2RE Intima Benefits:

- CO2RE Intima is an in-office, non-surgical laser procedure to restore vaginal health, by improving hydration and promoting healthy vaginal pH
- Each CO2RE Intima treatment relieves symptoms of vulvovaginal atrophy, rejuvenates vaginal tissue and treats exterior tissue to improve vaginal cosmetic appearance.
- 100% showed significant improvement in vaginal health (elasticity, fluid volume, pH level, epithelial integrity and moisture)
- 91% reported an improvement in dryness

CO₂RE[®] Intima
Women's Intimate Wellness



CO2RE Intima might be for you if:

- You want to relieve the signs of childbearing and aging in the vaginal area.
- You desire enhancement in sexual functioning and a better sexual experience.
- You seek vaginal cosmetic improvement and you want to feel more confident about your feminine health.

**10 Minute, Hormone Free,
In-Office Procedure**

Ask us today if CO2RE Intima is right for you

To discuss CO2RE Intima or any other options that are best for you, please call 239-449-7979



Joseph Gauta, MD



Nicole Houser, PA-C



Lisa Mark, MD



Amy Goetz, PA-C


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Bunions Are Quite Painful

Podiatric Treatments Work to Relieve Your Discomfort & Help You Enjoy Life Again

Michael J. Petrocelli, D.P.M., F.A.C.F.A.S., C.W.S.P.
Board Certified Ankle and Foot Surgeon and Board Certified Wound Care Specialist



Fashion and trends in shoe wear are often the cause of women's discomfort and issues with their feet. One condition in particular that has been plaguing women for years is bunions. Like other inflammatory arthritic conditions, bunions can be hereditary. It's not uncommon for patients to tell their podiatrist that their mother, sister, or aunt had bunions. After the age of 40, many women begin to notice that their big toe joint hurts, and in moderate to severe cases, it may even begin to protrude and rub on the inside of their shoes. Once this happens painful sores can form, and the joint may begin to swell, causing even more discomfort.

What Can You Do?

Many women will try and work through the pain, but bunions are progressive and once they become inflamed, many people succumb to wearing more comfortable shoes, or using gel toe inserts that help keep the toes in the proper alignment. Icing the foot can help to tamp down inflammations, as well as taking NSAID's (ibuprofen) as needed to lessen the discomfort.

When the conservative approach begins to stop working, which is NOT unusual as most bunions fail to heal on their own, surgery is the definitive answer.

Collier Podiatry Offers Advanced Surgical Options

In bunion surgery, the toe bone is cut in half, and part of the bone is removed. In many cases, there is a need to relieve tension on surrounding ligaments and tendons to try and realign the joint and bones. Generally, bunion surgery is done under an ankle block, which means that your foot will be completely numb, but you will not need to go under general anesthesia in most cases. Surgery can include removing boney spurs, removing part of the toe bone, relieving tension on ligaments and tendons, realigning and reconnecting the joint and

bones. Depending on the complexity of your surgery depends on your need and level of anesthesia.

The total recovery can take a few months, but initially, you will be in a protective boot or cast for the first two to four weeks. You will be able to get around, but you must take precautions as to not injure your surgical site, and instead, allow the foot and toe time to heal properly.

BUNIONS ARE PAINFUL! It's always best to be proactive and get them treated before they get too advanced.

A podiatrist will evaluate your symptoms and pain level, and from there create an individualized plan for your best treatment options. They will provide you with the best solution for your needs.

Collier Podiatry

Dr. Michael Petrocelli has been practicing podiatric medicine for well over 20 years. He is an expert in his field and a leader to his peers. If you are experiencing any foot pain or foot conditions, please contact Collier Podiatry. Their kind and well-trained staff are ready to answer your questions and concerns and get you back on your feet again.

Contact Collier Podiatry to make your appointment. Please visit their website at www.collierpodiatry.com, or call them at (239) 775-0019



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THE CARLISLE SHINES A SPOTLIGHT ON MEN'S HEALTH

By Jenny Bradley

In recognition of Men's Health Month, it's essential to explore unique environments that foster well-being for men, particularly as they age. Senior living communities can provide a supportive network and invaluable resources to maintain and improve men's health. They can also empower residents to prioritize their physical, mental and social well-being now and into the future.

Community and Social Engagement

Maintaining robust social connections is one of the key elements of men's health as they age. Senior living communities are designed to nurture a sense of community and ongoing social interaction, which can be beneficial for men who often face social isolation. For example, at The Carlisle Naples, a variety of engaging activities such as golf putting, card tournaments and special interest clubs are regularly scheduled. These activities offer entertainment as well as a platform for building relationships and fostering a sense of belonging through common interests. The resort-style community provides a structured yet relaxed environment where men can forge meaningful connections with peers, share experiences and continue to thrive socially.

Access to Health and Wellness Programs

Senior living communities offer numerous amenities and programming to enhance physical health. These may include fitness centers, walking trails and swimming pools for low-impact exercise. Additionally, many communities offer classes tailored to men's health needs, such as yoga for balance, strength training and even nutrition workshops focusing on heart health and diabetes prevention. The convenience of having these resources within the community encourages regular participation, making it easier for men to maintain their physical health. The Carlisle Naples' signature wellness program, Zest, takes a holistic approach to health, addressing the needs of the mind, body and soul. A wide range of fitness and wellness activities are incorporated into the community calendar throughout the week, from Pilates and spinning classes to healthy chef's demonstrations and Tai Chi. These repeated opportunities to prioritize wellness in a fun, social setting not only enhances residents' physical wellbeing, but supports their health in every dimension.



Preventative Health Care Services

Another significant advantage is the availability of onsite healthcare services. Many communities provide regular health screenings, flu shots, and consultations with health professionals. For men, having easy access to these services means more consistent monitoring of health conditions and timely interventions, which is crucial for issues like prostate health and cardiovascular maintenance. At The Carlisle Naples, the onsite health care providers known as the MyCare Clinic and EmpowerMe Wellness, offer physical, occupational and speech therapies. These preventative health care options, located just a short distance from residents' homes, support better health outcomes and provide peace of mind.

Mental Health and Cognitive Engagement

Mental health is often overlooked in discussions about men's health, yet it's just as crucial. Senior living communities offer a supportive environment where men can participate in cognitive activities like workshops, educational classes and even technology courses, keeping their minds active and engaged. A community setting can also help reduce feelings of loneliness and depression by providing ongoing support and companionship.

A Safe and Secure Environment

Senior living communities provide a secure environment with staff available around the clock. This aspect is crucial not only for the residents but also for their families. At The Carlisle Naples, residents can rest

assured knowing that a dedicated team of staff is readily available to respond to emergencies of all types. The freedom from home maintenance and repairs also reduces stress and enhances overall well-being.

"As we observe Men's Health Month, it's important to recognize the unique challenges men face in maintaining their health as they age," said The Carlisle Naples' Executive Director Bill Diamond. We prioritize creating an environment that supports the physical, emotional and social aspects of men's health. Our goal is not only to care for our residents but also to encourage them to lead healthier, more connected lives."

Located at 6945 Carlisle Court in Naples, The Carlisle offers independent and assisted living lifestyles featuring spacious one-and two-bedroom residences, dedicated housekeeping and flat linen services, basic cable TV, all utilities except telephone, and elevated dining with daily, chef-prepared specials. The community is accredited by the Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities (CARF), an important distinction that provides residents with the assurance that the highest standards of quality care, services and safeguards are maintained. For more information about the community, please call 239-221-0017 or visit www.TheCarlisleNaples.com.



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The Importance of Funeral Pre-Planning:

ENSURING PEACE OF MIND AND FINANCIAL SECURITY

We often focus on diet, exercise, and regular medical check-ups when considering health and wellness. However, a crucial aspect of financial and emotional health is funeral pre-planning. Planning your funeral ahead of time can provide substantial benefits, both emotionally and financially. Palm Royale Funeral Home and Cemetery in Naples, Florida, emphasizes the importance of pre-planning to ensure peace of mind for your loved ones and to lock in today's prices, protecting against future inflation.

Locking in Today's Prices: A Smart Financial Decision

Funeral expenses are rising at an average rate of 6% per year. This steady increase can significantly impact the cost of a funeral over time. You can avoid the financial burden of future inflation by pre-planning and pre-paying for your funeral at today's prices. This proactive approach ensures that your family will not face unexpected costs during a difficult time. For example, if a funeral costs \$10,000 today, in ten years, that same service could cost over \$17,000 due to annual price increases. Pre-paying now locks in the current rate, offering substantial savings.

Peace of Mind for Loved Ones

One of the most profound benefits of funeral pre-planning is the peace of mind it provides for your loved ones. Grieving is a challenging process, and making funeral arrangements can add significant stress and pressure. By planning ahead, you can relieve your family of this burden, allowing them to focus on mourning and remembering your life rather than dealing with logistical and financial issues. Knowing that your wishes are documented and will be honored can also comfort your loved ones.

Personal Choices and Customization

Pre-planning your funeral allows you to choose how you wish to be remembered. From selecting the type of service, music, and readings to choosing your final resting place, every detail can be tailored to reflect your preferences and values. This level of personalization ensures that your funeral will be a meaningful and accurate reflection of your life. Additionally, it removes the guesswork for your family, who may be uncertain about your wishes without a pre-planned arrangement.

Eliminating Emotional Over-Spending

During the emotional time following a death, it's common for families to make decisions driven by their grief, sometimes leading to emotional over-spending. Pre-planning your funeral can help avoid this by setting clear guidelines and budget constraints. With decisions made in advance, your family can avoid the pressure to spend more to honor your memory, as your wishes and budget will already be established.

Essential Documents for Pre-Planning

Preplanning, gathering, and organizing essential documents is crucial when preparing for a funeral. These documents will be invaluable for your executor and family, ensuring your wishes are carried out smoothly and efficiently. Key documents to gather include:

- 1. Will:** A legally binding document outlining the distribution of your assets and any specific funeral arrangements you wish to be honored.
- 2. Funeral Plan:** A detailed plan specifying your funeral arrangements, including service preferences, burial or cremation instructions, and prepaid funeral services.
- 3. Financial Records:** Information about bank accounts, insurance policies, retirement accounts, and other financial assets.
- 4. Personal Identification:** Copies of your birth certificate, Social Security card, and driver's license.
- 5. Insurance Policies:** Life insurance policies and any prepaid funeral insurance documentation.
- 6. Contact Information:** A list of important contacts, including family members, friends, and any professionals involved in your estate planning (e.g., lawyers, financial advisors).
- 7. Property Deeds and Titles:** Documentation for any real estate, vehicles, or other property you own.
- 8. Medical Records:** Relevant medical information, advance directives, or living wills.

Organizing these documents and informing your executor of their location will fulfill your wishes without unnecessary delays or complications.

Funeral pre-planning is a thoughtful and practical step that provides numerous benefits. By locking in today's prices, you protect against inflation and save your family from future financial burdens. The peace of mind that comes from knowing your loved ones will not have to make difficult decisions during their grief is invaluable. Additionally, pre-planning lets you make personal choices about your funeral, ensuring it reflects your unique preferences and values. Finally, by eliminating the risk of emotional over-spending, you ensure that your family can focus on what truly matters: celebrating your life and legacy.

Palm Royale Funeral Home and Cemetery in Naples, Florida, is dedicated to helping individuals and families navigate the funeral pre-planning process. For more information or to start your pre-planning journey, contact Palm Royale today. Taking this step now can provide you and your loved ones with lasting peace of mind.

We proudly announce that we have expanded our services by adding a beautiful, state-of-the-art funeral home on our grounds. This makes Palm Royale the newest and only independently owned "combination" funeral home and cemetery in Collier County. Palm Royale is your one-stop for funeral services, burial, or cremation, and even a banquet hall for a meal afterward to celebrate the life of your loved one.



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Shedding Light on Cataracts: Understanding and Addressing the Impact

Dr. Katia Taba, Board-Certified Ophthalmologist and Retinal Specialist

Cataract Awareness Month: A Call to Action

Every June, a spotlight shines on one of the most prevalent yet often misunderstood eye conditions: cataracts. Cataract Awareness Month serves as a crucial reminder of the importance of vision health and the need for proactive measures to address this common ailment. With an aging population and increasing prevalence worldwide, understanding cataracts and promoting awareness about prevention and treatment options are more critical than ever.

Understanding Cataracts: Unveiling the Cloudiness

Cataracts occur when the clear lens of the eye becomes cloudy, leading to blurred vision, sensitivity to light, and difficulty seeing at night. While age-related changes are the primary cause of cataracts, other factors such as genetics, injury, and certain medications can also contribute to their development. Over time, untreated cataracts can significantly impair vision, impacting daily activities and diminishing quality of life.

The Global Impact: A Growing Concern

According to the World Health Organization (WHO), cataracts are the leading cause of blindness worldwide, responsible for approximately 51% of all cases. With the global population aging rapidly, the prevalence of cataracts is expected to rise significantly in the coming years. This increase underscores the urgent need for awareness campaigns, early detection, and access to affordable treatment options.

Prevention Is Key: Nurturing Vision Health

While cataracts cannot always be prevented, several lifestyle choices can help reduce the risk of developing them. Protecting the eyes from excessive sunlight by wearing sunglasses and hats, maintaining a healthy diet rich in antioxidants, and avoiding smoking are all beneficial practices for preserving vision health. Regular eye examinations, especially for individuals over the age of 40, can also aid in early detection and timely intervention.

Empowering Communities: Promoting Awareness and Education

Cataract Awareness Month provides an invaluable opportunity to engage communities, healthcare professionals, and policymakers in dialogue about vision health. Educational initiatives, outreach programs, and media campaigns play a vital role in dispelling myths, raising awareness about risk factors, and promoting the importance of regular eye exams. By empowering individuals with knowledge and resources, we can encourage proactive steps towards preserving vision and preventing avoidable blindness.

Breaking Barriers: Access to Care

Despite significant advancements in cataract treatment, access to care remains a challenge for many communities, particularly in low- and middle-income countries. Limited resources, inadequate infrastructure, and cultural barriers can hinder individuals from seeking timely diagnosis and treatment. Addressing these barriers requires a multi-faceted approach, including increased investment in healthcare infrastructure, training of local healthcare providers, and greater collaboration between government agencies, non-profit organizations, and the private sector.

Innovations in Treatment: Restoring Clarity

Fortunately, cataract surgery remains one of the most successful and cost-effective medical procedures, with a high rate of success in restoring vision. Technological advancements, such as phacoemulsification and intraocular lens implants, have revolutionized cataract surgery, making it safer, more efficient, and more accessible to a broader population. Moreover, initiatives aimed at reducing the cost of surgery and improving post-operative care are instrumental in ensuring equitable access to treatment for all individuals affected by cataracts.

Looking Ahead: A Vision for Change

As we observe Cataract Awareness Month, let us recommit ourselves to the fight against preventable blindness and vision impairment. By raising awareness, advocating for equitable access to care, and embracing innovation in treatment, we can make significant strides towards eliminating the burden of cataracts on individuals and communities worldwide. Together, let us work towards a future where everyone has the opportunity to enjoy clear vision and a brighter tomorrow.

Conclusion

Cataract Awareness Month serves as a poignant reminder of the importance of vision health and the need for concerted efforts to address cataracts. By understanding the impact of this common eye condition, promoting prevention strategies, and advocating for improved access to care, we can make meaningful progress towards eliminating preventable blindness and preserving vision for generations to come. Let us join hands in spreading awareness, fostering education, and championing innovation to ensure a world where clarity of vision is within reach for all.



Katia E. Taba, MD, is the board-certified ophthalmologist and retina specialist at Personalized Retina Care of Naples in Naples, Florida. Dr. Taba treats macular degeneration, diabetic retinopathy, macular holes, eye floaters and flashes,

and other serious eye problems that can interfere with sight or steal vision without treatment. Patients know Dr. Taba as an extremely friendly and welcoming care provider who maintains great professionalism at all times.

Dr. Taba is a board-certified ophthalmologist in both her home country of Brazil and in the United States. She earned her medical degree at a leading medical school in Brazil and continued specialized vitreoretinal surgery training in Florida, New York, California, Louisiana, and many other locations in the U.S. Dr. Taba trained under the leading experts in the field of ocular disease.

Dr. Taba's extensive training and experience include many years as both a clinician and academician. She entered solo practice as a way to deliver consistently great care in a world where the environment and health care policies are always changing.

Dr. Taba wants to make sure that patients always get the most accurate diagnosis and most effective treatment, so she uses only the latest, state-of-the-art diagnostic equipment. Dr. Taba is the first retina specialist on the southwest coast of Florida to have wide-angle viewing imaging. Dr. Taba also makes sure that injections and treatments are pain-free so patients can always expect a comfortable experience.

Retina Group of Florida

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

Please call (239) 325-3970 today to schedule your eye exam. When necessary same day appointments can often be accommodated.



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Breaking New Ground in Alzheimer's Research: Aqualane Clinical Research Leads the Way

Alzheimer's disease, a devastating form of dementia, affects millions of people worldwide, robbing them of their memories, cognitive abilities, and ultimately, their independence. As the population ages, the prevalence of Alzheimer's is expected to rise, making the search for effective treatments and a potential cure more urgent than ever. At the forefront of this mission is Aqualane Clinical Research, a pioneering clinical research site dedicated to advancing medication and treatment of Alzheimer's disease.

The Alzheimer's Challenge

Alzheimer's disease is a complex and multifaceted condition that has baffled scientists for decades. It is characterized by the accumulation of abnormal proteins in the brain, which leads to the progressive destruction of brain cells and the formation of neurofibrillary tangles and amyloid plaques. As the disease progresses, patients experience a gradual decline in cognitive function, memory loss, changes in behavior and personality, and eventually, an inability to perform basic daily tasks.

Despite decades of research, the underlying causes of Alzheimer's remain largely unknown, and available treatments only temporarily alleviate symptoms without addressing the root causes of the disease. The search for effective therapies and a potential cure has been hindered by the complexity of the disease, the difficulty in early diagnosis, and the unique challenges of conducting clinical trials in cognitively impaired populations.

Aqualane Clinical Research: A Beacon of Hope

Aqualane Clinical Research, a leading research site based in Naples, Florida, is at the forefront of the battle against Alzheimer's disease. With a team of highly experienced researchers, clinicians, and support staff, Aqualane Clinical Research is dedicated to conducting cutting-edge clinical trials aimed at developing novel therapies and advancing our understanding of this devastating condition.

What sets Aqualane Clinical Research apart is their unwavering commitment to patient-centric research and their deep expertise in conducting trials specifically focused on Alzheimer's disease and other neurodegenerative disorders. Their state-of-the-art facilities are designed to provide a

safe, supportive, and comfortable environment for participants, ensuring their well-being is the top priority throughout the clinical trial process.

