

S O U T H W E S T F L O R I D A ' S

Health & Wellness[®] MAGAZINE

July 2024

Lee Edition - Monthly

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WHAT DOES
SUNSCREEN
REALLY DO AND
INGREDIENTS TO
LOOK FOR?

**JULY IS UV
SAFETY MONTH**
Protecting Your Eyes
from Harmful Rays

**ALZHEIMER'S
AND DEMENTIA**
What's the Difference?

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- 7/25- 1pm
- 7/27- 12pm
- 7/31- 8am

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- 7/5- 11am
- 7/6- 10am
- 7/9- 6:30pm
- 7/12- 11am
- 7/19- 11am
- 7/20- 10am
- 7/23- 6:30pm
- 7/26- 11am

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- 7/2- 11am
- 7/6- 11am
- 7/9- 11am
- 7/10- 6:30pm
- 7/16- 11am
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- 7/23- 11am
- 7/24- 6:30pm
- 7/30- 11am

Club Pilates Ft Myers West:

- 7/3- 1pm
- 7/10- 1pm
- 7/13- 12pm
- 7/16- 6:30pm
- 7/17- 1pm
- 7/24- 1pm
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SCULPTING YOUR IDEAL BODY

The Power of Body Contouring

RALPH R. GARRAMONE, MD, FACS

In the pursuit of a healthy and fit body, diet and exercise are undoubtedly crucial factors. However, there are instances when persistent areas defy even the most disciplined lifestyle choices. At Garramone Plastic Surgery, we proudly offer a range of body contouring procedures designed to help you achieve the body of your dreams.

Body contouring encompasses a variety of procedures, addressing different areas of the body. While many parts respond well to healthy living, there are those resilient areas that resist improvement through exercise and diet alone. Body contouring surgery becomes an invaluable option for individuals whose skin and underlying tissues have lost natural elasticity due to factors such as significant weight loss, pregnancy, aging, sun damage, genetics, or other reasons.

If certain areas of your body have been affected by age or drastic weight loss, Dr. Garramone's body contouring procedures provide a potential solution. Our options can eliminate excess, loose, or sagging skin, along with stubborn fat deposits, creating more even body contours.

Body contouring not only enhances the tone of underlying tissues but also addresses cellulite, providing a smoother and more even skin appearance. It effectively targets areas prone to sagging or drooping, ultimately contributing to a more sculpted and youthful physique.

TYPES OF BODY CONTOURING:

SmartLipo:

Utilizing advanced laser technology, SmartLipo targets and eliminates stubborn fat deposits with precision, promoting a more contoured appearance.

Zwave Cellulite Treatment:

This innovative treatment tackles cellulite, reducing its appearance and leaving the skin smoother and more toned.

Sculptra:

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Evolve Body Contouring:

A comprehensive body contouring solution, Evolve combines different technologies to sculpt and tighten the body.

Breast Augmentation:

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Crafting Your Custom Treatment Plan:

During your consultation with Dr. Garramone, we will discuss your specific concerns, goals, and desired outcomes. Depending on your individual needs, a tailored treatment plan may include one or more of the mentioned procedures. While some cases may require a single session, multiple sessions could be recommended based on factors such as overall health, procedure types, and desired outcomes.

Dr. Garramone will guide you through every aspect of your treatment plan, ensuring that you are fully informed and comfortable at each step of the process.

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UNDERSTANDING CHRONIC VENOUS INSUFFICIENCY

Chronic Venous Insufficiency (CVI) is a common and progressive medical condition that affects the veins in the legs. It occurs when the valves inside the veins become damaged or weakened, causing blood to pool or flow backward instead of returning to the heart. This condition can lead to various symptoms and complications if left untreated.

Causes and Risk Factors

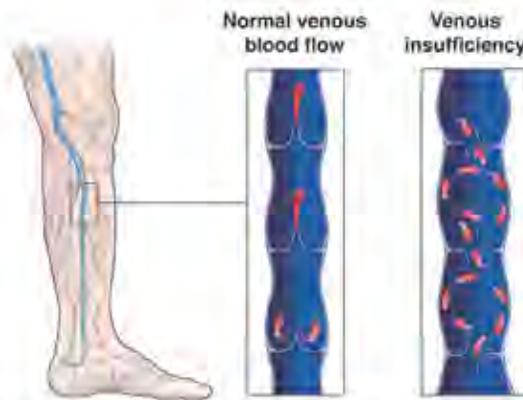
The primary cause of CVI is increased pressure within the veins, which can be attributed to various factors. Some of the most common risk factors include:

- 1. Age:** As we get older, the veins can lose their elasticity, making it harder for them to pump blood back to the heart efficiently.
- 2. Obesity:** Excess weight puts additional strain on the veins, increasing the risk of valve damage.
- 3. Pregnancy:** The added weight and pressure during pregnancy can contribute to the development of CVI.
- 4. Lack of mobility:** Prolonged sitting or standing can impair blood flow in the legs, leading to increased pressure in the veins.
- 5. Family history:** CVI can have a genetic component, and individuals with a family history of the condition are at a higher risk.

Symptoms and Complications

The symptoms of CVI can range from mild to severe, depending on the severity of the condition. Some of the most common symptoms include:

- 1. Swollen legs and ankles:** This is often one of the earliest signs of CVI, caused by the pooling of blood in the veins.
- 2. Leg cramps:** Muscle cramps, particularly in the calves, can occur due to poor circulation.
- 3. Skin discoloration:** The skin on the legs may appear reddish or brownish, a condition known as venous stasis dermatitis.
- 4. Varicose veins:** These bulging, twisted veins are a visible sign of CVI and can be uncomfortable or painful.



5. Leg ulcers: In severe cases, CVI can lead to the formation of open wounds or ulcers on the legs, which can be difficult to heal.

If left untreated, CVI can progress and lead to various complications, including deep vein thrombosis (DVT), a potentially life-threatening condition where blood clots form in the deep veins of the legs.

Treatment and Management

The treatment and management of CVI primarily focus on relieving symptoms, improving circulation, and preventing further complications. Here are some common approaches:

- 1. Compression stockings:** These specialized socks or stockings apply gentle pressure to the legs, helping to improve blood flow and reduce swelling.
- 2. Lifestyle changes:** Maintaining a healthy weight, exercising regularly, and avoiding prolonged periods of sitting or standing can help alleviate symptoms and slow the progression of CVI.
- 3. Elevating the legs:** Keeping the legs elevated above the level of the heart can help reduce swelling and improve circulation.
- 4. Medications:** In some cases, medications may be prescribed to improve circulation or manage pain and inflammation.
- 5. Surgical interventions:** For severe cases or when other treatments are ineffective, surgical procedures such as vein ligation, stripping, or ablation may be recommended to remove or close off damaged veins.

Prevention and Early Intervention

While CVI cannot always be prevented, there are steps individuals can take to reduce their risk and catch the condition early:

- 1. Regular exercise:** Engaging in physical activity, such as walking or swimming, can help improve circulation and maintain healthy veins.
- 2. Maintaining a healthy weight:** Carrying excess weight can put unnecessary strain on the veins in the legs.
- 3. Avoiding prolonged standing or sitting:** Taking breaks to move around and stretch the legs can help promote healthy blood flow.
- 4. Early treatment:** If you notice symptoms such as swollen legs, varicose veins, or skin discoloration, it is essential to seek medical attention promptly.