Innovative Approaches to Alzheimer's Research
Aqualane Clinical Research is at the forefront of exploring innovative approaches to Alzheimer's research, including:

- 1. Targeting Amyloid and Tau Proteins:** Many ongoing trials focus on developing therapies that target the build-up of amyloid and tau proteins in the brain, which are believed to be key contributors to the development and progression of Alzheimer's disease.
- 2. Exploring Neuroprotective Strategies:** Researchers are investigating compounds and therapies that can protect and preserve healthy brain cells, potentially slowing or halting the progression of Alzheimer's.
- 3. Cognitive Enhancement Therapies:** Some trials explore therapies aimed at enhancing cognitive function and preserving memory in individuals with Alzheimer's or at risk of developing the disease.
- 4. Early Intervention and Prevention Strategies:** As our understanding of Alzheimer's risk factors and early biomarkers improves, researchers are exploring interventions that may delay or prevent the onset of the disease.

Patient-Centered Approach

One of the key strengths of Aqualane Clinical Research is their patient-centered approach to clinical trials. They understand the unique challenges faced by Alzheimer's patients and their caregivers, and they strive to create a supportive and compassionate environment throughout the trial process.

From initial screening and enrollment to ongoing monitoring and follow-up, Aqualane's team works closely with patients and their families to ensure their needs are met and their voices are heard. This includes providing educational resources, offering support services, and ensuring clear communication and informed consent throughout the trial process.

Advancing the Future of Alzheimer's Treatment

By conducting cutting-edge clinical trials and embracing innovative approaches to Alzheimer's research, Aqualane Clinical Research is playing a pivotal role in advancing our understanding and treatment of this devastating disease. Their commitment to patient-centered research and their deep expertise in neurodegenerative disorders make them a beacon of hope for those affected by Alzheimer's and their loved ones.

As the global population ages and the prevalence of Alzheimer's continues to rise, the work of organizations like Aqualane Clinical Research becomes increasingly vital. Through their tireless efforts and dedication, they are paving the way for new breakthroughs and bringing us closer to a future where Alzheimer's disease can be effectively treated, managed, and perhaps even prevented.

Aqualane Clinical Research has trials open for people with:

- Alzheimer's Disease
- Parkinson's Disease
- Multiple Sclerosis
- Myasthenia Gravis
- Essential Tremor
- Multiple System Atrophy
- Migraine
- Depression
- Anxiety
- Other Neuropsychiatric Conditions



Dr. William A. Justiz, MD
Medical Director,
Principal Investigator



Kelly E. Calistri, B.A.
Chief Operating Officer,
Site Director



Dr. Matthew J. Baker, MD
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Unlock the Fountain of Youth at Ageless Wellness Spa

In our fast-paced modern world, the pursuit of wellness and vitality often takes a backseat to the demands of daily life. However, at Ageless Wellness Spa, we believe that prioritizing your well-being is the key to unlocking your full potential. Our state-of-the-art facility offers a comprehensive range of therapies, products, and services designed to help you achieve a new level of wellness, rejuvenation, and longevity.

Embark on a Holistic Journey

At the core of our philosophy lies the belief that true wellness stems from a holistic approach. Our Holistic Nutrition Programs are meticulously crafted by experts to provide you with personalized dietary guidance, ensuring that your body receives the optimal nourishment it needs to thrive. Complementing these programs is our cutting-edge IV Infusion Therapy, which delivers a potent blend of vitamins, minerals, and antioxidants directly into your bloodstream, providing an unparalleled boost to your overall vitality.

Optimize Your Hormonal Balance

Hormonal imbalances can have far-reaching effects on your physical and emotional well-being. At Ageless Wellness Spa, our Hormone Optimization services are designed to restore your body's natural equilibrium. Our team of experts utilizes advanced techniques to analyze and address any imbalances, helping you regain your youthful vigor and zest for life.

Elevate Your Intimate Experience

For men seeking to enhance their sexual performance and vitality, our Men's Sexual Performance Enhancement program offers a comprehensive solution. Combining advanced therapies with personalized guidance, we aim to unlock your full potential and reignite the passion in your intimate relationships. As part of this program, we offer complimentary Testosterone Testing to ensure a tailored approach that addresses your unique needs.

Harness the Power of Light

At Ageless Wellness Spa, we embrace the healing properties of nature. Our Red Light Sauna Therapy utilizes the power of specific wavelengths to promote cellular rejuvenation, reduce inflammation, and enhance overall well-being. Immerse yourself in this transformative experience and emerge feeling revitalized from the inside out.



Achieve Your Ideal Physique

For those seeking to shed unwanted pounds and sculpt their desired physique, our Weight Loss Management program provides a comprehensive solution. Combining personalized nutrition plans, expert guidance, and cutting-edge techniques, we empower you to take control of your journey towards a healthier, more confident you.

Embrace Radiant Beauty

In addition to our wellness offerings, Ageless Wellness Spa is committed to enhancing your outward radiance. Our Aesthetic Care services, including advanced skincare treatments and cosmetic procedures, are designed to rejuvenate your appearance and boost your self-confidence.

Unlock Luscious Locks

Thinning hair can be a source of insecurity for many individuals. At our spa, we offer innovative Hair Growth Treatments that harness the power of cutting-edge technologies and natural remedies to promote healthy hair growth and restore your luscious locks.

Compassionate Care for Your Furry Companions

At Ageless Wellness Spa, we believe that wellness extends beyond human boundaries. Our Pet Holistic Treatments are tailored to provide your beloved furry friends with the care and attention they deserve. From nutritional guidance to natural remedies, we strive to promote the overall well-being of your cherished companions.

Experience Unparalleled Rejuvenation

Whether you seek to optimize your health, enhance your appearance, or simply indulge in a moment of pure relaxation, Ageless Wellness Spa is your sanctuary for transformation. Our team of dedicated professionals is committed to providing you with a personalized experience that exceeds your expectations.

Step into our world of wellness and embark on a journey of self-discovery and rejuvenation. Experience a new level of vitality and unlock the secrets to ageless living at Ageless Wellness Spa.

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ASK THE EXPERT

Hearing Loss and Cognitive Decline

By Brittany Colburn, Au.D. Doctor of Audiology/Ear Nerd

June is Alzheimer's & Brain Awareness Month.

Hearing loss is often gradual and, therefore, something that you adapt to. You may not notice it for months or even years. But slowly, the hearing apparatus that nature provided does wear out for many as we grow older and it's simply part of the aging process. There's a growing collection of detailed studies that demonstrate, clinically, that people with hearing loss do better addressing the limitation when they act quickly. In other words, the first time the family tells you to turn down the TV, it's time for a hearing test. Why? When the hearing nerves and the areas of the brain responsible for hearing are deprived of sound, they atrophy – weaken – making recovery from hearing loss through mechanical means, aka a hearing aid, that much more difficult. The fancy term used by hearing professionals is auditory deprivation. The key to hearing better longer is to keep the ear bits active and NOT let them atrophy. Through the use of hearing aids – early, when you first notice hearing loss – you'll enjoy a better quality of hearing longer.

For most people, turning up the tv or asking others to repeat themselves is enough to alert them that they should come in for a hearing evaluation and obtain a baseline hearing test.

For others, they feel like their hearing loss is everyone else's problem. We hear it all the time: "My wife will speak up, my kids know to email or text me now instead of call, if someone really wants to talk to me, they'll get my attention."

The truth is, however, that hearing loss is all about you.

It's about your brain. You were born with two ears, and you need them to work well in order to keep your brain healthy.

In a recent study, Hearing Loss and Cognitive Decline (*Frank Lin, M.D., Ph.D. et al. 2013 JAMA Internal Medicine*), Dr. Lin explained his findings:

- Over a 6-year period, individuals with hearing loss had cognitive abilities that declined 30-40% faster than those with normal hearing.



- Levels of declining brain function were directly related to the amount of hearing loss.

- On average, older adults with hearing loss developed significant impairments in their cognitive abilities 3.2 years sooner than those with normal hearing.

The truth is that your wife may not mind yelling, your friends may not mind repeating themselves... But you need to correct your hearing loss to keep your brain healthy.

The truth is that your wife may not mind yelling, your friends may not mind repeating themselves... But you need to correct your hearing loss to keep your brain healthy.

Can Hearing Aids Give Your Ears the Work-Out They Need?

There are several studies that indicates that the ear can recover from the effects of auditory deprivation, though other studies show that "resolution of auditory deprivation is generally significant but incomplete following binaural amplification," or in other words, yes, things get better with a pair of hearing aids, but the improvement is incomplete, meaning that the sooner you recognize hearing loss, the sooner you get treatment for hearing loss,

the more success you will have with hearing aids and the better hearing you will have. The longer you ignore it, the harder it is to treat.

Research clearly shows the sooner you treat hearing loss the better outcome you will have with using and adapting to hearing aids. The solution? Keep your hearing nerves fresh and stimulated – don't deprive them. See an audiologist when you first suspect hearing loss.

And, if you've suspected (or known) you have hearing loss, move your cars to an audiologist instead of turning up the TV and radio.

Hearing is one of the joys of life. The sooner you act when you suspect bearing loss, the better your bearing will be in the years ahead.

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In-Home Care Aides Benefit Alzheimer's Patients and their Family Caregivers

Home health care providers play a vital role in improving the quality of life for individuals with Alzheimer's disease and other forms of dementia who are aging at home. Their services encompass a wide range of support, including assistance with daily activities, medication management, emotional support, and engaging in meaningful activities. By addressing the unique needs of both individuals with Alzheimer's and their family caregivers, home health aides can significantly enhance the well-being of those affected by the disease.

1. Assistance with Activities of Daily Living:

Alzheimer's and dementia often impair individuals' ability to perform routine tasks such as bathing, dressing, and meal preparation. Home health aides are trained to provide hands-on assistance with these activities, helping individuals maintain their dignity and independence while ensuring their safety. According to the Alzheimer's Association, approximately 70% of people with dementia receive care at home, highlighting the crucial role of home health aides in supporting these individuals with daily tasks.

2. Medication Management:

Proper medication management is essential for individuals with Alzheimer's and dementia to maintain their health and manage symptoms effectively. Home health aides can help ensure that medications are taken as prescribed, reducing the risk of medication errors and complications. According to a study published in the Journal of Applied Gerontology, home health care services have been shown to improve medication adherence among older adults, including those with dementia.

3. Emotional Support and Companionship:

Alzheimer's and dementia can be isolating conditions, leading to feelings of loneliness and depression among affected individuals. Home health aides provide much-needed companionship and emotional support, engaging clients in conversation, reminiscing, and stimulating activities. Research published in the Journal of the American Geriatrics Society has shown that social interaction and emotional support from caregivers can improve the quality of life and well-being of individuals with dementia.



4. Engagement in Meaningful Activities:

Keeping individuals with Alzheimer's and dementia engaged in stimulating activities is essential for maintaining cognitive function and reducing behavioral symptoms such as agitation and aggression. Home health aides can plan and facilitate activities tailored to the individual's interests and abilities, such as music therapy, art projects, and gentle exercise. According to a study published in the Journal of Clinical Nursing, engagement in meaningful activities has been associated with improved mood and cognitive function in individuals with dementia.

5. Respite Care for Family Caregivers:

Caring for a loved one with Alzheimer's or dementia can be physically and emotionally demanding, leading to caregiver stress and burnout. Home health aides offer respite care services, allowing family caregivers to take a much-needed break from their caregiving responsibilities. Research from the Alzheimer's Association indicates that family caregivers who utilize respite care services report reduced stress levels and increased satisfaction with their caregiving role.

Whitsyms home health aides play a critical role in improving the quality of life for individuals with Alzheimer's and dementia aging at home. Their support encompasses assistance with daily activities, medication management, emotional support, and engagement in meaningful activities. By addressing the unique needs of both individuals with dementia and their family caregivers, home health aides contribute to enhancing the overall well-being of those affected by the disease.

SERVICES

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PROGRAMS

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UNVEILING THE ENIGMATIC POWER OF METHYLENE BLUE

In the ever-evolving landscape of medicine, certain compounds emerge as unsung heroes, quietly revolutionizing treatments and offering hope where none seemed to exist before. Among these, methylene blue stands as a beacon of promise, navigating through centuries of scientific exploration to unveil its multifaceted potential in the realm of health and well-being.

Initially synthesized in the 19th century, methylene blue found its first applications as a textile dye, coloring fabrics with its distinctive blue hue. However, its journey transcended the confines of the textile industry when researchers began to uncover its medicinal properties. Since then, its versatility has sparked a renaissance in medical science, with myriad applications spanning diverse fields.

One of the most notable uses of methylene blue lies in the realm of neuroscience. With its ability to cross the blood-brain barrier, this compound has garnered attention for its neuroprotective properties. Studies have shown its potential in mitigating neuronal damage associated with conditions such as Alzheimer's disease and Parkinson's disease, offering a glimmer of hope in the quest for effective treatments.

Beyond neurology, methylene blue has also demonstrated remarkable efficacy in combating infections. Its antimicrobial properties make it a potent ally in the fight against bacterial and fungal pathogens. From wound care to urinary tract infections, methylene blue presents a formidable defense, showcasing its prowess as a versatile antimicrobial agent.

Moreover, the therapeutic potential of methylene blue extends to the realm of mood disorders. Research suggests that it may act as an adjunctive treatment for depression, offering relief to individuals who have not responded to conventional antidepressants. By modulating neurotransmitter levels and promoting neurogenesis, methylene blue represents a beacon of hope for those grappling with the burdens of mental illness.

In the field of surgery, methylene blue has found utility as a vital tool for intraoperative visualization. Its ability to stain tissues enables surgeons to delineate anatomical structures with greater precision,



facilitating safer and more effective procedures. Additionally, its role in sentinel lymph node mapping has revolutionized cancer surgery, allowing for accurate lymphatic mapping and targeted lymphadenectomy.

Furthermore, methylene blue has garnered attention for its potential in the treatment of malaria. Recent studies have highlighted its ability to inhibit the growth of Plasmodium parasites, the causative agents of malaria, both in vitro and in vivo. This discovery opens new avenues for the development of novel antimalarial therapies, offering hope in the battle against this deadly disease.

In the realm of metabolic disorders, methylene blue has emerged as a promising candidate for the treatment of mitochondrial dysfunction. By enhancing mitochondrial function and reducing oxidative stress, it holds potential in mitigating the symptoms of conditions such as mitochondrial encephalomyopathy, lactic acidosis, and stroke-like episodes (MELAS) syndrome, offering a ray of hope to patients grappling with these debilitating disorders.

Moreover, methylene blue has shown promise in the field of oncology, with studies suggesting its potential as an adjuvant therapy for certain types of cancer. By targeting tumor metabolism and promoting apoptosis, it complements conventional cancer treatments, enhancing their efficacy and reducing the risk of recurrence.

In the midst of these groundbreaking discoveries, it is essential to acknowledge the importance of further research to fully elucidate the therapeutic potential of methylene blue. While its benefits are

undeniable, there is still much to learn about its mechanisms of action and potential side effects. Nonetheless, the journey of methylene blue from a humble textile dye to a versatile therapeutic agent serves as a testament to the power of scientific inquiry and the boundless potential of nature's pharmacy. As researchers continue to unravel its mysteries, methylene blue stands poised to shape the future of medicine, offering hope and healing to countless individuals around the globe.

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THE RISING PROMISE OF SEMAGLUTIDE IN WEIGHT LOSS: A GAME-CHANGER ON THE HORIZON

By Dr. Magdalena Kerschner

In the persistent battle against obesity, the emergence of Semaglutide has ignited hope and fascination within the medical community and beyond. Originally developed as a treatment for type 2 diabetes, Semaglutide has unexpectedly revealed a remarkable side effect – substantial weight loss. This unexpected twist has spurred intensive research and clinical trials, positioning Semaglutide as a potential game-changer in the fight against obesity.

Semaglutide belongs to a class of medications known as GLP-1 receptor agonists, which work by mimicking the effects of the naturally occurring hormone GLP-1. Originally approved for the management of type 2 diabetes, its efficacy in controlling blood sugar levels was well-documented. However, its impact on weight loss came as a surprise during clinical trials.

The groundbreaking STEP (Semaglutide Treatment Effect in People with obesity) trials provided compelling evidence of Semaglutide's efficacy in promoting weight loss. In these trials, individuals with obesity who received Semaglutide injections experienced significant reductions in body weight compared to those on a placebo. The results were nothing short of remarkable, with participants achieving weight loss of up to 15% or more of their initial body weight over the course of the study.

One of the key factors contributing to Semaglutide's weight loss effect is its ability to reduce appetite. By acting on the brain's appetite control centers, Semaglutide helps individuals feel fuller for longer periods, leading to reduced food intake and subsequent weight loss. Additionally, Semaglutide may also influence other factors involved in weight regulation, such as slowing gastric emptying and improving insulin sensitivity.

The potential of Semaglutide as a weight loss aid extends beyond its physiological effects. Unlike many weight loss medications that require daily administration, Semaglutide is administered once weekly via subcutaneous injection. This convenience factor not only enhances patient compliance but also makes Semaglutide an attractive option for long-term weight management.

Despite its promising efficacy, Semaglutide is not without limitations and considerations. Like any medication, it may cause side effects in some individuals, including nausea, vomiting, and diarrhea. However, these side effects are typically mild to moderate in severity and tend to diminish over



time. Additionally, Semaglutide is not recommended for use in individuals with a history of pancreatitis or thyroid cancer due to safety concerns.

Moreover, Semaglutide is intended to complement lifestyle modifications, including a healthy diet and regular exercise, rather than serve as a standalone solution for weight loss. As such, its effectiveness may vary depending on individual adherence to these lifestyle changes. Furthermore, the long-term safety and efficacy of Semaglutide for weight loss beyond the duration of clinical trials remain to be fully elucidated.

Despite these considerations, the enthusiasm surrounding Semaglutide's potential as a weight loss treatment continues to grow. It was approved by regulatory agencies such as the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) for the treatment of obesity would mark a significant milestone in the field of obesity management. Moreover, Semaglutide's benefit in addressing obesity, type 2 diabetes, and treatment of cardiovascular disease to lower the rate of heart attacks may offer a compelling treatment option for individuals with these conditions, who often face significant challenges in achieving weight loss.

Looking ahead, ongoing research is focused on further understanding the mechanisms underlying Semaglutide's weight loss effects and identifying strategies to optimize its use in clinical practice. This includes exploring the potential use of higher doses of Semaglutide, combination therapies with other weight loss medications, and personalized approaches based on individual patient characteristics.

In conclusion, Semaglutide represents a promising new frontier in the treatment of obesity. Its ability to induce significant weight loss, coupled with its convenient dosing regimen, positions it as a potential game-changer in the field of weight management. However, further research is needed to fully realize its long-term safety and efficacy and to identify the optimal strategies for its use in clinical practice. Nonetheless, Semaglutide's emergence heralds a new era of hope and possibility for individuals struggling with obesity worldwide.



Dr. Kerschner

Dr. Magdalena Kerschner is a board-certified Anesthesiologist and board-certified Interventional Pain specialist.

She completed her medical school education at Wayne State University School of Medicine in Detroit Michigan and subsequent anesthesiology residency at the University of Kentucky in Lexington, KY.

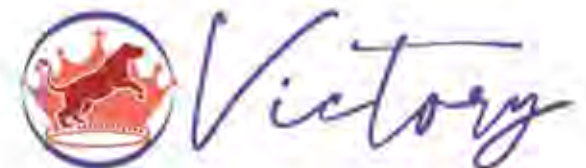
After many years of practicing traditional medicine and treating illness, Dr. Kerschner realized that preventing disease before it starts results in healthier and happier patients.

The concept of preventing illness has awakened in her an interest in weight management and bio-identical hormone replacement therapies as a modern way to promote physical and emotional wellness. Dr. Kerschner holds a certificate of training from Dr. Neal Rouzier – a nationally recognized authority in bio-identical hormone replacement therapies and preventive medicine as well as receiving a Certificate of Continued Medical Education in Wellness at Canyon Ranch.

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Introducing Naples Cancer Advisors Platinum Level Second Opinion Service to the SWFL Community

"Great Care Begins With a Great Plan"

By Dr. William Barrett, MD

Naples Cancer Advisors (NCA) is thrilled to introduce a transformative approach to oncology consultative second opinion services, tailored specifically for Naples and the surrounding SWFL region. Originating from the successful model established by Cincinnati Cancer Advisors and now Naples Cancer Advisors with the aim of providing the crucial services of barrier-free, expert second opinions, genetic testing and counseling, and financial advocacy services for patients with a cancer diagnosis.

What Sets NCA Apart?

NCA offers comprehensive second opinion consultations at no charge, focusing on delivering unbiased and thorough evaluations of cancer diagnoses and treatment plans. This unique service ensures that every patient, regardless of their financial situation, has access to top-tier medical advice without the burden of additional costs. This is a consultative service only - we do not assume clinical care of the patient. This allows us to be objective and enhance the patient's experience with their primary oncologist by providing reassurance and education.

Services Offered

Our service is designed to complement existing treatment plans, providing reassurance and potential alternatives that can be discussed collaboratively with the primary oncologist. This is not just about providing a second opinion; it's about integrating into the existing healthcare framework to enhance patient outcomes and support the local medical community.

Highly Qualified Team

Our team comprises experienced oncologists and healthcare professionals who specialize in various aspects of cancer treatment, from breast and lung cancer to more complex cases requiring the insight of subspecialists. By employing a multidisciplinary approach, we ensure that all recommendations are well-rounded and meticulously considered.

Benefits to Referring Physicians and Patients

1. Enhanced Patient Confidence:

Your patients will benefit from a comprehensive review of their case, which often enhances their confidence in the treatment plan and improves adherence to prescribed therapies.



2. Support Without Competition:

NCA provides support and additional resources like genetic testing and counseling, financial advocacy and care coordination to the primary oncologist without competing for patients. Our goal is to supplement existing treatment plans, not replace them.

3. Access to Expertise:

Sometimes, the complexity of a case requires input beyond the local options available. NCA connects local physicians and patients with national and international cancer experts, ensuring that you have access to the best possible advice while helping to keep care local and patients close to home.

4. Altruistic Mission:

Powered by the 501c3 Cincinnati Cancer Foundation and funded entirely through philanthropy, our service is designed to be purely beneficial, with no financial incentives that might bias the care provided.

Community and Collaboration

NCA is committed to building strong relationships within the Naples and SWFL medical communities. We respect the bonds you have with your patients and aim to be a supportive element in the continuum of care. By enhancing the services you provide, we hope to collectively elevate the standard of cancer care in our region.

Join Us in This Initiative

We invite you to learn more about how Naples Cancer Advisors can assist your practice and help your patients navigate their cancer care journey with greater confidence and support. Together, we can achieve better outcomes and foster a healthier community.

For more information on referring patients or to discuss potential collaborations, please visit our website or contact our office directly. We look forward to partnering with you to advance cancer care in our SWFL communities.



Dr. William Barrett

Dr. Barrett is Co-Director of the University of Cincinnati (UC) Cancer Center, professor and chair of the Department of Radiation Oncology at the UC College of Medicine, and Medical Director of the UC Health Barrett Cancer Center. Dr. Barrett received his undergraduate degree from the University of Virginia and his medical degree from UC. His training included an internship in general surgery at UC followed by a residency in radiation oncology at UC and a fellowship in brachytherapy at Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center.

Dr. Barrett founded The Cincinnati Cancer Foundation, Inc. in 2018 powering Cincinnati Cancer Advisors (CCA) and Naples Cancer Advisors (NCA) which provide platinum-level consultative oncology services such as second opinions, care coordination, referrals, clinical trial navigation, financial navigation, and precision oncology services including genetic testing and counseling to cancer patients in the Southwest Florida area.



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UNDERSTANDING LIABILITY IN FLORIDA POOL DROWNING CASES: ARE YOU KEEPING VISITORS TO YOUR HOME SAFE?

By F. Scott Pauzar, III, Naples Personal Injury Attorney

According to a report from the Florida Department of Health, Florida has one of the highest rates of preventable drownings in the country. While some accidental drownings occur on our lakes and inland waterways, many occur in pool drowning—including swimming pools in people's backyards.

If you have a swimming pool, it is important to ensure you are doing everything required to keep visitors to your home safe. While you might not be able to stop trespassers from swimming in your pool when you aren't home, there are steps that you can (and should) take to minimize the risk of drowning for your visitors.

Pool Safety Requirements and Homeowner Liability Under Florida Law

Florida's Residential Swimming Pool Safety Act establishes specific safety requirements for home swimming pools. Under the law, "a residential swimming pool must meet at least one of the following requirements" to pass inspection:

- The pool must be surrounded by an enclosure that meets Florida's "pool barrier requirements;"
- The pool must be equipped with an approved pool safety cover;
- All doors and windows that provide direct access to the pool must be equipped with an approved exit alarm;
- All doors providing direct access to the pool must be equipped with a self-closing, self-latching device with a release mechanism at least 54 inches above the ground or,
- The door must be equipped with a swimming pool alarm that detects accidental or unauthorized entrance into the water.

Importantly, however, even if a homeowner complies with the Residential Swimming Pool Safety Act, this doesn't necessarily mean that the homeowner is immune from liability in the event of an accidental drowning. Homeowners can be held liable for other forms of negligence as well, including (but not limited to):



- Failing to keep the pool clean (in particular, failing to remove debris from the surface of the water that could obscure the view of someone below)
- Failing to keep pool water properly treated and maintain pumps and other pool equipment in good working order
- Failing to install drain covers or take other protective measures to prevent entrapment below the water
- Failing to adequately monitor children who are swimming
- Providing alcohol to minors who are swimming

Again, these are just examples. When a homeowner is deemed negligent, the homeowner can be liable for an accidental drowning in the homeowner's pool. While accidental drowning claims may be covered under the homeowner's insurance policy, a homeowner's coverage might not be enough to fully cover the financial and non-financial losses suffered by the victim's family.

Speak with a Lawyer about Pool Drowning Liability
If you need to know more about Florida's Residential Swimming Pool Safety Act or have questions related to homeowners' liability for accidental drownings in swimming pools in Florida, we invite you to get in touch. To speak with a lawyer at our offices in Naples or Marco Island in confidence, please call 239-649-6555 or tell us how we can reach you online today.

Request a Free Consultation at Woodward, Pires & Lombardo, P.A.

Do you need to know more about your legal rights after a product-related accident in Florida? If so, we invite you to get in touch. To request a free consultation with a lawyer at Woodward, Pires & Woodward, P.A., please call 239-649-6555 or get in touch online today.



About the Author

F. Scott ("Scott") Pauzar, III is a litigation and personal injury law attorney in Woodward, Pires & Lombardo's Naples office. He has a broad base of

legal knowledge and skills cultivated through over 19 years of experience as a litigator in complex litigation in both state and federal courts. Previously, Scott was an Assistant State Attorney at the 20th Judicial Circuit State Attorney's Office in Fort Myers. During his five years as a Prosecutor, Scott conducted over 30 jury trials. After leaving the Office of the State Attorney, Scott served as an insurance defense attorney for 11 years, where his practice focused on litigation of complex cases and catastrophic injuries. Scott now combines his jury trial and defense experience to successfully represent his clients in litigation and personal injury law matters.

Scott is a military veteran, having served on active duty in the United States Air Force between 1989 and 1993. He is a native of Naples, Florida. Scott received his Bachelor of Arts degree from Jacksonville University in 1996 and his Juris Doctor from the University of Nevada, Las Vegas, in 2004. He is a member of The Florida Bar, and is admitted to practice in the U.S. Middle District and U.S. Northern District of Florida.



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CELEBRATE MEN'S HEALTH MONTH BY OPTIMIZING TESTOSTERONE LEVELS

By Kathy V. Verdes, APRN, A-GNP-C

June is Men's Health Month, an annual opportunity to raise awareness about preventable health issues and encourage early detection and treatment among men and boys. One key focus area is declining testosterone levels, which can have wide-ranging impacts on male health and vitality.

Testosterone is the primary male sex hormone. It plays a crucial role in male sexual and reproductive function, but also influences muscle mass, fat distribution, red blood cell production, and bone health. After age 30, most men begin experiencing a gradual decline in testosterone. By age 70, the decrease in testosterone levels can lead to deficiency symptoms in some men.

Signs and Symptoms of Low Testosterone

Common symptoms associated with low testosterone include:

- Low sex drive
- Erectile dysfunction
- Depressed mood
- Difficulty concentrating
- Fatigue and lack of energy
- Loss of muscle mass and strength
- Increased body fat
- Breast development (gynecomastia)
- Thinning of bones (osteoporosis)

While a certain decline in testosterone is a normal part of aging, some men experience a more significant drop, leading to a condition called hypogonadism or low testosterone. This can result from dysfunctions in the testes, pituitary gland, or hypothalamus which control testosterone production.

Benefits of Testosterone Replacement Therapy

For men diagnosed with low testosterone by a blood test, testosterone replacement therapy can provide significant benefits by restoring hormone levels to the normal range. Potential benefits include:

Increased Muscle Mass and Strength: Testosterone plays a key role in building and maintaining muscle mass. Low levels make it extremely difficult to build muscle, while replacement therapy increases lean muscle and strength.

More Energy: The fatigue and lack of stamina associated with low testosterone is often relieved with proper treatment, providing a renewed sense of vitality.

Better Mood: Low testosterone often coincides with irritability, depression, and poor concentration. Replacement therapy can help stabilize mood and mental clarity.

Improved Libido and Sexual Function: Perhaps the most well-known benefit, testosterone therapy has been shown to increase sexual desire and help reverse erectile dysfunction related to low hormone levels.

Boosted Bone Density: Testosterone increases bone density during puberty and helps maintain it throughout life. Therapy can help prevent or restore bone loss from osteoporosis.

Reduced Body Fat: While not a sure path to weight loss, testosterone can shift the body's proportion of fat to lean muscle mass when combined with a healthy diet and exercise.

Other Benefits: There's also evidence that testosterone therapy can provide protection against heart disease, cognitive decline, anemia, and insulin resistance in diabetics.

Getting Testosterone Replacement Therapy

If you are experiencing potential symptoms of low testosterone, the first step is to get a simple blood test to check your levels. Prepared for Men's Health Month, doctors are ready to test and diagnose any deficiencies.

For those diagnosed with low testosterone by their doctor, there are several different delivery methods for testosterone replacement therapy approved by the FDA:

- Gels or patches applied to the skin
- Injections given every 1-2 weeks
- Pellets implanted under the skin every 3-6 months
- Oral medications

The different delivery methods can affect how quickly testosterone enters the bloodstream and

maintains normal levels. Your doctor will work with you to find the safest and most effective approach based on your specific needs.

Potential Side Effects and Risks

While testosterone replacement therapy can have tremendous benefits, it also carries some risks if not properly monitored and adjusted. Excessive or poorly controlled therapy can potentially lead to:

- Polycythemia (too many red blood cells)
- Acne or other skin reactions
- Sleep apnea
- Enlarged prostate
- Acceleration of pre-existing prostate cancer

However, the latest research shows that when therapy is dosed and monitored appropriately, these risks are low for otherwise healthy men. Following your doctor's orders for therapy and attending regular checkups is essential for safe and effective results.

This Men's Health Month, don't ignore depleted testosterone levels and the toll it can take on your overall vitality, energy, and wellbeing. See your doctor to get tested, and if diagnosed with low testosterone or hypogonadism, discuss therapeutic options that could help you reclaim peak physical, sexual, and mental performance. With proper treatment, you can Celebrate Men's Health Month by feeling like your best, most virile self again.

Are you ready for a consultation?

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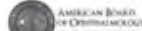
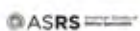
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Hip Fractures After a Fall: What I Learned From My Hip Fracture

By Susan Keller, BSN, MPH

On election day, 2022, I enthusiastically rode my bicycle to the local voting precinct to cast my vote. After quickly stopping bicycle, my foot failed to clear the bicycle seat, sending me crashing onto my left hip.

I lay in the street motionless, in childbirth like pain, unable to properly move my left leg.

I didn't wait for someone to ask if they should call an ambulance, I begged bystanders to call an ambulance, I asked every minute, where was the ambulance? Two guys lifted me up. The pain and abnormal position of my dangling leg was a sure indication something was wrong.

The ambulance ride to the hospital seemed to take hours, yet ER triage time seemed to take just minutes. There was a flurry of healthcare team introductions, forms to sign and then preparation for an x-ray.

My belt wasn't even unbuckled when the nurses knew my new pair of J Crew shorts would have to be cut off. I was in significant pain and didn't care.

I was fortunate to have fallen mid-day, as the hospital had an orthopedic surgeon on call and readily accessible.

Dr. Robert Swift, my orthopedic surgeon addressed the fracture head on, preparing me for surgery, which I surely thought could wait at least three days. He informed me this was not the case, as the situation was an urgency.

Two hours later, my sedation had worn off and I was welcomed to the orthopedic unit. I thought surely an indwelling catheter would have been inserted so I wouldn't have to get out of bed to pee, but there was none. Getting out of bed, if to just go to the bathroom, was instrumental in the recovery process.

My mindset changed from "I can't move" to how to "how can I move so it's not painful"?

During my week stay at the hospital, the nursing staff inspected the surgical dressing, assessed my pain and recovery progress. Physical therapy taught me how to reposition myself, get me out of bed and how to walk using a walker.

The goal of the healthcare team was to ensure I was healing and to provide me with the knowledge, motivation and tools to have a successful recovery at home. I was transferred to an inpatient rehabilitation

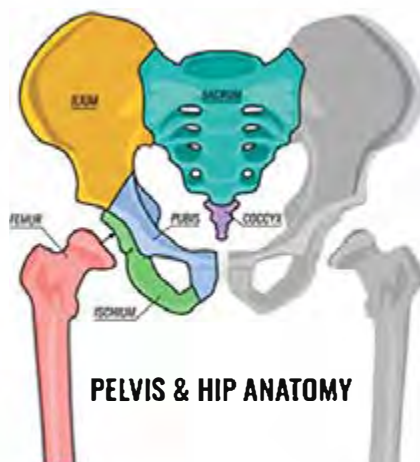
program at a local rehabilitation hospital. Physical therapy was scheduled daily, progressing from two sessions a day, increasing to four times a day by week's end.

Home physical therapy was scheduled before the hospital discharge. Physical therapy reinforced the leg exercises taught in the hospital. I progressed from using a walker to using a rollator. While I was sometimes uncomfortable performing the exercises, they were instrumental in my healing process. Ice, pain medication and my mantra "I can do this" helped the healing process even more.

The partnership between my health care provider and orthopedic surgeon gave me peace of mind that progress was being made.

Almost two months after my hip surgery successfully completing physical therapy. I rode my bike past my neighbors, only to find her sprawled in her driveway, in obvious pain. We elected to drive to the hospital. While she was fortunate not to need surgery, the CT scan revealed she had a pelvic fracture. Fortunately, Dr. Swift was her orthopedic surgeon as well.

There is confusion about what exactly a hip fracture is. Is it a femur fracture? Is there a hip bone? Is a pelvic fracture worse? The hip is made up of the femur and the pelvis. When there is a fall onto the side all of those structures are at risk. There can be fractures of the femur through the top part of the bone. There can be fractures that separate the ball of the femur through the neck. There can be surrounding fractures around the pelvis on the front and even into the back of the pelvis. Many of these fractures are referred to as "hip fractures."



Osteoporosis is a disease in which the bone's mineral density and mass is decreased, thereby negatively impacting bones strength, thereby increasing the risk of bone fracture (broken bones).

Risk factors for osteoporosis include:

- Race
- Women greater than.
- Age (age 50 and over)
- Men with low testosterone levels
- Smokers and heavy drinking (more than two drinks a day on most days)
- Weight (less than 125 pounds)
- Previous bariatric surgery
- Previous fragility fracture as a senior
- Kidney failure, inflammatory bowel disease, rheumatoid arthritis, liver disease or an eating disorder
- Taking oral corticosteroids on a daily basis, or other high-risk medications (e.g., thyroid hormone replacement, immunosuppressant drugs, warfarin)

Osteopenia is a loss of bone mineral density (BMD) that weakens bones, normally this occurs first and if untreated can progress to Osteoporosis.

Signs and risk factors, including:

- Height loss
- Receding gums
- Curved, stooped forward shape of the spine
- Lower back pain
- Prior fragility fractures with mild impact can occur at the shoulder, elbow, wrist, spine and ankle.

My hip fracture motivated me to reduce my osteoporosis risk factors that I could control, including maintaining a proper weight, working on flexibility and range of motion exercise, performing resistance exercises, eating a healthy diet, and participating in daily weight bearing activities.

A fall is just not a fall, see your Orthopedic Surgeon or go to the ER. In my case Dr. Swift worked to get me to the operating room urgently. This prevented me from lying in a hospital bed in pain waiting to go to the Operating room. Early intervention got me out of bed and on to a speedy recovery. Early intervention was a key to my early recovery, and a hallmark of Dr. Swift's commitment to care.