By understanding the causes, symptoms, and treatment options for Chronic Venous Insufficiency, individuals can take proactive steps to manage this condition and prevent further complications.

Vascular and Vein Center at Gulfcoast Surgeons has been one of the most respected vein clinics in Southwest Florida for over 30 years. Our surgeons, Dr. Abraham Sadighi, Dr. Johan Escribano, and Dr. Vijayakumar Tanjavur have performed thousands of vascular and vein surgeries with consistently positive outcomes.

We focus on diseases of the vascular system that can range from harmless but unattractive spider veins to dangerous conditions such as peripheral artery disease. Our caring and dedicated team will help you identify problems and offer the best treatment options for you.



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HEARING AND MEMORY LOSS ARE CONNECTED

By John Nobile - HAS (Hearing Aid Specialist), BC-HIS, ACA



Hearing Loss Affects the Brain

Hearing loss doesn't just mean an older adult needs to turn up the TV. It's been linked to a range of health problems, including dementia. The latest aging research not only shows the two are connected but also leads scientists to believe that hearing loss may cause dementia. If you have hearing loss, you have a greater chance of developing dementia, according to a 2020 Lancet commission report that lists hearing loss as one of the top risk factors for dementia.

Brain Strain and Social Isolation

Hearing loss can make the brain work harder, forcing it to strain to hear and fill in the gaps. That comes at the expense of other thinking and memory systems. Another possibility is hearing loss causes the aging brain to shrink more quickly. A third possibility is that hearing loss makes people less socially engaged, which is hugely essential to remain intellectually stimulated. If you can't hear very well, you may not go out as much, so the brain is less engaged and active.

Quantifying Hearing Loss's Impact

Hearing loss is estimated to account for 8% of dementia cases. This means that hearing loss may be responsible for 800,000 of the nearly ten million new cases of dementia diagnosed each year.

Studies from the National Institute of Health show an association between hearing impairment and dementia while supporting the hypothesis that hearing impairment contributes to cognitive dysfunction in older adults.

Reducing the Risk of Dementia

Johns Hopkins is leading a large National Institute on Aging study to see if hearing aids can safeguard seniors' mental processes. The study has multiple locations and has recruited nearly 1,000 people ages 70-84 with hearing loss. One group is provided hearing aids, while another group receives aging education. By early 2023, the study should provide definitive results on whether treating hearing loss reduces cognitive decline risk. In essence, we'll know whether the use of hearing aids can potentially reduce brain aging and the risk of dementia.

Other Effects on Health

Hearing loss has long-term effects on health. It's believed to increase the risk for falls and depression. It also leads to higher health care costs:

People with hearing loss have, over ten years, a 47% increased hospitalization rate. Hearing loss is associated with an increased risk of institutionalization, an increased risk for dementia, and increased health care costs overall for all ages.

In Summary

Individuals with hearing loss are at an increased risk for developing cognitive decline and dementia. New research finds that treating hearing loss is the single most modifiable risk factor for reducing the risk of dementia. While your risk increases with the degree of hearing loss, it is essential to note that even mild hearing loss can increase your risk by as much as 200%! If you or a loved one struggles to hear clearly, we can help reduce your risk of dementia in Cape Coral and Fort Myers, FL., with our 5-star-rated hearing care.

John Nobile, HAS, BC-HIS, ACA is a licensed hearing aid specialist and an ACA-certified audioprosthetologist who is also board-certified in hearing instrument sciences. With over 55 years of experience, he has transformed thousands of lives in Cape Coral



and Fort Myers, FL, by providing his patients with the gift of sound. He is also a former veteran committed to providing all veterans with free services.

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KIDNEY STONES

Alejandro Miranda-Sousa, MD

A kidney stone is a solid mass made up of tiny crystals. One or more stones can be in the kidney or ureter at the same time.

Causes, incidence, and risk factors

Kidney stones are common. Some types run in families. They often occur in premature infants.

There are different types of kidney stones. The exact cause depends on the type of stone.

Stones can form when urine contains too much of certain substances. These substances can create small crystals that become stones. The stones take weeks or months to form.

- Calcium stones are most common. They are more common in men between age 20 - 30. Calcium can combine with other substances, such as oxalate (the most common substance), phosphate, or carbonate, to form the stone. Oxalate is present in certain foods such as spinach. It's also found in vitamin C supplements. Diseases of the small intestine increase your risk of these stones.

- Cystine stones can form in people who have cystinuria. This disorder runs in families and affects both men and women.

- Struvite stones are mostly found in women who have a urinary tract infection. These stones can grow very large and can block the kidney, ureter, or bladder.

- Uric acid stones are more common in men than in women. They can occur with gout, diabetes, hypertension, obesity or chemotherapy.

- Other substances also can form stones, including the medications, acyclovir, and triamterene among others.

The biggest risk factor for kidney stones is not drinking enough fluids. Kidney stones are more likely to occur if you make less than 1 liter of urine a day. That's slightly more than a quart.

Symptoms

You may not have symptoms until the stones move down the tubes (ureters) through which urine empties into your bladder. When this happens, the stones can block the flow of urine out of the kidneys.

The main symptom is severe pain that starts suddenly and may go away suddenly:

- Pain may be felt in the belly area or side of the back
- Pain may move to groin area (groin pain) or testicles (testicle pain)

Other symptoms can include:

- Abnormal urine color
- Blood in the urine
- Chills
- Fever
- Nausea
- Vomiting

Signs and tests

The health care provider will perform a physical exam. The belly area (abdomen) or back might feel sore.

Tests that may be done include:

- Blood tests to check calcium, phosphorus, uric acid, and electrolyte levels
- Kidney function tests
- Urinalysis to see crystals and look for red blood cells in urine
- Examination of the stone to determine the type

Stones or a blockage can be seen on:

- Abdominal CT scan
- Abdominal/kidney MRI
- Abdominal x-rays
- Intravenous pyelogram (IVP)
- Kidney ultrasound
- Retrograde pyelogram

Treatment

Treatment depends on the type of stone and the severity of your symptoms.

Kidney stones that are small usually pass on their own. When the stone passes, the urine should be strained so the stone can be saved and tested.

Drink at least 6 - 8 glasses of water per day to produce a large amount of urine.

Pain can be severe enough to need narcotic pain relievers. Some people with severe pain from kidney stones need to stay in the hospital. You may need to get fluids through a vein (intravenous).

Depending on the type of stone, your doctor may prescribe medicine to decrease stone formation or help break down and remove the material that is causing the stone. Medications can include:

- Allopurinol (for uric acid stones)
- Antibiotics (for struvite stones)
- Diuretics
- Phosphate solutions
- Sodium bicarbonate or sodium citrate
- Water pills (thiazide diuretics)

Surgery is usually needed if:

- The stone is too large to pass on its own
- The stone is growing
- The stone is blocking urine flow and causing an infection or kidney damage
- The pain cannot be controlled

Today, most treatments are much less invasive than in the past, ie,

- Extracorporeal shock-wave lithotripsy is used to remove stones slightly smaller than a half an inch that are located near the kidney or ureter. It uses sound or shock waves to break up stones. Then, the stones leave the body in the urine.

- Percutaneous nephrolithotomy is used for large stones in or near the kidney, or when the kidneys or surrounding areas are incorrectly formed. The stone is removed with tube (endoscope) that is inserted into the kidney through a small surgical cut.