Feel free to contact Dr. Robert Swift or ask for him in the Emergency Department if you fall and have concern for a fracture.

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THE HEALING TOUCH: Acupuncture and Tai Chi in Alzheimer's Disease Treatment

By Alik Minikhanov, AP, DOM

Alzheimer's disease, a neurodegenerative disorder, presents a significant global health challenge. As traditional treatments strive for breakthroughs, alternative therapies like acupuncture and tai chi are gaining recognition for their potential in managing Alzheimer's symptoms and improving overall well-being. This article explores the evidence behind these ancient practices and their role in Alzheimer's disease treatment.

Understanding Alzheimer's Disease:

Alzheimer's disease is characterized by progressive cognitive decline, memory loss, and behavioral changes. Pathologically, it involves the accumulation of amyloid plaques and neurofibrillary tangles in the brain, leading to neuronal death and cognitive dysfunction. Current treatments aim to alleviate symptoms but do not halt disease progression.

Acupuncture, A Time-Honored Therapy:

Acupuncture, rooted in traditional Chinese medicine, involves the insertion of thin needles into specific points on the body to stimulate energy flow or Qi. It is believed to restore balance and promote healing. Recent studies suggest acupuncture may benefit Alzheimer's patients by enhancing cognitive function, reducing agitation, and improving quality of life.

A study published in the Journal of Alzheimer's Disease (2018) found that acupuncture improved cognitive function and activities of daily living in Alzheimer's patients compared to a control group. The researchers noted changes in brain connectivity patterns, indicating potential neural plasticity effects. Another review in Evidence-Based Complementary and Alternative Medicine (2018) concluded that acupuncture could alleviate behavioral and psychological symptoms of dementia, including agitation and aggression.

Mechanistically, acupuncture may modulate neurotransmitter levels, such as acetylcholine and serotonin, involved in cognitive function and mood regulation. Additionally, it may promote neurogenesis and neuroplasticity, supporting brain repair and resilience against degeneration.

Tai Chi: Moving Meditation for Mind and Body:

Tai chi is a mind-body practice originating from ancient Chinese martial arts. It involves slow, flowing movements, deep breathing, and meditation. Tai chi is known for its gentle nature and accessibility to people of all ages and fitness levels. Research suggests tai chi may benefit Alzheimer's patients by improving cognitive function, balance, and mood.

A randomized controlled trial published in the Journal of Alzheimer's Disease (2018) demonstrated that tai chi improved cognitive function and quality of life in individuals with mild to moderate Alzheimer's disease. Participants showed significant improvements in memory, attention, and executive function compared to a control group. Another study in the Journal of Aging and Physical Activity (2019) found that tai chi reduced falls and improved balance in older adults with cognitive impairment.

The mechanisms underlying tai chi's therapeutic effects in Alzheimer's disease are multifaceted. Regular practice may enhance cerebral blood flow, neuroplasticity, and brain-derived neurotrophic factor (BDNF) levels, supporting neuronal survival and cognitive function. Moreover, tai chi promotes relaxation, stress reduction, and emotional well-being, which are crucial for managing Alzheimer's symptoms.

Integration into Alzheimer's Care:

Acupuncture and tai chi offer promising adjunctive therapies for Alzheimer's disease management. Integrating these practices into comprehensive care plans can address multiple dimensions of the disease, including cognitive, behavioral, and emotional aspects. Furthermore, their low risk profiles and minimal side effects make them suitable for individuals with Alzheimer's who may have contraindications to conventional treatments.

As a Doctor of Acupuncture and Chinese Medicine, I work with patients to create personalized approaches that tailor acupuncture and tai chi interventions to individual needs. I help create easy to follow Tai Chi sequences that supplement regular treatment sessions to enhance practice adherence and clinical effectiveness.



Future Directions and Considerations:

While the evidence supporting acupuncture and tai chi in Alzheimer's disease treatment is promising, further research is needed to elucidate their mechanisms of action and long-term benefits. Large-scale randomized controlled trials with rigorous methodology are necessary to establish their efficacy and inform clinical practice guidelines.

Additionally, cultural considerations, accessibility, and affordability should be addressed to ensure equitable access to acupuncture and tai chi interventions for all individuals affected by Alzheimer's disease. Collaboration between Western and traditional medicine systems can enrich therapeutic options and improve outcomes for Alzheimer's patients worldwide.

Conclusion:

In the face of the Alzheimer's epidemic, alternative therapies like acupuncture and tai chi offer hope and holistic support for patients and caregivers. With growing recognition of their potential benefits and ongoing research efforts, I'm honored to guide patients through these ancient practices, complementing a regular treatment schedule while enhancing the quality of life for individuals living with Alzheimer's disease.

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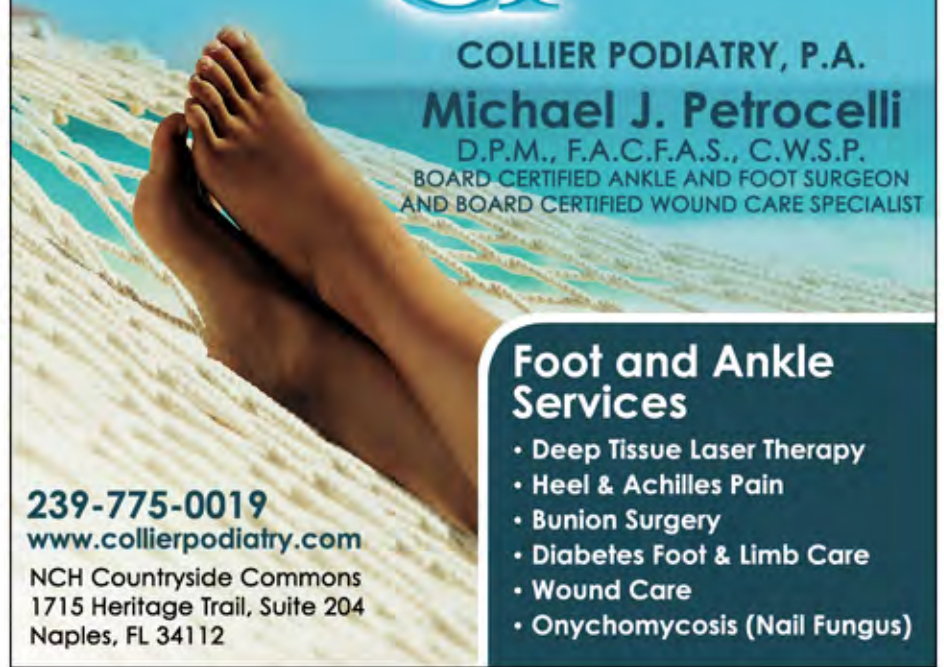
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The Importance of Progesterone Replacement in Both Men and Women

By Dr. Melissa (Mel) Irvine, DNP - Clinical Sexologist
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Of the many hormones in the body, a select few are typically categorized as being for one gender or for the other. Many people are often surprised to learn, though, that despite these hormones being more prominent in one gender, they are essential for proper body functioning in both.

One example of these hormones is progesterone, which is often considered for women, although it has many essential roles in men. However, progesterone can decline in both genders for a number of reasons, including with age or due to health conditions. When progesterone levels fall, unpleasant symptoms can occur, which is why progesterone replacement is a crucial treatment for those with unbalanced hormones.

What Is Progesterone?

Progesterone is a hormone most often known to be released by the corpus luteum after a woman has ovulated. Also referred to as the “pregnancy hormone,” progesterone prepares the uterus for pregnancy by thickening the lining and preventing muscle contractions that would expel an egg.

Despite its primary role in preparing the female body for pregnancy, though, progesterone is also vital for men, albeit with different roles.

Let’s further discuss the role of progesterone in both genders and why it is crucial for men and women to have balanced progesterone levels.

The Role of Progesterone in Women

Progesterone varies considerably through a woman’s menstrual cycle, with it being produced in low levels during the first half but rising considerably following ovulation. If a woman becomes pregnant, progesterone remains high throughout the pregnancy and aids in breast milk production upon delivery of the baby.

While the ovaries initially produce progesterone, the placenta begins producing progesterone at a higher rate after 8 or 10 weeks of pregnancy. This increase in progesterone keeps the body from releasing more eggs and prepares the breasts to produce milk.



Despite the role of progesterone in pregnancy, it can also be used to prevent pregnancy. In fact, progesterone is often used by itself or in combination with estrogen in hormonal contraceptives. When in this format, it helps the cervical mucus thicken, making it difficult for sperm to reach and fertilize an egg. It can also cause the uterine lining to thin, or it may stop ovulation entirely.

Because of these extremes in the body, promoting an ideal amount of progesterone is critical for healthy fertility, if pregnancy is a woman’s goal.

Signs Of Low Progesterone in Women

Some signs of low progesterone in women include:

- missing periods or having abnormal periods
- uterine bleeding
- repeated miscarriages
- spotting and pain while pregnant
- infertility

Progesterone and estrogen are also closely related, so if progesterone is too low, it may cause estrogen levels to become high, which can cause weight gain, headaches, or mood swings.

The Role of Progesterone in Men

Despite being considered the “pregnancy hormone,” progesterone is also an essential hormone in men.

In men, progesterone plays a vital role in mood regulation and keeping the mind calm. It also impacts libido and promotes fertility from the man’s side. This is because progesterone influences spermiogenesis, or the creation of sperm; if the amount of progesterone in a man is too low, the body might not be able to produce as much sperm, which can influence a couple’s ability to conceive.

Progesterone is also crucial for the biosynthesis of testosterone, otherwise known as the male sex hormone, which is responsible for the development of secondary sex characteristics such as body hair, muscle growth, and a deeper voice.

Progesterone also plays an essential role in the male body regarding counteracting the effects of estrogen, which can cause testosterone levels to decline. Proper progesterone levels ensure that these sex hormones are in the correct balance.

Signs Of Low Progesterone in Men

Some of the signs of low progesterone in men include:

- hair loss
- low libido
- fatigue
- weight gain
- depression
- breast growth
- muscle loss
- bone loss
- erectile dysfunction

Low progesterone levels can also increase the risk of certain health conditions such as arthritis, osteoporosis, prostate cancer, and prostatism.

Estrogen Dominance and Progesterone

Progesterone is an antagonist to estrogen, giving it an important role in keeping estrogen levels in check. However, this also means that if progesterone levels are too low, estrogen levels can become high without anything to keep them in the correct range, a condition called estrogen dominance.

While estrogen dominance is most often referred to in women, it can affect men as well, with both genders having shared and also different symptoms.

Women with estrogen dominance may have symptoms that include:

- swelling and tenderness in the breasts
- low libido
- bloating
- weight gain
- mood swings
- headaches
- increase premenstrual syndrome symptoms
- fatigue
- cold hands or feet
- memory problems
- anxiety and panic attacks

Men can share some of the above symptoms in addition to experiencing infertility issues, breast tissue growth, or erectile dysfunction.

Normal estrogen levels in adult, menopausal women range from 15 – 350 pg/ml. In adult men, estrogen levels should range from 10 - 40 pg/ml. Estrogen counts higher than these ranges may signify low progesterone.

What Causes Low Progesterone?

There are many causes of low progesterone, some due to a temporary situation, whereas others may be more chronic.

Hypothyroidism

Many of the hormones in the body interact, which is evident between the thyroid hormones, T3 and T4, and progesterone. With hypothyroidism, the thyroid does not produce enough hormones, and since the thyroid is responsible for regulating the endocrine system, this can then influence how well the body is able to produce progesterone.

It is also possible for low progesterone to lead to hypothyroidism, so this connection is bi-directional.

Low Cholesterol

Cholesterol is needed by the body in order to make progesterone. So, if your cholesterol is low, your body does not have enough of the building blocks required to produce enough progesterone.

Stress

Stress contributes to many health conditions, and low progesterone is one of them. This is because the hormone secreted by the body when in a perceived stressful situation, cortisol, utilizes the resources needed to make progesterone.

Essentially, when the body is stressed, it halts progesterone production in order to increase the amount of cortisol produced. For those experiencing chronic stress, this means that cortisol continually interferes with progesterone production.

Anovulatory Cycle

An anovulatory cycle is a menstrual cycle where ovulation does not occur. Since a rise in progesterone is triggered by the release of an egg and the empty follicle it leaves behind called the corpus luteum, an anovulatory cycle results in no increase in progesterone.

Anovulatory cycles are common in those on certain types of birth control or with PCOS.

Abnormal Bodyweight

Your body weight can play a prominent role in progesterone production because of its impact on the menstrual cycle. This is because women need a certain amount of body fat in order to have a regular cycle, which leads to ovulation and a rise in progesterone. Because of this, low body weight may impede ovulation, leading to no progesterone production.

Problems can occur at the other end of the spectrum as well, though. This is because fat cells produce estrogen, so high body fat can result in an overproduction of estrogen, which can lead to low progesterone. Studies have shown this correlation between obesity and low progesterone in men as well.

Prolactin Disorder

Prolactin is a hormone produced by the pituitary, and it negatively affects the production of sex hormone precursors. Those with hyperprolactinemia produce too much prolactin, which can disrupt the menstrual cycle, keeping progesterone from being produced.

Correcting Low Progesterone

Progesterone replacement therapy involves progestins, which are synthetic compounds mimicking the effects of progesterone on the body.

Some reasons why someone may be treated with progesterone hormone therapy are to:

- correct a low amount of progesterone due to underproduction
- bring on menstruation
- reverse low progesterone resulting from certain medications
- replace progesterone that is limited due to specific medical procedures

There are many different forms of progesterone hormone therapy, such as:

- injections
- oral capsules
- vaginal gels
- vaginal inserts
- vaginal suppositories

The ideal method of progesterone replacement will depend on gender, symptoms, and personal preferences.

The Importance of Progesterone Replacement

Besides helping to address problems with fertility, progesterone replacement can also be essential for a healthy pregnancy in women. For example, women who are pregnant, but have low progesterone, may be at a greater risk of preterm delivery or miscarriage. Replacing progesterone can help prevent these complications from occurring.



Progesterone replacement produces similar benefits in men regarding improving fertility due to its role in spermatogenesis and the fact that low progesterone can lead to erectile dysfunction.

Progesterone can also help with other symptoms affecting well-being, including those that appear in men with low progesterone. These benefits can include an improvement in mood, better sleep, and stronger bones.

Some cases of low progesterone are temporary, but for those suffering significantly from low progesterone, it is likely due to a chronic cause, and the only way to find relief is by addressing the hormonal imbalance.

Progesterone can be supplemented in many forms, such as injections, pills, or creams, which help raise progesterone levels and assist the body in functioning correctly, reversing unpleasant symptoms. Working with a doctor who specializes in hormones can also ensure that you get just the right amount of progesterone, as too much can also cause problems, especially for those looking to conceive.

By adequately balancing progesterone, all other hormones in the body can work in balance again, significantly improving your quality of life.

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Choosing the right realtor is crucial when navigating the competitive and exclusive real estate market of Southwest Florida, particularly when considering gated communities and luxury properties. Southwest Florida, known for its pristine beaches, vibrant cultural scene, and luxurious lifestyle, attracts discerning homebuyers seeking the epitome of upscale living. In such a dynamic environment, the expertise of an experienced realtor becomes indispensable.

The allure of gated communities in Southwest Florida lies not only in the added security they offer but also in the sense of exclusivity and community living. Experienced realtors in the region understand the intricacies of these gated neighborhoods, possessing insights into the unique features and amenities each community provides. From golf courses and private beaches to state-of-the-art amenities, they can guide prospective buyers to the enclave that aligns seamlessly with their preferences and lifestyle.

Luxury properties within these gated communities present a myriad of options, each with its own distinctive charm. An experienced realtor brings a wealth of knowledge to the table, helping buyers navigate the complexities of the luxury real estate market. They are adept at identifying properties that match not just the buyer's budget but also their specific criteria for opulence, architectural style, and preferred amenities.

In a market where timing is often of the essence, seasoned real estate agents possess the ability to stay ahead of trends and fluctuations. They are well-versed in the Southwest Florida market's ebbs and flows, enabling them to provide valuable insights on when to buy or sell. This foresight is especially crucial in the luxury real estate sector, where timing can significantly impact property values.

Furthermore, an experienced realtor can facilitate a smooth and efficient buying or selling process. Navigating the paperwork, negotiations, and legalities of real estate transactions requires a level of expertise that can only be gained through years of

hands-on experience. Buyers and sellers alike benefit from the guidance of a real estate professional who can streamline the process and mitigate potential challenges.

In the realm of luxury real estate, discretion is often paramount. Seasoned realtors in Southwest Florida understand the importance of maintaining confidentiality and respecting the privacy of their clients. This level of professionalism is particularly crucial when dealing with high-profile individuals or celebrities who seek refuge in the exclusive gated communities of the region.

Beyond their knowledge of the local real estate market, experienced realtors also boast an extensive network of industry connections. From architects and interior designers to legal professionals and contractors, these connections can prove invaluable when it comes to enhancing and maintaining a luxury property. The ability to tap into this network ensures that clients receive top-notch service at every stage of the real estate process.

Ultimately, the importance of using experienced realtors in Southwest Florida when exploring gated communities and luxury properties cannot be overstated. Their expertise, market knowledge, and network of connections distinguish them as invaluable partners in the pursuit of a dream home. In a region renowned for its upscale living, entrusting the guidance of a seasoned real estate professional is not just a wise decision – it's a key to unlocking the doors of Southwest Florida's most exclusive residences.

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SHEDDING LIGHT ON CATARACT AWARENESS MONTH

A VITAL INITIATIVE FOR OPTIMAL VISION HEALTH

Cataracts, a common eye condition characterized by the clouding of the lens, significantly impact millions of individuals worldwide. As an internist, I believe it is crucial to raise awareness about cataracts and their implications during Cataract Awareness Month. This article aims to enlighten readers about cataracts, their risk factors, preventive measures, and available treatment options. By empowering individuals with knowledge, we can encourage early detection, promote timely interventions, and ultimately improve the quality of life for those affected by cataracts.

Understanding Cataracts

Cataracts occur when the lens of the eye becomes cloudy, leading to blurred vision and potentially severe visual impairment. Age-related changes in the lens are the primary cause of cataracts, although other factors such as genetics, smoking, diabetes, and excessive ultraviolet exposure can contribute to their development. Symptoms may include gradual vision loss, decreased night vision, sensitivity to light, and the perception of halos around lights.

Prevention and Risk Reduction

While cataracts are typically associated with aging, certain preventive measures can help reduce the risk and delay their onset. Shielding the eyes from harmful ultraviolet rays by wearing sunglasses and wide-brimmed hats outdoors is crucial. A nutritious diet rich in antioxidants, particularly vitamins C and E, may also support eye health. Smoking cessation and managing chronic conditions like diabetes can further minimize the likelihood of cataract development.

Early Detection and Diagnosis

Regular comprehensive eye exams play a pivotal role in identifying cataracts at their early stages. During these evaluations, ophthalmologists evaluate visual acuity, assess the lens for cloudiness, and perform additional tests to determine the severity of the condition. Early detection allows for prompt interventions, ensuring appropriate treatment and minimizing the impact on an individual's daily life.



Treatment Options

While cataracts cannot be reversed or prevented from progressing, effective treatment options are available to restore vision. Surgery is the most common and successful approach, involving the removal of the clouded lens and its replacement with an artificial intraocular lens. This outpatient procedure is safe, generally painless, and typically results in significant visual improvement. Post-operative care and follow-up appointments are crucial for monitoring healing and optimizing outcomes.

Cataract Awareness Month serves as a reminder of the importance of maintaining optimal vision health. By educating individuals about risk factors, preventive measures, and available treatment options, we can empower them to take proactive steps towards preserving their vision. Regular eye exams, healthy lifestyle choices, and timely interventions are key to reducing the burden of cataracts and enhancing the quality of life for affected individuals.

Contact Well-Being Medical Center of Naples today at (239) 315-7801.



Dr. Ricardo Martinez

Dr. Ricardo Martinez is an internist in Naples, FL and is affiliated with NCH Baker Hospital. He received his medical degree from Superior Institute of Medical Sciences of Santiago de Cuba and has been in practice 20 years. He also speaks multiple languages, including Spanish. He specializes in hospital medicine, ambulatory care and is experienced in hospice and palliative medicine, bariatric medicine, diabetes mellitus, food allergy, and infectious disease. As of March 16th, 2020, Dr. Martinez has founded Well-Being Medical center in Naples Florida. He is looking forward to providing Medical care within primary care settings and urgent care service throughout the Naples Florida area.



239-315-7801

www.well-beingmedicalcenter.org

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Understanding Polycystic Kidney Disease

By Neetu Malhotra, MD

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

Polycystic kidney disease is the fourth leading cause of kidney failure and 600,000 people in the United States have the disorder. Polycystic kidney disease (PKD) affects the kidneys with cysts that grow and are filled with fluid. These cysts can damage the kidneys, and essentially take over the kidney's ability to work properly, especially if there are numerous cysts growing at one time. These cysts can severely reduce kidney function.

Poly cystic kidney disease can also affect other organs in the body including the spleen, ovaries, liver, pancreas, bowels, brain, and heart. Most people don't develop PKD until middle age, and the symptoms can range from mild to severe.

The primary symptoms of PKD are as follows:

- High blood pressure
- Back or side pain
- Swollen abdomen
- Blood in the urine
- Frequent bladder and/or kidney infections
- Fluttering or pounding chest
- Chest pain
- Headaches

50 to 60 percent of individuals with PKD will develop kidney failure.

PKD Treatment

Individuals with PKD will need dialysis and possibly a kidney transplant. There are also medications that can help treat the disorder and certain diets that will help to prevent the growth of the cysts, which can stop the progression of the disease. PKD can be genetic, so it's best to speak to your physician about your children's health or any planned pregnancies.

How Can the Progression of Kidney Disease Be Delayed?

1. Keeping blood pressure under 130/80 or if you have diabetes or protein in the urine, under 125/75.
2. Taking certain types of medications called ACE-Inhibitors or angiotensin receptor blockers.

3. If you are diabetic, keeping blood sugars tightly controlled (HbA1c less than 7.0).
4. Avoiding medications that harm your kidneys such as non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs. (NSAIDs). Examples are Motrin, ibuprofen, Aleve, Advil, Naprosyn. A Cox-2 inhibitor called Celebrex is also harmful.
5. Avoiding, if possible, IV contrast dye used for CT scans and heart catheterizations and gadolinium used in MRIs.
6. Controlling your cholesterol.
7. Quit smoking.
8. If overweight, losing weight.
9. Treating anemia if present.
10. Avoiding Fleet phospho-soda (oral) and Fleet enemas for patients in Stage 4 and 5 chronic kidney disease.

Associates in Nephrology

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

Chronic Kidney Disease Program

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

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

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

Services Provided

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

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

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

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Alzheimer's Awareness Month: The Link between dementia and UTIs

UTIs and Dementia: An Overlooked Connection

Urinary tract infections (UTIs) are a common yet often overlooked issue among individuals living with Alzheimer's disease and other forms of dementia. While UTIs can affect anyone, the risk is heightened in those with dementia due to various factors, including decreased personal hygiene and challenges in communicating symptoms.

At the root of this problem lies the reduced ability of people with dementia to maintain proper hygiene and personal care. As cognitive function declines, tasks such as regular cleaning and staying hydrated become increasingly difficult, creating an environment conducive to the growth of harmful bacteria that can lead to UTIs.

Compounding the issue is the challenge in detecting UTIs in individuals with dementia. Many individuals with dementia experience communication difficulties, making it challenging for them to express discomfort or symptoms clearly. Additionally, the symptoms of UTIs can overlap with those of dementia, further complicating the diagnosis.

The signs of a UTI in someone with dementia can be diverse and may include sleeping issues, anxiety, depression, confusion, aggression, delusions, hallucinations, and paranoia. Physical symptoms such as pain or a burning sensation when urinating, frequent urination, cloudy or bloody urine, lower abdominal pain, urinary incontinence, and mild fever may also be present.

The connection between UTIs and dementia is multifaceted, with symptoms from both conditions often intertwining. This overlap can lead to misdiagnosis or a delayed response, exacerbating the situation and potentially causing further complications.

Early detection and prompt treatment of UTIs are crucial for individuals with dementia, as untreated infections can worsen cognitive function and contribute to an overall decline in health. Caregivers and healthcare professionals play a vital role in recognizing the signs and advocating for appropriate medical attention.

IS IT A UTI OR IS IT ALZHEIMERS? WHY IT CAN BE HARD TO TELL

Common Symptoms Shared by UTIs and Dementia

- Confusion
- Agitation
- Hallucinations
- Unusual behavior changes
- Dizziness
- Falling
- Frequent need to pee

Getting Help

When UTIs wreak havoc, we sometimes see message threads in which caregivers are in a state of panic about the symptoms. And for good reason — the symptoms are powerful and can actually mimic the end of life for some people. Getting a urine test may not be the first thing you think of when your loved one starts behaving so differently, but these changes often occur with a UTI due to fever and increased pain. When you see sudden behavioral changes, it is important to rule a UTI out and consult with a doctor.

How can people with dementia prevent UTIs?

Preventing UTIs in people with dementia is crucial for their overall well-being. Here are some tips to help reduce the risk:

- **Stay Hydrated:** Encourage regular fluid intake to promote proper urinary function.
- **Frequent Bathroom Breaks:** Prompt people with dementia to use the bathroom regularly to prevent urinary retention.
- **Proper Hygiene:** Do your best to help with maintaining personal hygiene, including wiping techniques. Women especially need to wipe front to back after using the bathroom to avoid bacteria spread.
- **Cranberry Pills:** Take a daily cranberry pill to prevent bacteria from sticking to the urinary tract lining.
- **UTI Test Strips:** Keep Utiva UTI Test Strips on hand to diagnose UTIs early and start treatment right away.

Utiva Cranberry PACs: A Clinically Effective Prevention: Utiva Cranberry PACs offer a promising solution for UTI prevention without contributing to antibiotic resistance. Cranberry proanthocyanidins (PACs) have been extensively studied for their ability to inhibit bacterial adhesion to the urinary tract, preventing the colonization and proliferation of UTI-causing bacteria. A urogynecologist, Dr. Emily Rutledge emphasizes, "There is a lot of evidence that cranberry supplements are safe and effective. You can find all sorts of cranberry supplements but if they don't have that 36 mg PAC and are measured by DMAC/A2 then they are a waste of money." Utiva Cranberry PACs, with a standardized dose of 36 mg PACs measured by DMAC/A2, provide a clinically effective option for individuals seeking to reduce their risk of recurrent UTIs.

Recurrent UTIs pose a significant health concern, exacerbated by the growing threat of antibiotic resistance. Healthcare providers and patients play a vital role in addressing this challenge by adopting preventive strategies and exploring alternative approaches to UTI management. Dr. Colleen McDermott, another urogynecologist, recommends,



"Antibiotics are the first-line treatment, but there are clinically proven options to help prevent. When considering cranberry supplements, I recommend my patients select a product with 36 mg of PACs." Utiva Cranberry PACs offer a safe, evidence-based option for UTI prevention, empowering individuals to take proactive steps towards better urinary health and reduced reliance on antibiotics.

Sources:

- https://www.alz.org/blog/alz/october_2011/sudden_change_in_behavior_urinary_tract_infection
- <https://www.utivahealth.ca/blogs/resources/the-link-between-dementia-and-utis-spotting-the-signs-and-preventing-infection#:~:text=People%20with%20dementia%20are%20twice,keep%20infections%20away%E2%80%9494for%20good>

For more information, visit Utiva's webpage.

<https://www.utivahealth.com> or call:

1-888-622-3613

What is Rhinitis?

An In-Depth Look at This Common Nasal Condition

Rhinitis is an incredibly prevalent condition, impacting over 20 million adults and 7 million children in the United States annually. Despite its widespread nature, many people remain unfamiliar with this nasal nuisance. So, what exactly is rhinitis?

At its core, rhinitis refers to inflammation of the nasal passages and mucous membranes. While often mistaken for sinusitis, the majority of presumed "sinus" issues are actually cases of chronic rhinitis. Recognizing this key distinction is critical for proper diagnosis and treatment.

The Hallmark Symptoms

The telltale signs of rhinitis include nasal congestion, difficulty breathing through the nose, frequent sneezing, runny nose, post-nasal drip, itchy nose and eyes, and headaches. These bothersome symptoms arise when the sensitive nasal lining becomes inflamed and swollen.

Under normal circumstances, the nasal mucous membranes act as a filter, trapping dust, pollen, bacteria, and other airborne particles in a thin mucus layer. Tiny hair-like projections called cilia then sweep this debris down the throat to be expelled from the body. However, when irritated, these membranes react by producing excess mucus, swelling up, and obstructing airflow - giving rise to the characteristic rhinitis symptoms.

While rhinitis is typically not a serious condition, its effects can significantly disrupt daily activities like sleeping, exercising, and concentrating.

Two Main Types

Rhinitis can be classified into two overarching categories: acute and chronic. Acute cases are short-lived, resolving within just a few days for most people. In contrast, chronic rhinitis lingers for weeks or months at a time, often recurring repeatedly.

Allergic Rhinitis: The Usual Culprit

In the vast majority of cases, rhinitis stems from an allergic reaction. When the immune system mistakenly identifies a harmless substance (known as an allergen) as a threat, it kicks into overdrive. This prompts the production of antibodies called Immunoglobulin E (IgE) to neutralize the perceived danger.

However, this process also triggers the release of inflammatory chemicals like histamine, which then cause the swelling and irritation characteristic of allergic rhinitis. Common allergens include pollen, dust, dander, mold, certain foods, and more.

Allergic rhinitis can be further divided into seasonal and perennial categories. Seasonal cases are caused by allergens present during specific times of year, such as spring tree pollen. Perennial rhinitis, on the other hand, persists year-round due to ongoing exposure to triggers like dust mites or pet dander.

The Diagnostic Process

If you visit an ENT (ear, nose, and throat) specialist with suspected rhinitis, they will gather detailed information about your symptoms, their onset and progression, potential triggers, prior treatments or testing, medical history, and more.

The physician will then carefully examine the interior of your nasal passages, evaluating the condition of the mucous membranes, assessing mucus color and amount, and checking for any abnormalities like polyps or a deviated septum that could contribute to obstruction.

Depending on the exam findings, additional diagnostic tests may be recommended, such as allergy testing, pulmonary function tests, imaging studies like CT scans or X-rays, or laboratory analysis. Many of these can be conveniently performed in the ENT clinic.

Once a rhinitis diagnosis is confirmed, your doctor will develop a personalized treatment strategy tailored to your specific needs, symptoms, and triggers.

Treating the Nuisance

For cases of mild allergic rhinitis, your treatment plan may start with environmental control measures, nasal saline irrigation, antihistamines, or corticosteroid nasal sprays to reduce inflammation.

If these initial steps prove insufficient, your ENT may recommend additional interventions like decongestants (for short-term use), turbidoplasty to reduce obstructive nasal tissue, or minimally invasive procedures like balloon sinuplasty to improve sinus drainage.

For severe, persistent allergic rhinitis, immunotherapy remains the most effective long-term solution. Through a course of allergy shots or sublingual (under-the-tongue) therapy, your immune system can be gradually desensitized to your specific triggers over time.

In some cases, surgical procedures like rhinoplasty or septoplasty may be considered to correct structural nasal abnormalities that exacerbate symptoms.

No matter the rhinitis type or severity, an individualized multimodal treatment plan is key to achieving lasting relief and an improved quality of life.

By combining patient education, environmental control strategies, medical management, and specialized ENT services, the experts can tackle even the most stubborn cases of this nasal nuisance. Don't let rhinitis disrupt your daily routine - seek expert care to overcome those congested, drippy, sneezy days for good.



Dr. Price Sonkarley is a Board Certified Otolaryngologist Head and Neck Surgeon and will be continuing Dr. Montgomery's practice providing excellent care to all patients. He will be performing both medical and surgical aspects of the specialty and is accepting new patients.

Dr. Sonkarley grew up in the Midwest and received his Doctorate from the University of Wisconsin School of Medicine. He completed his Otolaryngology Residency at the University of Oklahoma. He served in the US Marine Corps for 5 years and was awarded the Joint Services Achievement Medal after his tour in Iraq.



Kathleen Rocuant, Au.D FAAA received her Doctorate from the Arizona School of Health Sciences and is Board Certified by the American Board of Audiology. She specializes in Hearing Evaluations, Hearing Aids and Hearing Solutions. She is a Fellow American Academy of Audiology and a member of the American Academy of Audiology and the Florida Academy of Audiology.



Carly Treibits, PA-C is a graduate of Florida Gulf Coast University and is a Board Certified Physician Assistant. She is a member of the Florida Academy of Physician Assistants and the American Academy of Physician Assistants.

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VERTEBRAL COMPRESSION FRACTURES: Understanding Their Impact on Health

By Gregory Cannarsa, MD, Fellowship-Trained Neurosurgeon

Vertebral compression fractures (VCFs) are a prevalent yet often overlooked health issue affecting more than 700,000 Americans yearly, especially the elderly population. These fractures occur when the vertebral body in the spine collapses due to weakness in the bone, which can lead to severe back pain, reduced mobility, and a significant decline in quality of life. Understanding the impact of VCFs is crucial for effective management and prevention of long-term complications.

The Nature of Vertebral Compression Fractures

VCFs are most commonly caused by osteoporosis, a disease characterized by decreased bone density and strength. They can also result from traumatic injuries or metastatic diseases. The spine's vertebrae become so porous and weak that they can fracture under the normal pressure of daily activities, sometimes with minimal or no apparent cause.

Symptoms and Diagnosis

The primary symptom of a VCF is sharp, sudden back pain. It may be exacerbated by standing or walking and relieved by lying down. Other symptoms include height loss, deformity, and limited spinal mobility. Diagnosis typically involves a thorough medical history, physical examination, and imaging tests like X-rays, CT scans, and MRIs to confirm the presence and extent of the fracture.

Impact on Physical Health

- **Chronic Pain and Disability:** The most immediate impact of a VCF is pain, which can become chronic and debilitating. This pain significantly limits mobility and interferes with daily activities, often leading to disability.
- **Spinal Deformity:** Multiple VCFs can cause changes in the shape of the spine, such as a stooped posture or kyphosis. This deformity can further exacerbate pain and impair function.
- **Height Loss:** VCFs can cause a loss in body height due to the collapse of the vertebral bodies. This physical change can impact self-esteem and body image.
- **Reduced Lung Function:** Severe spinal deformity can compress the abdomen and thorax, reducing lung capacity and leading to breathing difficulties.

Impact on Mental and Emotional Health

The chronic pain and physical limitations associated with VCFs can lead to significant mental and emotional distress. Patients often experience depression, anxiety, and a sense of isolation due to their reduced ability to engage in social activities and maintain independence.

Increased Risk of Further Fractures

Once a vertebral compression fracture occurs, the risk of subsequent fractures significantly increases. Each additional fracture can lead to a worsening spiral of pain, disability, and further decline in overall health. This risk escalation can be attributed to several factors:

- **Structural Compromise:** A VCF inherently weakens the structural integrity of the spine. Once one vertebra has fractured, the biomechanical load is redistributed to adjacent vertebrae, increasing their vulnerability to fractures.
- **Decreased Mobility and Muscle Weakness:** Following a VCF, patients often experience decreased mobility and muscle weakness due to pain and fear of movement. This reduction in physical activity can lead to further weakening of the spinal muscles and bones, compounding the risk of additional fractures.
- **Impact of Chronic Pain:** Chronic pain from a VCF can lead to a sedentary lifestyle, further exacerbating osteoporosis and muscle weakness. Additionally, the use of pain medications, particularly opioids, can affect balance and coordination, increasing the risk of falls and subsequent fractures.
- **Psychological Factors:** The fear of experiencing another fracture can lead to a condition known as "fracture anxiety". This anxiety may cause patients to limit their activities, which, while intended to protect the spine, can actually weaken it further due to lack of exercise and movement.

Economic and Healthcare Burden

VCFs pose a substantial economic burden, both for the individuals affected and the healthcare system. The costs include medical treatment for the fractures, need for multiple repeat imaging studies, long-term pain management, and indirect costs related to lost productivity and the need for caregiving.

Treatment Approaches

- **Conservative Management:** This includes pain medication, bed rest, and physical therapy. While conservative management can help relieve symptoms, it does not address the underlying vertebral collapse. As well, pain medications such as opioids can have significant side effects if taken over a long period.
- **Procedural Intervention:** Procedures like kyphoplasty are minimally invasive, stabilize the fracture, alleviate pain, and can be performed in the office setting in less than an hour. These procedures involve injecting bone cement into the fractured vertebra to restore its height, stabilize the fracture, and relieve pain.

Osteoporosis Management: Treating the underlying osteoporosis is crucial to prevent further fractures. This can involve medications, dietary changes, and lifestyle modifications to strengthen bones.

Prevention and Awareness

Prevention of VCFs involves managing osteoporosis and reducing fall risks, especially in the elderly. Regular bone density tests, calcium and vitamin D supplementation, and exercises to improve strength and balance are essential preventive measures.