- Ureteroscopy, placing a very small camera inside the ureter to remove or break the stone. May be used for stones in the lower urinary tract.

Expectations (prognosis)

Kidney stones are painful but usually can be removed from the body without causing permanent damage.

Kidney stones often come back, especially if the cause is not found and treated.

If treatment is significantly delayed, damage to the kidney or other serious complications can occur.

Complications or Side Effects of urinary stones

- Decrease or loss of function in the affected kidney
- Kidney damage, scarring
- Obstruction of the ureter (acute unilateral obstructive uropathy)
- Recurrence of stones
- Urinary tract infection

Prevention

If you have a history of stones, drink plenty of fluids (6 - 8 glasses of water per day) to produce enough urine. Depending on the type of stone, you might need medications or diet changes to prevent the stones from coming back. It is important to find out why the person forms stones so, prevention could be started soon.

For more information, please visit our website www.UrologyExperts.com or call Urology Experts today at (239) 226-2727 or email info@UrologyExperts.com to schedule your consultation!

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Alzheimer's and Dementia:

What's the Difference

Lisa Mattingly, M.D.

In the realm of cognitive health, two terms often intermingle, causing confusion: Alzheimer's and dementia. While they are related, understanding their distinctions is crucial for proper diagnosis, treatment, and support. Grasping the contrast between Alzheimer's disease and dementia not only aids those living with these conditions but also offers invaluable guidance to caregivers. Read on to unravel this perplexity and shed light on the disparities between Alzheimer's disease and dementia.

What is Dementia?

Dementia isn't a specific disease but rather an umbrella term encompassing a range of symptoms affecting cognitive abilities such as memory, communication, and reasoning. Think of it as a collective noun under which various cognitive impairments reside. These impairments significantly interfere with daily life and function.

It's important to note that dementia is not a normal part of aging. It is caused by damage to brain cells and can stem from multiple underlying causes, including Alzheimer's disease, vascular dementia, Lewy body dementia, and frontotemporal dementia, among others. Each type presents distinct symptoms and progression trajectories.

Understanding Alzheimer's Disease

Alzheimer's disease is the most prevalent form of dementia, accounting for 60 to 80 percent of cases. It is a progressive neurodegenerative disorder characterized by the accumulation of abnormal protein deposits in the brain, namely beta-amyloid plaques and tau tangles. These neurobiological changes lead to the deterioration of brain cells and the subsequent decline in cognitive function.

Key Differences Between Alzheimer's and Dementia

Cause: Alzheimer's disease has a specific pathology involving the accumulation of beta-amyloid plaques and tau tangles, while dementia encompasses various conditions with diverse underlying causes, such as vascular issues or Lewy bodies.



Progression: Alzheimer's typically progresses gradually over several years, starting with mild memory loss and advancing to severe cognitive impairment and functional decline. Other types of dementia may have different progression patterns depending on their underlying causes.

Symptoms: While both Alzheimer's and dementia involve cognitive decline, Alzheimer's often presents with specific memory-related symptoms early in the disease process, whereas other forms of dementia may manifest with distinct symptoms such as visual hallucinations and tremors in Lewy body dementia or changes in behavior and language in frontotemporal dementia.

Treatments: While there is no cure for Alzheimer's or for most types of dementia, treatments and interventions may help manage symptoms and slow disease progression. However, specific treatments may vary depending on the type of dementia and its underlying cause.

Importance of Early Diagnosis and Intervention

Early detection of cognitive impairment is crucial for providing appropriate care and support to individuals affected by Alzheimer's or dementia. Diagnosis involves comprehensive evaluations of medical history, cognitive testing, neurological exams, and sometimes imaging studies. Timely intervention can enable access to treatments, support services, and lifestyle modifications that may improve quality of life and slow disease progression.

Support and Resources

Caring for someone with Alzheimer's or dementia can be challenging, both emotionally and practically.

Fortunately, numerous resources and support networks exist to assist caregivers and individuals living with these conditions. These include memory care facilities, support groups, respite care services, and educational programs aimed at enhancing understanding and coping strategies.

In the intricate landscape of cognitive disorders, Alzheimer's and dementia stand as prominent figures, each with its unique characteristics and challenges. By unraveling the differences between them, we empower ourselves to navigate this terrain with clarity and compassion. Through education, early intervention, and unwavering support, we can strive to enhance the lives of those affected by these conditions and advance our collective efforts toward finding effective treatments and, ultimately, a cure.

Empower yourself against Alzheimer's and Dementia

Take charge of your brain health today! Schedule an appointment with VIPcare and proactively assess your cognitive well-being. Call 239-747-7202. Let's tackle Alzheimer's and dementia together, starting with a proactive step towards a healthier future. Don't wait, act now!



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Florida Gulf Coast University Filling the Need for Nurses

State funding fuels partnership with local healthcare systems

Florida Gulf Coast University, the state Legislature and the two largest healthcare systems in Southwest Florida are working together on a prescription to address the widespread nursing shortage.

For the past year, the School of Nursing in FGCU's Marieb College of Health & Human Services has benefited as a recipient of the Florida Legislature's Linking Industry to Nursing Education (LINE) funding program.

To qualify for the grants, the school has to secure a dollar-to-dollar match from a healthcare partner. For 2023-24, NCH Healthcare System in Collier County and Lee Health in Lee County stepped up to fulfill this requirement. By doing so, the area's two major hospital systems demonstrated their commitment to FGCU and the program poised to educate more nurses for Southwest Florida.

FGCU a pipeline for the workforce

The LINE grant isn't the only way FGCU is strengthening the healthcare workforce. With a three-year, \$22.9 million grant from the U.S. Department of Commerce-Economic Development Administration's Good Jobs Challenge, the university is offering workforce training programs designed to help unemployed and underemployed Southwest Floridians quickly obtain the qualifications for jobs in four of the region's primary industries – including healthcare.

According to the most recent Bureau of Labor Statistics' employment projections, the healthcare sector is projected to create 45% of all projected new jobs from 2022 to 2032. Nurse practitioners are among the top three occupations in that sector to expect increased employment and rapid growth through 2032. The current shortages affecting hospitals nationwide are felt locally and caused by a lack of qualified nurses. Another factor: The Florida Center for Nursing reports that more than 40% of the state's nurses are baby boomers and expecting to retire in the next 10 years.

By 2035, Florida is expected to face an overall shortage of 59,000 nurses, according to a Florida Hospital Association analysis. Labor market conditions are pushing hospitals to unusual measures to retain staff and fill vacancies, including salary modifications to reflect the value of labor in the current economy.

Teaching the next generation of nurses

One goal of the LINE funding program is to increase the number of nursing graduates to combat the shortfall in the state. In addition to the bachelor's degree in nursing, FGCU's nursing school offers graduate programs for nurse practitioners, nurse anesthetologists and nurse educators.

Marieb College's undergraduate nursing students spend four to five semesters immersed in clinical settings where they apply their learning in professional patient-centered environments, gain an understanding of health system practices and develop confidence as compassionate caregivers. Those pursuing graduate degrees experience intensive hands-on internships in a variety of acute and primary healthcare settings. All of this helps the school maintain 100% graduate employment rates and excellent first-time certification pass rates.

Another key asset of the program is Marieb Hall's laboratory facilities, which house high-fidelity simulation and assessment labs. This is where students enjoy low faculty-to-student ratios and the individualized attention of our nurse educators. By the time they graduate, they feel confident and fully prepared to do the important work of delivering superior care to the community.