Conclusion

Vertebral compression fractures significantly impact an individual's health, leading to chronic pain, physical deformity, and a decline in mental well-being. These fractures also pose a significant economic burden. Effective management involves not only treating the fracture with minimally invasive kyphoplasty but also addressing the underlying causes, such as osteoporosis, to prevent future fractures. Raising awareness about VCFs, their impact, and the importance of preventive measures is crucial for improving patient outcomes and quality of life.

The *Compression Fracture Clinic*, a service of Apex Brain & Spine, was specifically created and designed for the specialized care and treatment of vertebral compression fractures. Focused on minimally-invasive kyphoplasty, the Compression Fracture Clinic is certified and licensed by the Florida Department of Health. Patients are able to come into a comfortable office setting, have their fracture treated while under moderate sedation, recover in a private room, and go home within an hour of the procedure being completed. To learn more or to schedule an appointment for you or your loved one with a compression fracture, call 239-422-2739.



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MEMORY MATTERS

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

June is Alzheimer's and Brain Awareness month. This provides us an opportunity to spread the word about Alzheimer's disease, and its impact on all of us. President Ronald Reagan initiated the observance of June being Alzheimer's and Brain Awareness in 1983. Sadly, Alzheimer's disease would impact President Reagan personally and he died with the disease in 2004.

According to the 2024 Alzheimer's Association Facts and Figures report, nearly 7 million people in the United States have Alzheimer's disease. From a risk perspective, 1/5 women and 1/10 men at age 45 have a lifetime risk of developing Alzheimer's disease. Alzheimer's disease impacts the entire family. About one in nine adults over the age of 65 have Alzheimer's disease. Of those living with Alzheimer's disease two thirds (2/3) are women. In addition, older Black adults are twice as likely as older White adults to have Alzheimer's disease or a related dementia. Older adults with a Hispanic/Latinx background are 1.5 times as likely to have Alzheimer's disease or another dementia than older White adults.

Talking about Alzheimer's disease is important. One third of people die with Alzheimer's or another dementia. There still may be a perceived stigma when one has a diagnosis of Alzheimer's disease, which is not seen with other health concerns. The Alzheimer's Association reports that nearly 580,000 people in Florida are living with Alzheimer's and there are approximately 840,000 unpaid caregivers supporting them. Being a caregiver for someone with cognitive issues is stressful, and over 66% of those caregivers have health issues. Education and awareness are critical in eliminating the stigma! Alzheimer's disease is a brain disease, a process where brain cells, called neurons are damaged and die.

Taking care of our brains needs to be a top priority. Depending on what source you use, there are several approaches you can take proactively to keep your brain healthy. From Johns Hopkins University, here are five tips you can incorporate into your routine for a healthy brain:



Get your heart pumping through exercise. Of course, be sure to clear any exercise with your health care practitioner, particularly if you are new to an exercise routine.

Stay on top of any chronic medical issues, including heart disease, hypertension, diabetes, and depression through regular visits to your health care provider.

Get your sleep! Many times, this is easier said than done. We know that sleep is important and two of the biggest sleep challenges are a result of sleep apnea and stress. If you are having issues with sleeping, talk to your health care provider.

Review your medications. Medications on their own can cause memory issues. Medication interactions can have a negative impact on memory and thinking. Discuss your medications with your health care provider or your pharmacist to evaluate if there are other options if necessary.

Stay socially engaged. Challenging our brains with new activities is helpful. When you are pursuing new activities and interests with others, you get the added benefit of social engagement.

In addition to these tips, we know that what we eat impacts all aspects of our health and wellness. The diet that shows some promising evidence is the **Mediterranean diet**, which emphasizes fruits, vegetables, whole grains, legumes, fish, and other seafood; unsaturated fats such as olive oils; and low amounts of red meat, eggs, and sweets. A variation of this, called MIND (Mediterranean-DASH Intervention for Neurodegenerative Delay) incorporates the DASH (Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension) diet, which has been shown to lower high blood pressure, a risk factor for Alzheimer's disease. Every June, the Alzheimer's Association sponsors a fundraising event called The Longest Day. On the summer solstice, people from across the world will fight the darkness of Alzheimer's disease through a fundraising activity of their choice. Choosing to "go purple" in June, shows your commitment and passion for not only finding a cure for Alzheimer's disease, but also shows your support of all those living with the disease and their care partners.

Learn more about the Longest Day here at <https://act.alz.org/site/TR?frid=17194&pg=informational&sid=24695>



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Are You Practicing Mindful Wealth?

Courtesy of Nina Azwoir, First Vice President, Investments

If the past few months have given you more time for introspection, use it to improve your financial plan in a big-picture way. Even for the privileged among us who still have our jobs, are not on the front lines with the pandemic, and have not had anyone close to us felled by COVID-19, the current crisis has brought hardships big and small.

Parents have confronted the daily struggle of trying to do their jobs while also home-schooling. Adult children have not been able to visit their elderly parents. Graduations, weddings, and even funerals have been put on hold or “Zoomified.” Yet as difficult as it has been, there have been a few silver linings too, especially for those of us lucky enough to not be touched directly by the crisis. One of the most valuable is that pressing pause on our usual routines has given many of us the opportunity to take a step back, get out of our ruts, and take stock. What do we really value? What do we really miss? What can we not wait to do when this is all over? What “necessity” of our past lives, whether the daily purchased latte or frequent meals in restaurants, are we finding that we are quite happily doing without?

Travel may be someone’s greatest longing, while others miss cooking and entertaining big groups of family and friends. Talking about how the pandemic has changed our thinking on a topic, or made us want to do more of something else, can help us feel like we are using the present situation productively. The current sense of isolation will not be for naught, because it is shaping how we intend to use our lives in the future, when we once again have a full set of choices before us.

Are You Allocating Your Time and Money with Your Intentions?

It can be argued that now is a good time to put a fresh set of eyes on your financial plan, taking a similarly expansive view of it that you might not have been able to do when you were busy and mired in your day-to-day activities. Too often, one expert opined, financial plans (and planners) move straight to the “solution” phase, without stopping to ask some basic questions about what someone is trying to achieve and what their real problems are.

“Much of the scientific research about spending and happiness points to a clear connection between spending on experiences versus things.”

What will constitute “success” for you over the next few years, not just in financial terms, but in life terms, too? Are you allocating your time and money in line with your intentions, what you find fulfilling, and what brings you joy? These questions are incredibly personal; no one else can answer them for you.

Whether you are well into retirement or early in your career, it can be easy to backburner questions like these and move straight to logistics, determining your asset allocation and minimizing taxes, for example. Those are all worthy pursuits, but if you find yourself with a bit of extra time to think a bit more broadly and introspectively about your financial plan, here are some of the key questions to ask yourself.

What Expenditures Bring You Happiness?

As most investors know, the biggest determinant of whether you achieve financial success is how much you spend versus how much you save. But as important as it is to make sure your intake exceeds your outgo, budgeting can seem like sheer drudgery. Here is a different way to think about budgeting. Simply begin to take note of how various discretionary expenditures make you feel. It can be incredibly illuminating. Much of the scientific research about spending and happiness points to a clear connection between spending on experiences versus things. Many would also argue that many of life’s most memorable experiences cost very little.

How Are You Allocating Your Precious Resources?

Investors should strive to make smart allocations of financial capital across opportunity sets, not just saving versus spending but also debt pay down versus investing in the market, how much to allocate to retirement savings versus college, and so on. These are crucial topics worthy of significant analysis and introspection. Ultimately, the right answers are a matter of math (expected return on “investment”) and personal preference.

Many of us pay much less attention to how we allocate an even more scarce resource, our time, even though that allocation will ultimately have an even greater impact on whether we feel like we have met our goals. Of course, some of our time expenditures are pre-ordained, the time we spend working or caring for children, for example. Even within those allocations it seems worthwhile to be more mindful, to help ensure that your allocation of time in a given day, week, or year aligns with your goals and vision for that period. An audit of how you are allocating your time currently is a good starting point. Technology tools can help you determine how much time you waste (uh, spend) on social media and other activities that could be detracting from your productivity and happiness.

What Is Your Definition of “Enough”?

Many of us are operating with an incredibly vague notion of how much we really need to save in order to achieve our financial goals and find security. Even financial planners might rely on rules of thumb when setting your retirement savings target. For example, they might assume that you will need 80% of your working income in retirement and extrapolate the rest of your plan from there.

As humans, we often have a natural tendency to reach for more more more, regardless of whether that “more” is actually bringing more happiness and security. Trying to keep up with the people around us, in terms of possessions and outward signs of success, can get exhausting and may not get us any closer to our life’s goals. That is why, in this period of limited activity, spending, and social contact, it is worthwhile to think through your own definition of enough, both now and for the future.

What Do You Want Your Legacy to Be?

When taking a strictly financial and estate-planning perspective, leaving a “legacy” is one of those topics that can seem overly narrow. It is about leaving assets behind for children, grandchildren, and other loved ones, as well as charity if we so choose. It is about making sure we do not burden the people we care about. Those are crucial considerations and they are why everyone needs an estate plan that includes wills, powers of attorney, and beneficiary designations, among other key documents.

While you are at it, why not think big picture about your legacy, too? What do you hope people will say about you after you are gone? What life philosophy or pieces of wisdom do you hope that your loved ones will always associate with you? If you find yourself with a bit of extra time for introspection, write down a few ideas along these lines. And no, you are not too young to start thinking about this. You can find templates for creating a “personal legacy” online, but some good advice is not to overthink it. Balance more serious ideas with more lighthearted ones. We all have credos that we live by; make sure your loved ones know yours.

*Nina Azwoir, First Vice President of Investments,
Wintrust Wealth Management.*

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GlycoCheck!

Revolutionizing Vascular Health Assessment

By Lisa H. Sprague MSS, PTA, LMT



Met the GlycoCheck! For many years, the medical field has only analyzed a portion of the vascular system – the veins, arteries, and heart. However, those comprise only 1% of the surface area of all the vessels in your body, with the microvascular system making up the other 99%.

Until recently, those microvessels weren't given much attention in the medical field. Due to their tiny size, they couldn't be measured, couldn't be operated on, and couldn't be examined and assessed. There has been no instrumentation small enough to evaluate and mitigate any issue until now!

The GlycoCheck is an FDA-registered, Class 1 medical device that allows the function of the microvascular system to be measured and analyzed, monitoring the status of the endothelial glycocalyx lining inside the microvessels. The device has been heavily researched around the globe, and there is no other device available – it is a truly one-of-a-kind, life-changing system. Once only used in hospitals and universities, GlycoCheck is now available for practitioners!

What Is the Glycocalyx?

Have you ever heard of the glycocalyx? It comes as no surprise if your answer is “sort of” – or even a resounding “no.” But it's critical to understand what it is, since it happens to be the most important part of our cardiovascular system and the literal foundation of our overall health. You may look and even feel healthy on the outside, but inside your microvascular system, a completely different situation could be developing.

Put simply, the glycocalyx is the Teflon-like lining of all our blood vessels. It is made up of a micro-thin gel and is the largest organ in the body that protects the inside walls of our entire circulatory system. Our blood vessels are not just hollow tubes that our blood flows through – there's so much more going on inside.

The integrity of the glycocalyx is extremely important. We have over 60,000 miles of microvessels that comprise 99% of our vascular system. At the “sweet spot” of nutrient-, oxygen-, and waste-product exchange to and from our tissues and organs lies the tiniest microvessels, just 4–6 microns thick. If the

glycocalyx is compromised and the single-cell thick vessel wall is exposed, it leaves the vessel vulnerable to damage. A compromised/damaged glycocalyx can become leaky and tissues and organs can begin to starve due to lack of nutrients and oxygen, leading to health decline.

Early warning signs of declining health due to a damaged glycocalyx are fatigue, cold hands and feet, thinning hair, memory loss, blood sugar imbalances, blood pressure inconsistencies, lack of focus, and slow wound healing. Scientific research tells us that endothelial glycocalyx dysfunction can progress to several diseases and conditions.

The Role and Health of the Glycocalyx: Many researchers consider the endothelial glycocalyx as a first line of defense against vascular diseases. You cannot have healthy vascular walls without a healthy glycocalyx. Highlights of the importance of your glycocalyx are: 1. Maximizes delivery of nutrients and oxygen to your tissues and organs 2. Regulates healthy blood flow 3. Protects your entire vascular system from damage.

Other functions of the glycocalyx include the regulation of vascular permeability, fluid balance, and the synthesis of nitric oxide in response to the blood flow. The surface of the glycocalyx helps maintain endothelial function.

How Does GlycoCheck Work?

A video microscope camera is placed under the tongue showing live movement of red blood cells as they travel through your microvessels. In a matter of minutes, GlycoCheck measures and analyzes 100,000 vessels, with 1,000 measurements calculated per vessel. It is a non-invasive test that takes approximately 10-20 minutes that produces a Microvascular Health Score that reveals the health of the microvessels by measuring several key parameters of the microvascular system:

- Capillary Density
- Capillary Blood Volume Recruitment Capacity
- Capillary Blood Volume Dynamic
- Perfused Boundary Region Flow Corrected
- Microvascular Health Score (MVHS):

Your Microvascular Health Score is the overall score based on capillary density, recruitment capacity, and glycocalyx health. A higher score means better microvascular health.

A healthy microvascular system is essential for maximizing your health potential. Clearly, the health of the epithelial glycocalyx has a significant impact on all aspects of our overall health. A plan to maintain or improve your health – regardless of your age – should involve optimizing the function of your endothelial glycocalyx.

Think of all the nutritious food and beneficial supplements you take to bolster your health. Now you can find out how well you are actually delivering those nutrients. Lastly have you ever wondered why someone with no cardiovascular history has a heart attack or even dies of a massive heart attack? I wonder about the health of their microvascular system. Knowledge is power and now we can know and be proactive.

I am proud to be one of the few testing sites in the United States to offer you GlycoCheck. Testing is provided in my office or on-site for HealthCare professionals. Discover the most comprehensive analysis of your microvascular system and how to improve your glycocalyx and optimize blood flow for a healthier you!

Lisa H. Sprague MSS, PTA, LMT

Lisa H. Sprague MSS, PTA, LMT is a licensed healthcare practitioner with over 35 years of experience and owner of MV Solutions and Science & Art of Healing. She holds AS, BS, and MSS degrees and is currently pursuing her PhD. Her extensive experience, skill and training have allowed her to become a unique specialist to benefit her clients.

She has been in private practice in Naples, FL since 1999 and became a certified GlycoCheck tester and trainer in 2022. She specializes in GlycoCheck microvascular testing and therapies that optimize healing from the cellular level. Lisa utilizes new approaches to optimize your health and well-being from the cellular level. Powering your potential from the cellular level and frequency based therapies are core to her private practices.

You can connect with Lisa at 239-821-1223 or Lisa@MVsolutions.pro. Please go to www.microvasculartesting.com & www.ScienceandArtofHealing.com for more information.



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A NEW LAB IN TOWN: Take Control of Your Health with Any Lab Test Now

Residents of Naples, Florida now have a convenient new option for getting affordable lab tests right in their neighborhood. **Any Lab Test Now** has opened a new location on Immokalee Road, bringing their extensive selection of professional lab tests to the Naples area.

Any Lab Test Now allows individuals to order their own lab tests without requiring a doctor's order. This puts patients in control of their own health monitoring and screening. The retail lab testing model provides an easy and affordable way to get lab work done for wellness, prevention, treatment, and management of existing conditions.

"We're excited to open our doors in Naples and provide this level of access to lab testing services," said the local owner. "Our goal is to empower people to be proactive about their health by making it simple and affordable to get the lab tests they need."

At Any Lab Test Now, patients can get tested for a wide range of health concerns from routine wellness panels to highly specialized biomarker tests. Some of the most popular tests offered include:

- **Annual Check-Up Panel:** A comprehensive array of tests that screen for a variety of potential health issues like diabetes, liver and kidney problems, anemia and more.

- **Paternity Informational (Non-Legal):** For those needing to determine biological relationships through DNA testing for personal knowledge.
- **STD Panel, Comprehensive:** Screens for all major sexually transmitted infections like HIV, syphilis, hepatitis B & C, herpes, chlamydia and more.
- **Cholesterol (Lipid) Panel:** Checks HDL, LDL, triglycerides and total cholesterol levels to assess heart disease risk.
- **5 Panel Rapid Drug Screen (Urine):** Detects recent use of marijuana, cocaine, amphetamines, opiates and PCP.
- **Weight Management Hormone Test Panel:** Looks at levels of hormones like cortisol, thyroid, testosterone and more that can affect weight.
- **Hemoglobin A1C:** Used to monitor average blood sugar levels over 2-3 months for diabetes management.
- **Prostate Specific Antigen (PSA):** Screens for prostate cancer and other prostate disorders in men.
- **Basic Thyroid Panel:** Checks TSH, T4 and T3 levels to identify thyroid disorders.
- **Testosterone, Free & Total:** Measures free and total testosterone levels in men and women.



The new Any Lab Test Now Naples is staffed by certified technicians who can properly collect samples for blood tests, urine tests, saliva tests, hair tests and more. They are knowledgeable about all the tests offered and can help customers select the right screening for their needs. Test results are typically available within 24-48 hours.

With the opening of the Naples location, residents of Collier County now have convenient access to professional lab testing services. Stop by Any Lab Test Now on Immokalee Road and take control of your health today.

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BREAKING THE SILENCE: Addressing Men's Mental Health

By Richard J. Capiola, MD

As we celebrate Men's Health Month this June, it's imperative to shine a light on an often-overlooked aspect of a man's well-being: mental health. While strides have been made in recent years to destigmatize mental health challenges, there remains a significant gap when it comes to addressing the unique needs of men in this area. From societal expectations of masculinity to ingrained notions of strength, many men find it difficult to unwrap their mental health struggles. Let's explore the pressing issues surrounding men's mental health, different approaches to support, and the importance of breaking down barriers to care.

The Stigma Surrounding Men's Mental Health

One of the most significant barriers to men seeking help for mental health issues is the stigma attached to vulnerability and emotional expression. Society often reinforces the idea that men should be stoic, strong, and unyielding in the face of adversity. As a result, many men feel pressure to suppress their emotions and tough it out alone, leading to underreporting of mental health issues and reluctance to seek treatment.

According to the National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH), men are less likely than women to seek mental health treatment despite experiencing similar rates of mental illness. Men are more likely to die by suicide, with the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention reporting that men die by suicide at a rate nearly four times higher than that of women. These statistics underscore the urgent need to address the stigma surrounding men's mental health and encourage open dialogue about emotional well-being.