Brenda Hage, FGCU's School of Nursing director, says the LINE funds are already making a difference in addressing the need for more nurses through scholarships for financially challenged students that help keep them in school and on track for careers.

"Our students are working while they're going to school, and when they're trying to juggle so many

things it can detract from their ability to be successful," says Hage. "These scholarships have been so essential because they're allowing our students to focus more fully on their education."

More than \$145,000 has been awarded in the past year.

Another goal for NCH and Lee Health's partnership is to keep nursing graduates in Florida. As part of the LINE scholarship, recipients participate in an 18-month residency at Lee Health after graduation, which further supports new graduates as they enter practice.

Helping expand programs to teach more nurses

In addition to supporting students, LINE funds are used to purchase simulation equipment, recruit additional faculty and cover other essential one-time expenses to facilitate the expansion of Marieb College's nursing program.

The partnership with Lee Health and NCH extends beyond funding, providing opportunities for clinical rotations and fostering a commitment to producing top-notch graduates to address the healthcare needs of Southwest Florida residents.

Shawn Felton, Marieb College's dean, believes such collaborative community partnerships are invaluable.

"I think we're all in the business of making Southwest Florida the best community we can. And we have an obligation, from the university's perspective, to align the workforce talent for our clinical partners. This is just another example of great partners working together for a common goal," says Felton.



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JULY IS UV SAFETY MONTH: PROTECTING YOUR EYES FROM HARMFUL RAYS

As the summer sun reaches its peak intensity, July marks an important reminder of the need for UV safety. Ultraviolet (UV) radiation from the sun's rays can have severe consequences for our eye health, particularly when it comes to the development of cataracts. This UV Safety Month, it's crucial to understand the risks and take proactive measures to safeguard your vision.

The Threat of Excessive UV Exposure

UV radiation, categorized as UVA, UVB, and UVC, is an invisible form of electromagnetic radiation emitted by the sun. While UVC rays are largely blocked by the Earth's atmosphere, UVA and UVB rays can penetrate and cause harm to the eyes and surrounding skin.

Prolonged exposure to UV rays, especially without proper protection, can lead to various eye conditions, including cataracts. Cataracts are a clouding of the eye's natural lens, which can impair vision and, if left untreated, may eventually lead to blindness.

The Formation of Cataracts

The lens of the human eye is primarily composed of water and protein. When exposed to excessive UV radiation over time, the protein structures within the lens can become damaged and clump together, causing the lens to become opaque or cloudy. This cloudiness is what we refer to as a cataract.

Initially, cataracts may not significantly impact vision, but as they progress, they can cause blurred or double vision, sensitivity to light and glare, and a diminished perception of colors. Cataracts are a leading cause of visual impairment worldwide, and the risk increases with age, UV exposure, and other factors such as diabetes, smoking, and certain medications.

Protecting Your Eyes from UV Damage

The good news is that cataracts are largely preventable by taking appropriate precautions against UV exposure. Here are some simple yet effective strategies to incorporate into your routine:

1. Wear Sunglasses: Invest in high-quality sunglasses that offer 100% protection against both UVA and UVB rays. Look for sunglasses labeled as "UV400," which block all UV rays up to 400 nanometers in wavelength.



2. Use Hats and Shades: Broad-brimmed hats and shades can provide additional protection by blocking UV rays from entering the eyes from various angles.

3. Limit Midday Sun Exposure: The sun's rays are strongest between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m., so try to minimize outdoor activities during these peak hours or seek shaded areas when possible.

4. Apply Sunscreen: While sunscreen is primarily designed to protect your skin, it can also offer some protection for the delicate areas around your eyes. Apply a broad-spectrum sunscreen with an SPF of 30 or higher.

5. Consider UV-Blocking Lenses: For those who wear eyeglasses or contact lenses, consider investing in lenses with built-in UV protection to further shield your eyes from harmful rays.

Early Detection and Treatment

Regular eye exams are crucial for detecting cataracts in their early stages, when treatment options are more effective. If cataracts are diagnosed, your eye care professional may recommend various treatment options, including:

1. Prescription Eyeglasses or Contact Lenses: In the early stages, updated prescriptions may help improve vision while managing the cataract.

2. Cataract Surgery: For advanced cataracts, surgery to remove the clouded lens and replace it with an artificial intraocular lens is often recommended. This procedure is generally safe and effective in restoring clear vision.

By prioritizing UV safety during the summer months and throughout the year, you can significantly reduce your risk of developing cataracts and other eye-related issues. Remember, taking proactive steps to protect your eyes today can help ensure clear vision for years to come.



Albert Smolyar M.D.
LASIK, CATARACT & LENS
REPLACEMENT SURGEON

Dr. Smolyar is a board-certified cataract and refractive surgeon with over 25 years of experience. He received his medical degree from Kursk State Medical University in the former Soviet Union. He completed an ophthalmology residency at the University of Louisville and a fellowship in Neuro-Ophthalmology at Michigan State University. He completed another ophthalmology residency at Ben Gurion University in Israel prior to coming to the United States.

Dr. Smolyar specializes in premium cataract and lens replacement surgery, as well as laser vision correction with LASIK, photorefractive keratectomy (PRK), and phototherapeutic keratectomy (PTK). He also has significant expertise in cosmetic and reconstructive eyelid surgery. Dr. Smolyar is certified by the American Board of Ophthalmology. He was in private practice in Louisville, Kentucky, for many years, where he also served as a clinical Associate Professor at the University of Louisville Department of Ophthalmology.

He has been living in Fort Myers since 2018 with his wife and dogs; they have raised three children together. In his spare time, Dr. Smolyar enjoys swimming, scuba diving, kayaking, and fishing. He has dedicated time to providing free surgical eye care in underserved countries and considers that to be one of his passions.



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MEMORY MATTERS

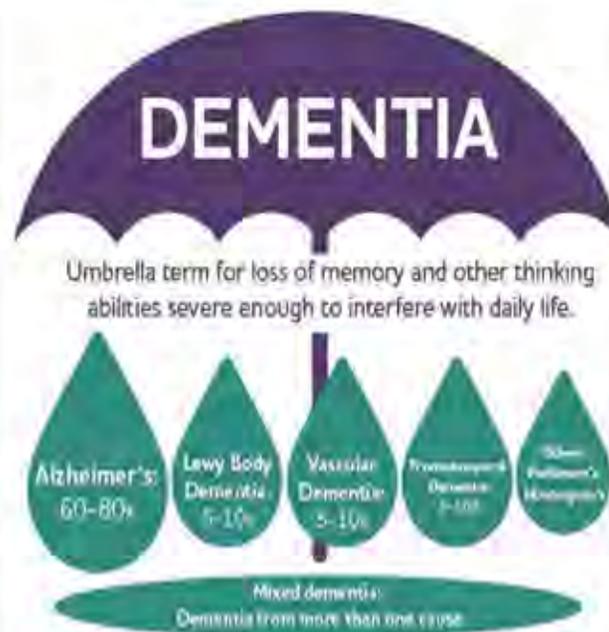
By Amy Hoffmann Schenk, RN, BSN, MS Ed, Community Engagement Lead Neuropsychiatric Research Center of SW Florida

Is it normal to have problems with our memory as we get older? Are you concerned that your memory seems to be getting worse? Do you just chalk it up to old age? Doesn't everyone have memory problems as they get older? Why is early detection so important?