Approaches to Supporting Men's Mental Health

Breaking through the barriers of masculinity and strength requires a multifaceted approach that acknowledges and respects men's unique needs. Mental health professionals must create safe spaces where men feel comfortable discussing their emotions without fear of judgment or ridicule. This may involve employing different therapeutic modalities, such as cognitive-behavioral therapy (CBT) or mindfulness-based techniques, tailored to resonate with men's experiences and communication styles.

Additionally, outreach efforts targeting men should aim to challenge traditional gender norms and promote positive masculinity. By celebrating vulnerability as a sign of courage rather than weakness, we can empower men to prioritize their mental health and seek help when needed. Peer support groups and online forums can also provide invaluable opportunities for men to connect with others facing similar challenges and share their stories in a supportive environment.

Depression and Anxiety in Men: Recognizing the Signs

Depression and anxiety are among the most common mental health disorders affecting men, yet they often go unrecognized and untreated. According to the Anxiety and Depression Association of America (ADAA), men are less likely than women to be diagnosed with depression, despite experiencing comparable symptoms. This discrepancy may be attributed to societal expectations that discourage men from acknowledging sadness or vulnerability.

Recognizing the signs of depression and anxiety in men is crucial for early intervention and treatment. Symptoms may manifest differently in men compared to women, with men more likely to report irritability, anger, and physical symptoms such as headaches or digestive issues. Additionally, men may engage in risky behaviors or substance abuse as a coping mechanism for underlying mental health issues.

Moving Forward: Breaking Down Barriers, Building Resilience

As we observe Men's Health Month this June, let us recommit ourselves to breaking down the barriers preventing men from seeking mental health help. By challenging outdated notions of masculinity and strength, fostering open dialogue, and providing tailored support, we can create a culture of acceptance and resilience where every man feels empowered to prioritize his mental well-being.

Sources:

- National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH)
- American Foundation for Suicide Prevention
- Anxiety and Depression Association of America (ADAA)

Remember, seeking help is a sign of strength, not weakness. If you or someone you know is struggling with mental health issues, don't hesitate to reach out to a qualified mental health professional for support and guidance.

If you or someone you love is exhibiting signs of a mood disorder or other mental health issues, there is help in Southwest Florida. Dr. Richard Capiola, MD, is a board-certified psychiatrist with specialty certifications in addiction and forensic psychiatry and over 31 years of experience in the medical field. He graduated from Tulane University School of Medicine in 1990. Be sure to call Dr. Capiola ahead of time to book an appointment.

RICHARD J. CAPIOLA, MD

With triple board certification in general psychiatry, addiction psychiatry and forensic psychiatry, Dr. Richard J. Capiola has been in practice for 27 years. During his training at Tulane Medical School and UCLA, Dr. Capiola developed a keen interest in the treatment of depression and anxiety overlapping with drug and alcohol abuse. This focus led to his role as chief medical officer for Oglethorpe Inc., which specializes in the treatment of mental health and addiction. He has been instrumental in the clinical development and oversight of 12 specialty treatment centers in five states.

Dr. Capiola's specialties include adult and adolescent psychiatry, treatment of anxiety, depression, and substance use problems, and forensic psychiatry, where he evaluates patients with legal issues related to mental health.

Dr. Capiola is the chief of psychiatry for Physicians Regional Medical Center and was the medical director for the Wilough at Naples for many years. He's served 10 years with The Joint Commission, which evaluates hospitals nationwide for quality of care and safety.

Dr. Capiola was the featured neuropsychiatrist in the recent book "Don't Give Up On Me" with Darryl Strawberry. His confidential private practice focuses on using each individual's inherent strengths to achieve the goal of living a healthy, well-balanced life.

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EMPOWERING WOMEN:

How GAINSWave® For Her Is Revolutionizing Sexual Health

By Dr. Viviana Cuberos

When women think of healthcare, the main focus often revolves around physical wellness, including preventive care, disease management, and overall bodily health. Amidst this broad spectrum of healthcare concerns, female sexual health frequently finds itself overlooked.

Discussions about female sexual health often revolve around issues such as reproductive health, contraception, and sexually transmitted infections, while broader aspects of sexual satisfaction, desire, and pleasure may be sidelined or dismissed. However, with the advent of groundbreaking solutions like GAINSWave® for Her, women now have a powerful tool at their disposal to reclaim control over their sexual wellness and enhance their overall quality of life.

Female sexual health is not just about physical pleasure; it's about overall well-being and empowerment. A fulfilling sex life can positively impact mental health, self-esteem, and intimate relationships. Unfortunately, many women experience challenges that hinder their sexual satisfaction, including decreased libido, difficulty achieving orgasm, vaginal dryness, and urinary incontinence. Women's sexual health can be affected by a multitude of factors, spanning from biological changes to psychological and emotional influences. Hormonal fluctuations, such as those experienced during puberty, pregnancy, or menopause, can significantly impact libido, vaginal lubrication, and overall sexual

function. Additionally, the physical strain of childbirth can lead to pelvic floor issues, vaginal laxity, and urinary incontinence, further complicating sexual satisfaction.

Furthermore, psychological factors play a significant role in female sexual health. Stress, anxiety, depression, body image issues, past trauma, and relationship problems can all contribute to decreased libido, difficulty achieving orgasm, and overall dissatisfaction with one's sex life. The societal stigma surrounding female sexuality and the lack of open discussion about sexual health concerns can exacerbate feelings of embarrassment or shame, preventing women from seeking the help and support they need.

Traditionally, treatments for female sexual dysfunction have often involved medications, injections, or invasive procedures, each with its own set of limitations and potential side effects. However, GAINSWave® for Her offers a revolutionary alternative that is safe, non-invasive, and highly effective.

Unlike drugs or injections that may only provide temporary relief or come with unwanted side effects, GAINSWave® for Her addresses the root cause of sexual dysfunction by enhancing blood flow to the intimate area. By utilizing low-intensity sound waves, this innovative procedure stimulates the growth of healthier vaginal tissue, restores sensation, and improves natural lubrication without the need for medication or invasive interventions.

GAINSWave® for Her addresses the root causes of diminished sexual satisfaction and function in women by utilizing a non-invasive procedure performed in a provider's office. This therapy employs pulse waves to stimulate the repair of blood vessels, promoting increased blood flow to the intimate area.

By addressing issues such as decreased vascularization and micro-plaque accumulation within the blood vessels, GAINSWave® for Her enhances sensitivity lubrication, tightens, strengthens, and improves the physical appearance of the genital region. With no downtime, drugs, or lasers involved, this therapy offers long-lasting results, ultimately boosting sexual satisfaction and function in women. A typical session lasts no more than 30 minutes, with no downtime afterward, allowing individuals to resume their daily activities immediately. Results from GAINSWave® for Her may vary, with some women noticing improvements after just a few sessions, though the full effects may take a few weeks to become apparent.

GAINSWave® for Her is not just a treatment; it's a game-changer for women's sexual health. By providing a safe, effective, and long-lasting solution, it empowers women to take control of their sexual wellness and live life to the fullest. It's time to break the silence, shatter the stigma, and embrace a future where every woman can experience the joy and fulfillment of a satisfying sex life.



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FROM HOSPITAL HEALTHCARE LIMBO TO HOME

By Guest Author - Melissa Weigle

I spend a lot of time in the hospital. No, I am not fighting a rare disease or having some “work done.” In my line of work, it is well known that hospitals are full of people who need help figuring out the next right step. In my role as Advisor, Senior Living and Care with Senior Care Authority, I know a lot about helping people in difficult situations. It was during one of those hospital visits in late 2023 that I met David.

I was walking the halls with my social worker colleague when I noticed a man aimlessly wandering the hall behind a group of hospital residents. He was dressed in clothes that screamed, “I am not a medical professional!” but the group of eager physicians seemed content with their tagalong. I asked Mary about what I was seeing, and she said, “Oh, that’s just David.”

She went on to tell me that David was in what they refer to as “health care limbo.” It is more common than I knew. A variety of factors lead to patients being left in a hospital with no discharge options including language barriers, mental illness, or simply being abandoned. In David’s case, he had new medical needs that his caregiver could no longer handle and his financial resources were limited. Because a hospital cannot discharge a patient without a safe place to go, David spent more than 9 months occupying a hospital bed long after being medically needed while a team of social workers and discharge planners worked for a solution.

Patients in health care limbo cost hospital systems upwards of \$2,600 per day. In David’s case, his 325 day stay came with a nearly \$850,000 price tag. Not to mention the toll it took on his well-being, spending his days in a clinical setting reserved for the sickest individuals. Mary and I decided to team up and find David a better alternative.

Before we could do anything to assist David, he first needed a legal representative, someone to assist with making health care decisions in his best interest. A guardian is a surrogate decision maker appointed by the court for these situations. While guardians are largely known for helping minors, adult guardianship is a growing need, especially in Florida.



When patients are in healthcare limbo many nursing facilities and assisted living communities are apprehensive about admitting them into their community. These patients can be labeled as difficult or raise red flags, at no fault of their own. Just making phone calls and inquiring about openings was not enough in David’s case. The team needed to build a story of need so an assisted living community would consider taking a second look.

And I found just that community nestled in North Collier County. A new team of Executive Director and Sales Manager were open to meeting David to see how they could help. On their first visit, David was in the 4th floor hospital lobby, watching the news and paging through the newspaper. He could have easily passed as a nervous family member awaiting news of his first grandchild. After spending time with David they saw he needed out of the hospital and into a room of his own with comfy furnishings, home cooked meals, and daily activities to stimulate his brain and body. They were on board!

The thumbs up from the community was a big hurdle, but bigger still, we had to figure out how to pay for it. The process of applying for Medicaid is lengthy. If we waited for approval, David could spend another three to six months institutionalized.

The team met and the plan was set....we would ask the hospital system to cover the cost of his care until Medicaid services could be approved.

Hospital systems have what is known as a benevolent care program, with a purpose of supplementing the expenses of medical care, which could include writing off a hospital bills, finding accommodations for a mother who needs a place to stay while her newborn is receiving life saving care, funeral and burial arrangements, and in our case, paying for assisted living community until Medicaid could be finalized.

The hospital system approved our proposal and after three full seasons on the intermediate care floor, David attended his going away party complete with balloons, noise makers and his favorite meal of roast beef and mashed potatoes, made special by the hospital dining services. His doctors, therapists, nurses, discharge planners, custodians, and hospital administrators showed up to see him off. We even found a transport company willing to donate their services. And his first full day at his new assisted living home was marked with eggs to order, cuddles with baby goats, and happy hour with dueling pianos. What a stark change from the clinical halls of the hospital to the homey living room of the assisted living community.

I love what I do, but never more than when I was able to build a team of like minded professionals with one goal: to find David a place to live that was warm, comfortable, and safe.



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NAVIGATING LIFE WITH VITILIGO TIPS, TREATMENTS, AND SUN PROTECTION

By Dr. Anita Grassi

Vitiligo is a medical condition that leads to loss of pigmentation in the skin creating white spots. It occurs in about 1% of the population and affects both men and women equally. The onset of vitiligo can occur at any age but half the time it develops in patients younger than 20 years old. All skin types are susceptible, but the discoloration is more visible and hence more disfiguring in people of color.

The depigmented patches of vitiligo commonly involve the face, hands and feet and often encircle the eyes, nose, and mouth. Vitiligo frequently develops in skin folds such as the armpits and groin as well as sites of trauma or friction such as elbows and knees, a response called the Koebner phenomenon. It can even occur in areas of sunburn. It is usually bilateral and symmetric, affecting both sides of the body, but can be unilateral and localized. White hair may develop on the scalp, brows, and eyelashes. Loss of pigmentation can become more widespread, but the progression is slow over months to years.

Vitiligo is considered an autoimmune condition in which the body's own T-cells destroy the pigment cells or melanocytes in the epidermis. It is associated with other autoimmune disorders including thyroid disease, pernicious anemia, Addison's disease, and alopecia areata. Vitiligo needs to be distinguished from other skin conditions that can likewise lighten skin. A dermatologist can generally make the diagnosis by clinical features alone or with the aid of a Wood's

lamp examination to enhance the contrast in color. A skin biopsy may be necessary to demonstrate the absence of melanocytes in the affected areas.

Treatment of vitiligo is based on a two-tiered approach: first suppress the attack on the melanocytes and then stimulate re-pigmentation. Vitiligo can be stubborn requiring months to years of treatment and complete cure may not be possible. However, much research is ongoing and new medications are on the horizon. Current treatments include topical cortisone creams and calcineurin inhibitors (tacrolimus, pimecrolimus) to decrease inflammation and light-box or phototherapy to stimulate pigmentation. In 2022 the FDA approved a topical JAK inhibitor (ruxolitinib) which blocks the overactive immune response, resulting in significant improvement of lesions especially on the face. Other oral JAK inhibitors are currently under investigation.

If you suffer from vitiligo, remember the following guidelines:

- **Always practice good sun protection.** The white patches sunburn very easily because they have lost melanin, the natural pigment that protects the skin from harmful UV rays. Apply sunscreen with SPF 30 or higher, wear hats, protective clothing and avoid sun exposure during peak hours.
- **Likewise avoid tanning beds or sun lamps.** This is especially true if you have a lighter complexion. Not only do you risk a sunburn, but

tanning increases the contrast between your natural skin tones and the white patches, making them more obvious.

- **Treat your skin gently to prevent triggering new lesions.** Vitiligo can develop after injury to the skin including abrasions, sunburns, tattoos, chemical peels, and some laser procedures.
- **Consider camouflage for discoloration.** Makeup may be useful for facial lesions. Self-action tanners and skin dyes that contain dihydroxyacetone will temporarily darken the skin and help blend pigmentation in larger areas.

Vitiligo is more than simply a cosmetic concern. Consult your dermatologist to confirm the diagnosis and develop a treatment plan that works best for you.

DR. ANITA GRASSI

Board Certified Dermatologist



Dr. Anita Grassi is a board-certified dermatologist who joins Skin Wellness Physicians after a long career in both academic and private practice in the Boston area. She spent 30 years in practice at the Dermatology

Laser and Cosmetic Center at xpert for Massachusetts General Hospital in Boston, MA, where she gained experience in cutting-edge laser treatments of skin disorders. She also served on the faculty of Harvard Medical School as an assistant professor and was instrumental in training many residents and fellows in medical dermatology, laser, and cosmetic procedures. Furthermore, she co-founded a private practice in Watertown, MA, bringing the same level of skillful dermatologic care into the community setting.

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HOME HEALTH SAFETY

By Julie S. Hurst-Nicoll, MBA, CMI, CMR - President, American Mold Experts

The Importance of Humidity and Mold Checks

Maintaining a healthy home environment is crucial for overall well-being, particularly for vulnerable populations such as young children, those with other health issues and the elderly. Among the many aspects of home health safety, two often overlooked but significant factors are humidity control and mold prevention. These elements are intricately linked, as excessive humidity creates a conducive environment for mold growth, which can have detrimental health effects.

The Role of Humidity in Home Health

Humidity refers to the amount of moisture in the air. While some humidity is necessary for comfort and health; excessive or insufficient levels can lead to problems. The ideal indoor humidity level is generally between 30% and 50%.

The Dangers of Mold

Mold is a type of fungus that thrives in moist or humid environments. It reproduces through tiny spores that are not visible to the naked eye and can easily become airborne. In addition mold produces a byproduct in addition to spores called mycotoxins. A poison which causes illness. Once inhaled, these spores and mycotoxins can cause a range of health problems. The health risks associated with mold include:

- 1. Respiratory Issues:** Mold spores can trigger asthma attacks and allergic reactions, including sneezing, coughing, and throat irritation.
- 2. Infections:** People with weakened immune systems are at higher risk of developing fungal infections from mold exposure.
- 3. Toxic Effects:** Certain types of mold, such as *Stachybotrys chartarum* (black mold), produce mycotoxins, which can cause more severe health issues like chronic fatigue, headaches, and neurological problems.

Why the Elderly Are More Susceptible

The elderly are particularly vulnerable to the health effects of mold for several reasons:

- 1. Weakened Immune Systems:** Aging naturally weakens the immune system, making it harder for the body to fight off infections and allergens.



- 2. Existing Health Conditions:** Many elderly individuals have pre-existing health conditions such as asthma, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), or cardiovascular diseases, which can be exacerbated by mold exposure.

- 3. Reduced Mobility:** Limited mobility can make it difficult for the elderly to maintain a clean environment or to notice and address areas of excessive moisture or mold growth.

Steps for Controlling Humidity and Preventing Mold

Effective humidity control and mold prevention require a proactive approach. Here are some practical steps to help maintain a healthy home environment:

- 1. Use a Hygrometer:** Regularly monitor indoor humidity levels with a hygrometer/humidity meter. Since rooms can vary based on air flow it's better to place several throughout the home. Place them where you are likely to view to keep monitoring. Aim to keep humidity between 30% and 50%. Seeing a jump can indicate a new water intrusion or malfunction in your HVAC.
- 2. Ventilation:** Ensure proper ventilation in high-moisture areas such as bathrooms, kitchens, and basements. Use exhaust fans (may have to leave on for longer than you plan on being there, leave the doors open to reduce moisture levels. Tip: Check how good your exhaust fan is working by placing a single piece of toilet paper by it to see if it is strong enough to hold at the fan. If not then replace with a stronger motor unit.

- 3. Dehumidifiers and Air Conditioners:** Use dehumidifiers in damp areas and air conditioners during humid months to maintain optimal humidity levels especially if you notice your humidity is not staying below 50%.

- 4. Fix Leaks Promptly:** Repair any leaks in roofs, walls, or plumbing to prevent moisture buildup. You typically have 24-48 prior to mold forming even if you cannot see. Remember mold is invisible to the eye until which time it has massively grown to a visual colony. Regularly check for signs of water damage underneath sinks, around tubs/showers, dishwashers and washers.

- 5. Use Mold-Resistant Products:** In areas prone to dampness, use mold-resistant drywall, paint, and insulation materials.

- 6. Regular Cleaning:** Clean and dry any damp or wet materials within 24-48 hours to prevent mold growth. Use mold-killing products for cleaning.

- 7. Professional Inspections:** Consider having a professional conduct regular inspections for mold and humidity levels, especially if you notice persistent issues.

Conclusion

Maintaining proper humidity levels and preventing mold growth are critical components of home health safety. These measures are particularly important for protecting the health of the elderly, who are more susceptible to the harmful effects of mold. By monitoring humidity, ensuring proper ventilation, promptly addressing leaks, and using mold-resistant materials, homeowners can create a safer and healthier living environment. Regular mold and humidity checks are not just preventive steps; they are essential actions that contribute to the overall well-being and comfort of all household members.