These are some of the questions that are common around the topic of memory loss. According to the National Institute of Health (NIH), while age is a the most important known risk factor for the disease, old age does **not** cause Alzheimer's disease. Alzheimer's disease is the most common form of dementia, and it's estimated that 1/9 (one in nine people) aged 65 and older have Alzheimer's. That roughly translates to approximately 6.9 million people in the United States who have Alzheimer's disease, per the 2024 Alzheimer's Association facts and figures document. Here in Florida, it is estimated that around 580,000 people are living with Alzheimer's disease. That translates into 12.5% of the individuals who are over the age of 65. In addition, the number of people with Alzheimer's disease in Florida is greater than the population of Orlando and Tallahassee added together (based on the 2020 census).

It is quite common for people to get the terms Alzheimer's and dementia confused. The best way to describe dementia is that dementia is a syndrome, characterized by a decline in cognitive functioning. Thinking, remembering, and reasoning are all impacted, and these changes are typically not reversible. In addition, to have a diagnosis of dementia, these changes in cognition are significant enough to interfere with your daily life.

Alzheimer's disease is a type of dementia, and estimated to be between 60 – 80% of all cases of dementia. Alzheimer's disease is progressive (it continues to get worse), neurodegenerative (nerve cells in the brain, called neurons, become damaged and lose function and die), and while there are a number of early warning signs of Alzheimer's disease, decline in short term memory is common. There are many different types of dementia. Vascular dementia, Lewy body dementia, Frontotemporal dementia and mixed dementia are several of the most common types.



Why is early detection important? Currently, early detection and screening procedures are very common for a variety of illnesses. You may have already had one or more of these types of screening. Cholesterol screening, Pap tests, fecal occult blood testing, colonoscopy, mammography, diabetes screening tests and the PSA (prostate specific antigen) blood test are all examples of screening tests. Having a memory screen should be a part of an annual health checkup.

You may be wondering why you should have a memory screen. There are a variety of reasons that having a memory screen is important. One of the main reasons is to find out why someone is experiencing memory concerns. There are a variety of different conditions that can impact one's memory that are reversible and/or treatable. Conditions such as thyroid issues, vitamin B12 deficiency, sleep apnea, depression, medication interactions, excessive alcohol use, even significant stress and anxiety can cause memory issues. These causes can be addressed. Even if you are not currently concerned about your memory, you can be proactive with your brain health by having a baseline memory screen done.

Regular memory screening may be beneficial in the early detection of Alzheimer's disease and other forms of dementia. The risk of dementia increases with age. When diagnosed early enough, a combination of lifestyle changes and medical treatments can potentially delay the progression. The information obtained from the screening is not a diagnosis but will better enable you to take charge of your brain health.

Memory screening promotes healthier aging. It is important to do a brain health check up every year. Annual memory testing is highly recommended for adults ages fifty or older, or even earlier if you are experiencing memory problems that worry you. It is a positive, proactive step you can take right now to take charge of your brain health. You will get a free cognitive assessment, plus education about aging, memory, lifestyle factors and referrals to appropriate community resources.

To make it easy to get a memory screen, the Neuropsychiatric Research Center of Southwest Florida (NPRC) offers free memory screens at our office. To schedule your free memory screen, contact us at 239 939 7777. Please bring a list of your current medications to your appointment. The screening and all services provided at our center are at no cost to you and we do not ask for any insurance information. At the Neuropsychiatric Research center there are many cutting edge clinical studies that are focused on addressing memory issues. Take charge of your brain health and schedule your free memory screen today! #Memoriesmatter

References:

Lee S, Huang H, Zelen M. Early detection of disease and scheduling of screening examinations. *Stat Methods Med Res.* 2004 Dec;13(6):443-56. doi: 10.1191/0962280204sm377ra. PMID: Diagnosing Alzheimer's: How Alzheimer's is diagnosed - Mayo Clinic <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/leecountyflorida>



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today for your free memory screen.



MEET THE TERRACES TEAM:

Jenna Drese, Senior Living Transitions Specialist

For more than a decade, Jenna Drese has dedicated herself to making the transition to senior living a smooth and fulfilling experience. As a senior living transitions specialist at The Terraces at Bonita Springs, she's witnessed firsthand the challenges and excitement that come with this new chapter.

With her unwavering positivity, insightful guidance, and in-depth knowledge of our community, Jenna transforms what could be a stressful process into a positive and empowering journey. Let's delve deeper into Jenna's remarkable journey at The Terraces and discover how her expertise helps residents embrace the vibrant possibilities that await them.

Answering the Call To Help Seniors

Jenna's journey with The Terraces at Bonita Springs began more than 15 years ago, and her dedication to the community has only deepened with time.

Drawn to the idea of helping seniors navigate major life transitions, she found her calling as a senior living transitions specialist. It's a role that resonates deeply with Jenna, allowing her to tap into her compassionate nature and make a genuine difference in the lives of others.

"Being present during those pivotal moments, seeing the mix of emotions a senior goes through – it's what drew me to this work," Jenna explains. "There's a vulnerability and courage required when embracing change, and I'm honored to walk that path alongside them."

Empowering Residents With a Smooth Transition

"For me, the most rewarding aspect is seeing a resident who was initially hesitant become genuinely excited about their new life," Jenna shares. "That transformation, from apprehension to a sense of belonging and renewed purpose – that's what makes it all worthwhile."

Through Jenna's attentive guidance, the transition into The Terraces at Bonita Springs becomes less about what residents might leave behind and more about a whole new world of possibilities ahead. Within a few weeks, residents often find themselves more engaged and active than before, enjoying the community's social atmosphere and dynamic activities.



Creating strong connections within the community is essential. Jenna understands that leaving familiar surroundings can be a challenge, so she encourages residents to join social events, try new hobbies, and explore all The Terraces offers. Seeing residents flourish in this new environment is what truly inspires her to excel in her role.

Jenna's Advice: Start the Conversation Early

Jenna encourages those considering senior living to start the conversation early. "Don't wait until a move becomes urgent," she advises. "By making this a choice rather than a necessity, the entire experience becomes less stressful, and you have time to fully explore your options."

She also emphasizes the importance of truly listening to the resident's wishes, even when family members are involved. "Sometimes, families have well-meaning intentions, but ultimately, this is about the resident's future," she explains. "While there might be some adjustments, my goal is to honor their choices as much as possible."

Dispelling Myths and Easing Worries

Moving to a new home, even under the best of circumstances, can be accompanied by some degree of anxiety. Jenna understands these feelings intimately. "There's often a fear of the unknown," she explains, "New residents worry about fitting in, leaving cherished possessions behind, and the logistics of the move itself."

Another common concern Jenna encounters is the perceived cost of senior living. "Many people believe that moving to a community like The Terraces will be a significant financial strain," she shares.

"However, when you factor in the costs of home maintenance, dining, utilities, and potential future health care needs, senior living often proves to be a surprisingly affordable, even cost-saving, option."

Jenna's Advice: Get To Know the Community

To ease anxieties about the unknown, Jenna encourages prospective residents to "test the waters" by visiting the community, attending events, and getting to know fellow residents and staff beforehand. This familiarity brings a sense of comfort and anticipation, making the actual move far less challenging.

There are plenty of friendly faces ready to welcome you at The Terraces. Join us for a variety of events, activities, programs, presentations and more! You can learn more about getting to know our community by visiting our Facebook page, browsing our events page, or contacting our team online.

JOIN US FOR OUR NEXT EVENT!

Wednesday, August 21
3 p.m.

Join us for an afternoon at The Terraces at Bonita Springs, a luxury Life Plan Community with a Type A LifeCare contract.

Space is limited. Valet parking will be available. Please RSVP by Wednesday, August 14.

Are you interested in learning more about The Terraces at Bonita Springs? Schedule a community tour and private lunch or dinner today by calling 239-204-3469 or take a virtual tour right now! Join us for our next event!

The Terraces
at Bonita Springs
A SantaFe Senior Living Community





Providing a Helping Hand

With Jenna by their side, the transition to The Terraces becomes a journey of ease and anticipation for new residents.

Her process starts with understanding. During a home visit, Jenna and a professional moving vendor take inventory, discuss what to keep and what to donate, and provide a detailed furniture placement plan for the new residence.

"Sometimes, the hardest part is visualizing how everything will fit," Jenna observes. "Giving residents a clear picture helps ease anxieties and allows them to focus on the benefits of downsizing and the exciting possibilities within their new community."

Jenna's Advice: Simplify the Downsizing and Moving Process

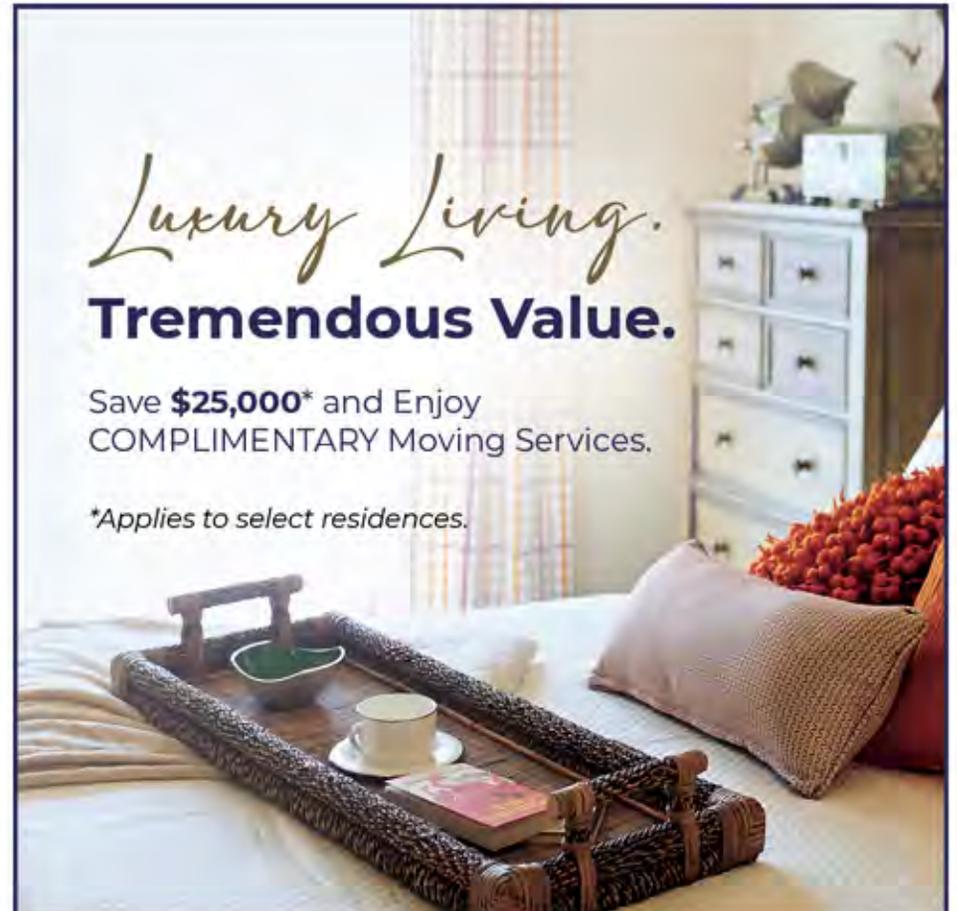
Simplifying the downsizing and moving process is essential for a stress-free transition to senior living, allowing residents to focus on the exciting possibilities of starting this new lifestyle.

Jenna offers residents resources for donations and emphasizes the benefits of our Pack and Move Program, comprehensive packing, moving and unpacking services provided by our partners at Turn Key Senior Transitions.

A Warm Welcome Awaits at The Terraces at Bonita Springs

Jenna's compassionate dedication makes all the difference, guiding residents toward new beginnings filled with friendship, purpose, and joy. With empathy and expertise, she helps residents navigate the practicalities of moving while honoring their wishes.

The Terraces at Bonita Springs offers a vibrant community where residents quickly find a sense of belonging. If you or someone you love is ready to explore the possibilities of senior living, Call 239-208-6963 to schedule a personalized visit, and discover how The Terraces is the perfect place to embrace a fulfilling new chapter.



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UV PROTECTION FOR YOUR FEET

By Patrick Bartholomew Jr., DPM, AACFAS

As a podiatrist, I often see the effects of sun damage on the feet and lower limbs in my patients. Many people are unaware of the importance of UV protection for their feet, but it is just as crucial as protecting other parts of the body from the sun's harmful rays.

First and foremost, prolonged exposure to UV rays can lead to a variety of skin conditions on the feet, including sunburn, skin cancer, and premature aging. Just like other parts of the body, the skin on the feet is susceptible to damage from the sun, and it is important to protect it with sunscreen or protective clothing. Skin cancer can develop on any part of the body that is exposed to the sun, including the feet, so it is essential to take precautions to reduce the risk.

Skin cancer in the foot is a rare but serious condition that can often go unnoticed due to its location. It can manifest as a new growth or mole, a sore that doesn't heal, or changes in the color or texture of the skin. Early detection is crucial in treating skin cancer in the foot, as it can spread to other parts of the body if left unchecked. Individuals who have a history of frequent sun exposure, use tanning beds, or have fair skin are at a higher risk for developing skin cancer in the foot. It is important to regularly inspect the feet for any abnormalities and consult a healthcare provider if any concerns arise. Additionally, wearing sunscreen and protective footwear can help prevent the development of skin cancer in the foot.

UV protection is important for patients with diabetes, as they are at a higher risk for developing foot complications. Prolonged sun exposure can cause the skin on the feet to become dry, sunburnt, and cracked, leading to an increased risk of infection and other issues. By protecting the feet from the sun, patients with diabetes can help prevent these complications and maintain the health of their feet.

It is also important to note that UV protection is not just important in the summer months, but year-round. Even on cloudy days, UV rays can still penetrate the skin and cause damage. Patients should make UV protection a part of their daily routine, no matter the weather or season, to ensure the health and safety of their feet.



In addition to using sunscreen on the feet, patients can also protect themselves from UV rays by wearing protective footwear and clothing. Socks, shoes, and hats with UV protection can help shield the feet from the sun's harmful rays and reduce the risk of damage. Patients should also seek shade whenever possible and avoid prolonged exposure to the sun during peak hours.

UV protection is essential for maintaining the health and appearance of the feet. From preventing sunburn and skin cancer to aiding in the management of existing foot conditions, UV protection plays a crucial role in overall foot health. As a podiatrist, I am committed to educating my patients about the importance of UV protection and helping them take the necessary steps to protect their feet

from the sun's harmful rays. By incorporating UV protection into their daily routine, patients can keep their feet healthy and happy for years to come.