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The Matterhorn Method: A Seamless Integration Between Pain Relief and Performance

By Angela Puchalla, MS, ATC, LAT

The leading company in Florida for identifying and correcting neurological compensation is Naples-based Matterhorn Fit. Through their proprietary process, called the Matterhorn Method, they have been able to successfully treat thousands of active seniors, over 70 professional athletes and 11 Olympians, in as little as two weeks. Through their comprehensive initial evaluation, they will identify exactly where the root cause of your problem is coming from, create a plan to fix it quickly, and prevent it from returning.

“Many of our clients have lost hope. They have tried traditional treatment methods and still live with pain. When you address pain, injury, and movement dysfunction from a neurological level, the results are immediate and our clients become hopeful again,” says Matterhorn Fit CEO Ryan Vesce.

Ryan Vesce was on the verge of retirement from his professional hockey career after major back and hip surgery, but mentally he was not ready. Ryan teamed up with professional athlete strength coach, Sean Sullivan, to find a solution to his chronic pain. The team spent the next five years compiling various techniques they had learned in professional sports into a systematic process and applied it to Ryan’s rehabilitation. The results were immediate and it enabled Ryan to keep playing for an additional 5 years pain free. Ryan and Sean founded Matterhorn Fit in 2018 to bring their newly developed process, called the Matterhorn Method, to everyday people who struggle with pain.



“When I retired in 2018, we had to tell the world what we had discovered,” says Vesce. “So we started testing our new process on pro athletes, and it worked. We started testing on active seniors in the area (60-80 yr olds) and it worked. In fact, the Matterhorn Method worked so well that our clients told all of their family and friends about it. That’s when we knew we had something really special. Within 2 weeks, virtually all of our patients were seeing a major reduction of pain and that has held true for thousands of our clients through today. The process worked fast. The culture was inspiring, and we began to take off.”

WHY IT WORKS

The reason why Matterhorn Fit has been able to consistently relieve pain in two weeks is credited to their proprietary process called the Matterhorn Method. The Matterhorn Method identifies the root cause of the issue from a neurological level and allows for muscles that were inactive to support the body again which eliminates the pain response from the brain.

The first step in Matterhorn Fit’s process is a comprehensive initial evaluation. Through their evaluation, they will be able to identify any neurological compensation in the client’s system. If they do find compensations, there is a very high probability that they can improve the client’s pain in two weeks.

“Through our initial evaluation we will be able to determine IF we can help you. If we do find something that we can fix, then we will start you with 6 sessions over a two week period to resolve your symptoms,” says Vesce. “Over 94% of our clients have reported a major reduction of pain within two weeks. After the symptoms are resolved, we build a personalized movement plan to prevent the problem from returning.”

To schedule an initial evaluation visit
matterhornfit.com or call the office at
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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?



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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.

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UNLOCKING MEN'S VITALITY: Understanding Testosterone Replacement Therapy and Enclomiphene

By Jerry and Lisa Meloche, Pharm.D., Owners, Compounding Pharmacists

Men's health and testicular health, in particular, are often overlooked and under-discussed. June marks Men's Health Month and a pivotal moment to shed light on the importance of testosterone replacement therapy (TRT) and the emerging role of enclomiphene. As we explore hormonal balance for men, Creative Scripts Pharmacy highlights the benefits and nuances of these treatments, guided by medical evidence and clinical insights.

Understanding Testosterone Replacement Therapy (TRT)
Testosterone, often dubbed the "male hormone," plays a multifaceted role in men's health, influencing vitality, muscle mass, bone density, libido, and mood. However, testosterone levels naturally decline with age, contributing to a myriad of symptoms such as fatigue, decreased libido, erectile dysfunction, and diminished cognitive function.¹

TRT serves as a cornerstone in managing hypogonadism (testicular shrinkage), a condition characterized by low testosterone levels. According to recent studies, approximately 38% of men aged 45 and older experience testosterone deficiency.² Factors such as aging, obesity, chronic illness, and certain medications can precipitate hypogonadism.³

The benefits of TRT extend beyond symptom alleviation. Research indicates that TRT may enhance muscle mass, bone density, cognitive function, and overall quality of life in hypogonadal men.⁴ Moreover, TRT has shown promise in mitigating the risk of cardiovascular disease and metabolic syndrome.⁵

Introducing Enclomiphene: A Holistic Approach
Enclomiphene, an estrogen receptor modulator, emerges as a promising adjunct to TRT, particularly in cases of secondary hypogonadism. Secondary hypogonadism arises from dysfunction in the hypothalamic-pituitary-gonadal axis, leading to inadequate testosterone production despite normal gonadal function.⁶

Enclomiphene stimulates the release of gonadotropins, namely luteinizing hormone (LH) and follicle-stimulating hormone (FSH), thereby enhancing endogenous testosterone production.⁷ This mechanism offers a more physiological approach to restoring testosterone levels, circumventing the potential drawbacks of exogenous testosterone administration, such as testicular atrophy and infertility.⁸

Indications for Enclomiphene

Enclomiphene presents a viable option for men seeking fertility preservation or those desiring a more natural testosterone restoration process. Individuals with primary hypogonadism, characterized by testicular dysfunction, may benefit from enclomiphene therapy to augment endogenous testosterone secretion.⁹

Enclomiphene can optimize therapeutic outcomes, minimize adverse effects, and preserve fertility potential when used in conjunction with TRT, and is only available from compounding pharmacies. This synergy underscores the importance of personalized medicine and tailored treatment regimens offered at Creative Scripts Compounding Pharmacy.

The journey to empower men with vitality and well-being, integrating TRT and enclomiphene heralds a new era in men's health management. Through evidence-based practices and innovative solutions, Creative Scripts Compounding Pharmacy remains steadfast in its commitment to enhancing the lives of men through bespoke pharmaceutical interventions.

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KEEP YOUR PET SAFE FROM THE CANE TOAD

A species of warty, toxic toads invades Florida backyards every year as it multiplies across the southern part of the state. When you see heavy rains, be on the lookout for the Cane Toad. The cane toad, also known as the bufo toad, is a poisonous amphibian that, when provoked, can produce a milky white toxin on its back, a substance that is particularly dangerous to house pets.

The toxin could leave a dog or cat in serious distress or dead in as little as 15 minutes, according to the Florida Fish and Wildlife Commission. The creatures breed after periods of rainy weather, according to Toad Busters, a south Florida company specializing in the removal of the dangerous toads. The rainy season lasts through the summer.

The state's wildlife commission encourages homeowners to kill Cane Toads whenever possible. The white toxin is visible near the sacs on the left side of the toad. What do they look like? Honestly, cane toads are gross. They're tan to reddish-brown, dark brown or gray, and their backs are marked with dark spots, according to the University of Florida. They have warty skin. Cane toads have large, triangular parotoid glands on their shoulders that secrete a milky toxin. (Native toads' parotoid glands are oval.) Unlike native southern toads, cane toads do not have ridges or "crests" on top of the head.

Even cane toad tadpoles are toxic. You can spot a cane toad by its size and its triangular glands. Cane toads usually are 4-6 inches long, sometimes growing to 9½ inches. With very few exceptions, any toad in Florida that is larger than 4 inches is not native and almost certainly is an invasive cane toad,

according to the University of Florida. A cane toad's favorite place is the ground. They don't like to climb.



Cane toads are native to South and Central America and were introduced into Palm Beach County to control pests in sugar cane fields, according to the University of Florida. They can be found in central and south Florida and in an isolated population along the Florida Panhandle. They live in urbanized habitats and agricultural lands but also in some natural areas, including floodplain and mangrove swamps. The cane toad (Bufo marinus) can hurt or kill pets.

Cane toads prey on anything they can get into their mouths, according to the University of Florida, but they normally feed on beetles, centipedes, crabs, millipedes, roaches, scorpions, spiders and other invertebrates. They also have been known to eat frogs, snakes, small reptiles, small birds and small mammals.

If a pet bites, licks or even sniffs a cane toad, it could become sick and, if not treated, it could die. Symptoms of poisoning in pets include excessive drooling and extremely red gums, headshaking, crying, loss of coordination and sometimes convulsions. If a dog bites or encounters a cane toad, use a damp cloth or towel and wipe the inside of the dog's mouth to make sure no toxins were swallowed. Do not flush the dog's mouth with a hose. It could send toxins down the animal's throat.

Dogs should be taken to a veterinarian as soon as possible to treat symptoms such as seizures, heart problems such as arrhythmia and body temperatures that skyrocket, then plunge. Dog droppings should be picked up; cane toads are attracted to proteins in the droppings.

There is a humane way to get rid of cane toads. The University of Florida recommends euthanizing them by rubbing or spraying 20% benzocaine toothache gel or sunburn spray (not 5% lidocaine) on the toad. In a few minutes, it will become unconscious. Put the toad in a sealed plastic bag in the freezer for 24-48 hours to ensure it is humanely euthanized.

The best trapping method is a net and a deep bucket with steep sides, according to the University of Florida. Make sure to put a board or lid on top of the bucket. The Florida wildlife commission recommends wearing latex, rubber, or nitrile gloves to safely handle the toads.

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CRYSTAL PERSONALIZATION AT HEALING CRYSTAL TUNNEL

What is the meaning of crystal personalization? Personalizing a crystal consists of aligning the vibrational frequencies of the crystal or in some cases a certain range of frequencies of the crystal with the frequencies of a specific person. All crystals, just like everything that exists in this and all universes, are fundamentally based on vibrational frequencies. From their unimaginable small beginnings, starting their process of alienation and transformation, more infinitely unimaginable small fractions of time. This "time" is nothing like we know here on earth. These vibrations are already pure energy, magnetism, existence and non-existence, creation and negation, in addition to being components of the whole in and of themselves.

During the process of crowding, combination, adaptation, mixing, alignment, and harmonic condensation, the vibrations increase their density. They share information to create the visible and invisible, the perceptible and the imperceptible. Within one of these billions of vibrational paths one can identify and define crystals. The crystals are capable of receiving, storing processing, and sharing information, which in turn is vibration moving at different frequency scales. All these crystals, even in their extremely pure form, already accumulate information. This information comes in the form of exploitation, recollection, transportation, storage, and all the extensive manipulation. The crystals ultimately absorb an especially wide range of emotional impressions contributed mostly unconsciously by those who came into direct contact with them. In our existence and within the immense dimensionality of vibrations of which we are composed, we share specific vibrational frequencies with each and every one of the crystals.

Crystals are possible to manipulate by creating a direct alignment with the vibrations of a specific imbalance due to multiple circumstances. It is also possible to program crystals so they interact directly by collecting, accumulating and processing low-density vibrations, which could be affecting an organ and/or organism. For this it is necessary to **FIRST:** perform an Energetic Cleanse, eliminating all possible vibrational contamination collected previously, during this process, communication with the crystal begins by opening one of its vortices, thus being able to enter the interior of his library, which is composed of multiple hallways, levels and sub-levels. Reading, visualizing and identifying the crystal's content. Once this intervention has been carried out, it is necessary to equalize the vibrations that are not its own. In this case we could assimilate as surgical energy blockages, proceeding to remove and eliminate all that unwanted information.

SECOND: Energization; which consists of raising the level of resonance through the spiral application of frequencies of the same intensity. As a result, the expansion or amplification of its energy level will be expressed in the form of sensory resonance so one can feel between other things during the alignment or personalization process.

THIRD: Personalization; consists of synchronizing the vibrational memory of the crystal with the cellular memory of the energy fields with whom the crystal has possession, specific and according to each particular case. Multiple steps taken through each case the harmonic alignment of high-frequencies vibratory impulses of the crystal, with the vibrational frequencies of an organic being that oscillate at the same energy levels of the crystal, creating a protective field that surrounds the organism or part of it with the crystal.

Giving the crystal a specialized and specified ability, depending on the necessity for collecting, blocking, minimizing and/or canceling possible negative interactions that could be influencing the individual's magnetic field.

Next, low energy levels; by intersecting the high energy sources of the clean and energized crystal with the vibrational imbalances of an organism or one of its organs, it is possible to raise the degree of energy by channeling the amplified emissions of the energetic level of the crystal. To summarize, in order to **PERSONALIZE** a crystal, it must go through the process of alignment, channeling, attunement of energy levels and intensity of vibratory frequencies of the crystal, which is connected with those of any organic being.

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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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5 Tips for Minimizing Toy Chaos in Your Home

by **maidpro**

Remember those days (before kids) when it was safe to walk barefoot across a room without risk of stepping on a Lego? When your visual field wasn't constantly being assaulted by assorted plastics in bright primary colors? When a tidy room might actually stay tidy for something longer than 3 minutes?

Right, us neither. If you have kids in the zero to preteen range (and that includes fur babies!), then toy chaos is a fact of life. You need to accept it, but don't have to succumb entirely. Here are 5 tips for minimizing toy chaos in your home.

Dedicate excess storage capacity for toys. Let's say, for example, you have 3 bins designated for daily toy storage. If those bins are stuffed full at the end of the day, you can pretty much count on them being dumped loudly and thoroughly at the start of the next day's play. Double bin capacity and fill each one only halfway, making it much easier for kids to rummage through and find what they are looking for. Sorting and labeling bins by major toy types, by kid/toy ownership, and so forth further minimizes the likelihood of dumping.

Schedule playdates wisely. Some kids are just natural born scatterers. Like, you are quite sure they stand in the middle of a room, flinging things around when you're not looking. Figure out who **THOSE** kids are and keep a closer-than-usual watch when they come over to play. Also, be honest.



If your kid is the scatterer, make sure they do at least their fair share of post-play tidying. If you are consistent with this, both dumping and scattering behaviors should abate over time.

Move toys in and out of heavy rotation. Keep a secret, well-out-of-reach space available for stowing away some portion of your kids' toys. Every so often, when your kids are either out or asleep for the night, remove and stow a few items from daily bins. If you notice your child looking for something, you can surreptitiously return it to daily rotation. Or you can magically find stowed items on bad-weather days, when kids' boredom levels are peaking. If a few weeks or months go by and a stowed item is never mentioned, you can be sure it's safe to move along. That goes for brand new stuff as well. So, for example, let's say you host a birthday party for your child's entire class of 25 kids. Few children will remember all 25 gifts they opened (especially if they unwrap the gifts during their exciting party). Pay close attention to how they react when opening each gift. When they're not looking, grab and stow the ones that receive the least-excited reactions. Add sticky notes to remind you who gave what and you can get away with re-gifting at other birthday parties or holidays.

Recruit kids for big toy cleanouts at least twice a year. Time these cleanouts for just prior to birthdays or big gift-giving holidays, so you can rationalize as "making space for all the new stuff you are going to get." Other good strategies for convincing kids to part with their beloved old toys include appealing to their sense of:

Growing up and maturing – "Let's give some of these old baby toys to your new cousin!"

Kindness and social justice – "Let's donate some of these toys to kids who are less fortunate than you."

Community – "Let's help raise money for your school by donating some of these toys to the spring fair."

Money and saving – "Let's see if we can sell some of these toys on Facebook marketplace; you can use the earnings to start your own savings account at the bank."

Special occasion – "Let's make this fun; when we're done, we can enjoy [fill in something fun or typically disallowed]."

As always, before donating toys, ensure they are safe, intact, in good repair, and as clean as you would want them to be for your own child.

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WHAT IS THE MIND DIET?

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

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

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

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

HISTORY OF THE MIND DIET

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

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

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

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

FOODS TO EMPHASIZE

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

FOODS TO AVOID

Some foods to avoid include:

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

Butter and margarine: less than a tablespoon daily.

Cheese: less than one serving per week.

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

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

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

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

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BEANS OR LEGUMES AT LEAST EVERY OTHER DAY	POULTRY AT LEAST TWICE A WEEK	FISH AT LEAST ONCE A WEEK <p><i>If you don't drink alcohol, purple grape juice provides many of the same benefits.</i></p>
A FIVE-OUNCE GLASS OF RED WINE EACH DAY		
NO MORE THAN ONE TABLESPOON A DAY OF BUTTER OR MARGARINE; CHOOSE OLIVE OIL INSTEAD	CHEESE, FRIED FOOD AND FAST FOOD NO MORE THAN ONCE A WEEK	
PASTRIES AND SWEETS LESS THAN FIVE TIMES A WEEK		

When You Are At Your Wits End

By Pastor Timothy Neptune

Have you ever been at your wits' end? Have you ever been so confused that you didn't really know which way was up? Have you ever had the feeling, "I know I need to do something... but I don't know what 'something' to do."

The Bible tells the story of a group of sailors who went out to sea and encountered a huge storm that almost killed them:

23Others went out on the sea in ships; they were merchants on the mighty waters. 24They saw the works of the LORD, his wonderful deeds in the deep. 25For he spoke and stirred up a tempest that lifted high the waves. 26They mounted up to the heavens and went down to the depths; in their peril their courage melted away. 27They reeled and staggered like drunken men; they were at their wits' end. 28Then they cried out to the LORD in their trouble, and he brought them out of their distress. 29He stilled the storm to a whisper; the waves of the sea were hushed. 30They were glad when it grew calm, and he guided them to their desired haven. 31Let them give thanks to the LORD for his unfailing love and his wonderful deeds for men. Psalm 107:23-31

Can you relate to this group of sailors? Maybe the circumstances in your life have caused your courage to melt away. Perhaps you are going through a storm of your own. You may find yourself at your wits' end without any clear direction as to what to do next. If so, follow the example of the sailors in the Bible.

The first thing they did was cry out to the LORD in their trouble. Don't underestimate the power of prayer. An old gospel song says, "when God is all you have, you'll find He's all you need." God responded to the sailor's prayer by bringing them out of their distress. In fact, it says he stilled the storm to a whisper and the waves of the sea were hushed. God can do that in your life and in your situation as well. Call out to him. His timing is not always as quick as we may like but He knows what is best for each of us.

When the storm was over, the text says that God guided the sailors to their desired haven. They found their place of rest and peace. Storms don't last forever... and neither will yours. Keep your faith in God. Cry out to Him in your pain. Trust that He knows what's best and keep praying and seeking your desired haven... it may be just around the corner.

And then, don't forget to thank God when He does bring you through the storm. The story concludes by saying, "Let them give thanks to the LORD for his unfailing love and his wonderful deeds for men."



Storms, crises, pain and problems are an unfortunate reality of life. We grow through the pain and learn valuable lessons during these times. Don't give up, give in, or quit. When you find yourself at your wits' end...hang on, cry out to God, and look for His deliverance.

Tim Neptune is the lead pastor of Venture Church in Naples, Florida. Venture Church meets on the campus of FSW State College on Lely Cultural Blvd. in East Naples. For times and directions, visit www.venturenaples.com.



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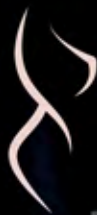
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