Patrick Bartholomew Jr., DPM, AACFAS

Dr. Bartholomew works at Family Foot & Leg Center at the Cape Coral office. He is accepting new patients.

To make an appointment, call 239-430-3668 or visit www.NaplesPodiatrist.com.



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ALIGNMENT MATTERS:

Mindfulness in Pilates and Alzheimer's

By Shannon Willits

Applying Pilates fundamentals to strengthen the mind-body connection

The Weight of Alzheimer's Disease

The human brain is fascinating. So when the brain begins to decline in function it's a big deal on the body's ecosystem. Alzheimer disease is an incurable brain disorder causing the brain to shrink and brain cells to die. Furthermore, Alzheimer is the number one risk factor to develop dementia. The impact of Alzheimer's disease damages memory, takes a toll on independence and can weigh heavy on the whole family.

"It is a common misconception that we have minimal control over our risk of developing Alzheimer's disease. However, nearly half of the Alzheimer's cases could have been prevented or delayed by modifiable factors, including lifestyle changes," says Sarita Khemani, MD, Clinical Associate Professor of Medicine and Neurosurgery Hospitalist at Stanford University. "Therefore, we should do everything in our power to incorporate healthy lifestyle habits as early as possible."

Exercise Mind and Body

Exercise is showing great results in cognitive studies. The Alzheimer's Society analyzed 16 studies between exercise and dementia to conclude regular exercise lowers the risk of developing dementia by 28% and Alzheimer's disease by 45% (Stanford Lifestyle Medicine, 2024). Regular exercise can also slow the progression of Alzheimer's disease.

"Brain changes associated with Alzheimer's begin approximately 20 years before symptoms appear," says Dr. Khemani. "Exercise stands out as one of the most effective strategies for prevention, offering a low-cost, non-pharmacological, and low-risk option accessible to everyone."

Of course not all exercise methods are equal. Various methods exist for various reasons. Exercise regimens that include mindfulness offer more than physical benefits. This is something Joseph Pilates figured out and started applying to patients during World War I.

Mindful Fundamentals of Contrology

Before it was known as the Pilates Method, Joseph Pilates called his method Contrology. Contrology is a dynamic balance of integrating body, mind and spirit in movement. Mindfulness is the awareness of the

present moment. Pilates encourages this practice by relating movement, breath and thoughts to each other so that the mind and body work together.

Some basic principles of Contrology/Pilates included breathing, concentration, control, centering, flow and precision.

Breathing

Drawing consciousness to the breath instantly trains mental focus. The Pilates breathing techniques are designed to train the mind and body connection. This allows focus inside the body rather than outside surroundings.

Concentration

Concentration is necessary for every breath and movement in Pilates. Practicing concentration provides the opportunity to learn deeper self-feedback. Learning self-feedback is a brilliant tool for the mind and body to grow a stronger connection.

Control

In Pilates, keeping mindfulness throughout each movement allows for optimal control while maintaining alignment. Alignment is a key focus in every movement allowing the nervous system to prioritize posture and reduce the risk of injury.

Centering

Another Joseph Pilates principle, "Centering," involves connecting the mind and body to the core, or powerhouse, of the body. The sequences and breathing patterns center the mind on intentional and precise movement. We learn to pause, observe and respond accordingly. This increased centering and mindfulness helps to calm the nervous system.

Flow

The controlled grace from one movement to the next allows for the mind and body to flow as one. As the mind and body flow together through movement they can safely play with range of motion and strength that challenge the nervous system. This flow builds the relationship the mind and body have.

Precision

Precision is essential in Pilates to ensure that each movement is performed with intention and alignment. It facilitates your mind and body to think about each movement. Yes, you have to think while

performing Pilates. By paying attention to the details and mindfully executing movements goals can be created and achieved.

Pilates for Cognitive Functioning

Contrology was about finding the dynamic balance of connecting the mind with the body. Eventually Contrology evolved to modern day Pilates.

"Pilates is the complete coordination of the body, mind and spirit" Joseph Pilates

The Pilates Method fuses physical activity with learning dynamic skills. These are two factors that train your brain and slow the rate of mental decline. According to Harvard Health, learning new skills like applying the fundamentals of Pilates improves cognitive functioning.

All of Joseph Pilates's principles involve mindfulness and co-exist to support the mind-body connection. Pilates not only exercises your body, but your brain too. Proper breathing, body alignment and precise movements are essentials of Pilates. By emphasizing concentration of breathing with movement, the exercise not only builds awareness of the body but also enhances mental clarity.

Pilates classes and training are more accessible than ever. For best cognitive results shoot for 3x a week. All that is left is remembering to start.

Shannon Willits, Master Pilates Educator

Shannon is a Master Pilates Educator with 4 growing local Club Pilates studios. As a career Pilates instructor and functional movement specialist, Shannon has mastered the science and art of her craft. She shares her knowledge by certifying aspiring Pilates instructors. Shannon's unique approach for developing an apprenticeship has grown into a recent launch for Southwest Florida Pilates Academy. Learn more at (786) 708-7601.

In her spare time Shannon has taken a love for playing Pickleball. Combining her Pilates wisdom with Pickleball training Shannon teaches Pilates for Pickleball. Currently you can find her Pilates for Pickleball tips with Into Pickleball Online Magazine and pilates-pickleball.com.



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INTRAVENOUS NUTRIENT THERAPY FOR ALZHEIMER'S SYMPTOM REDUCTION: EXPLORING METHYLENE BLUE, CHELATION, PHOSPHATIDYLCHOLINE, AND CURCUMIN

Alzheimer's disease, a progressive neurodegenerative disorder, affects millions of people worldwide, leading to cognitive decline, memory loss, and changes in behavior. While there is no cure for Alzheimer's, various treatments aim to alleviate symptoms and slow disease progression. Intravenous (IV) nutrient therapy has emerged as a potential complementary approach for managing Alzheimer's symptoms.

Methylene Blue: A Promising Cognitive Enhancer

Methylene blue (MB) has garnered attention for its potential neuroprotective and cognitive-enhancing properties. Initially used as a dye and antiseptic, MB has shown promise in improving mitochondrial function and reducing oxidative stress, both critical factors in Alzheimer's pathology.

Mechanism of Action

MB enhances mitochondrial respiration and energy production, which are often impaired in Alzheimer's patients. It also acts as an antioxidant, reducing the accumulation of reactive oxygen species (ROS), which contribute to neuronal damage.

Clinical Evidence

Studies have demonstrated that MB can improve cognitive function and slow cognitive decline in Alzheimer's patients. A randomized, double-blind study published in the *Journal of Alzheimer's Disease* reported that low doses of MB improved memory retention and executive function in patients with mild to moderate Alzheimer's disease. Further research is ongoing to establish optimal dosing and long-term efficacy.

Chelation Therapy: Removing Harmful Metals

Chelation therapy involves the administration of agents that bind to heavy metals, facilitating their excretion from the body. This therapy has been explored for Alzheimer's disease due to the potential role of metal toxicity in neurodegeneration.

Mechanism of Action

Heavy metals such as aluminum, lead, and mercury can accumulate in the brain, contributing to oxidative stress, inflammation, and beta-amyloid plaque formation. Chelation agents like EDTA (ethylene diamine tetraacetic acid) can bind these metals, reducing their toxic effects.

Clinical Evidence

Research on chelation therapy for Alzheimer's is mixed. A study published in *JAMA Neurology* found that chelation therapy with EDTA did not significantly improve cognitive outcomes in Alzheimer's patients compared to placebo. However, some case reports suggest potential benefits in specific patient populations, indicating the need for further investigation.

Phosphatidylcholine: Supporting Brain Health

Phosphatidylcholine (PC) is a phospholipid that plays a vital role in cell membrane integrity and function, particularly in the brain. It is a precursor to acetylcholine, a neurotransmitter essential for memory and learning.

Mechanism of Action

PC maintains neuronal cell membranes, enhances synaptic function, and supports neuroplasticity. By increasing acetylcholine levels, PC can help mitigate the cholinergic deficits observed in Alzheimer's disease.

Clinical Evidence

Clinical studies suggest that PC supplementation may improve cognitive function in Alzheimer's patients. A study in the *American Journal of Clinical Nutrition* reported that PC administration improved memory and cognitive performance in older adults with mild cognitive impairment, a precursor to Alzheimer's disease. IV administration of PC provides a direct and efficient means of delivering this nutrient to the brain, potentially offering greater benefits.

Curcumin: An Anti-Inflammatory Agent

Curcumin, the active compound in turmeric, has potent anti-inflammatory and antioxidant properties. It has been extensively studied for its potential therapeutic effects in various neurological disorders, including Alzheimer's disease.

Mechanism of Action

Curcumin can cross the blood-brain barrier and reduce inflammation and oxidative stress in the brain. It inhibits the formation of beta-amyloid plaques and tau tangles, which are hallmark features of Alzheimer's pathology.

Clinical Evidence

Several studies have explored the effects of curcumin on cognitive function in Alzheimer's patients. A clinical trial published in the *Journal of Alzheimer's Disease* found that curcumin supplementation improved cognitive function and reduced beta-amyloid plaques in patients with mild to moderate Alzheimer's disease. IV administration of curcumin can enhance its bioavailability, potentially offering more significant therapeutic benefits compared to oral supplementation.

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Doreen DeStefano, NHD, APRN, DNP

Dr. DeStefano is also a lifelong student. She holds a bachelor's degree in nursing and another in exercise physiology. She has a Master's (ABT) in criminology, a master's in public business administration, and a master's in nursing. She holds a doctorate in natural health and is a licensed Advanced Practice Registered Nurse. She holds numerous licenses and certifications from advanced practice training. She attends educational seminars in integrative and functional medicine twice yearly to stay abreast of the most recent, cutting-edge therapies available.

Her practice is centered on naturopathic principles, including healing the whole person on various levels and avoiding pharmaceutical intervention unless necessary. She believes your health is within your control and wants to help you achieve maximum health.

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The Relationship Between COVID-19 And Hair Loss

By Dr. Melissa (Mel) Irvine, DNP - Clinical Sexologist
Specializes in Sexual Medicine and Beauty

C OVID-19 sent out shockwaves through all aspects of society, many of which we still feel today. We all remember the toilet paper shortages and the social distancing requirements, but less known are the long-term effects that can come from those who had this virus, some of which we're still trying to understand.

Among these conversations about COVID-19's lasting impact is an increasing number of reports of hair loss, which many people notice only after they have had the virus. By logical reasoning, the question then arises of whether COVID-19 can cause hair loss and how to reverse it in the case that it does.

Hair Loss from COVID-19

COVID-19 is a virus most notably known for its effects on the respiratory system, where it likes to invade the lungs and interfere with breathing. This begs the question, though, of how this virus that prefers the lungs can result in hair loss. However, this hair loss might not be as central to COVID-19 as we expect.

Hair loss is normal after having any high fever or illness, and fever is a common symptom in those who have COVID-19 because of the body's desire to attack and rid itself of this outside contagion. So, hair loss has less to do with COVID-19 itself, and more to do with it being a virus that causes illness and fever in the body.

Furthermore, while many people may consider it hair loss, it's actually hair shedding, with the medical name of telogen effluvium. Still, the term hair loss is commonly used to depict the scenario.

A 2022 study into telogen effluvium found that of the 198 patients included in the study, 48 showed hair loss after having COVID-19, making it a prominent comorbidity, or lasting health complication, for those who had this virus.

Telogen effluvium (TE) is one of the most popular types of alopecia in women and can be provoked by:

- trauma
- stressful events
- hormonal imbalance
- malnutrition
- drugs



This condition occurs when more hairs than usual enter the shedding, or telogen, phase of the hair growth lifecycle at the same time.

So, while COVID-19 is not the only cause of TE, as a viral infection it is a possible culprit.

Why Does COVID-19 Trigger Hair Loss?

It can be a distressing situation to have undergone COVID-19 infection, something with aftereffects that are still largely unknown, only to begin experiencing hair loss. Furthermore, since hair shedding due to COVID does not occur immediately following infection, it can often be hard to narrow down if the cause is COVID, genetics, or something else entirely.

There are a few reasons why COVID-19 may cause hair loss, and they all primarily stem from stress. As for the type of stress, it can be physical stress on the body, or mental stress of the mind.

For physical stressors, those with COVID-19 often have a high fever, which is often associated with hair shedding following infection. While this stressor is mild, more serious physical stressors can also lead to

hair loss, such as being placed on a ventilator because of respiratory complications. Both of these complications place the body under physical stress, which may trigger TE.

COVID-19 also increases mental stress as you deal with the infection and how you feel because of it.

When you look at it this way, it is clear that COVID-19 infection can place tremendous stress on the body through various means, which is resulting in more cases of TE following infection.

Still, the severity of hair loss does not always relate to how severe the illness was. For instance, some people with severe COVID symptoms may not have any hair loss, while those with mild symptoms experience severe hair loss.

How Long Can It Last?

If you suffer from hair shedding due to COVID-19, or any other illness, it becomes most noticeable about two to three months after having the fever or infection. As for how long it lasts, it may take six to nine months before shedding stops and your hair begins to look normal again. However, some

studies on COVID-19-related hair shedding have seen that it stops sooner than this, sometimes in only two to three months instead of the six-month average.

Is COVID-19 Hair Loss Permanent?

The good news about TE from COVID-19 is that it is not permanent. The hair phase shifts to telogen more quickly than it should, but once the new strand begins growing in, the hair can return to normal.

This is because TE does not cause someone to lose their hair follicles, which is what occurs in the case of hair loss. While there might be a bit of time when the hair does not grow, since the hair follicle is still there, the hair will eventually regrow.

Still, as with most things, there is an exception. In less than 10% of cases, those experiencing hair shedding may suffer from chronic TE, which is when the hair shedding persists beyond six months. While the exact cause of chronic TE is unknown, in cases linked to COVID-19, it's suspected to be from the significant amount of stress you underwent while infected and the fact that you might not yet be back to normal even after six months. Even in this case, though, TE is not permanent, only longer lasting.

Reversing COVID-19-Related Hair Loss

If you are experiencing hair shedding due to TE, you do not have to worry about losing all of your hair, as the proportion of telogen hairs never exceeds 50%. Still, this is something that you likely want to avoid.

So, what can be done if you are suffering from hair loss? The following are some great steps:

Check For Other Causes of Hair Loss

Since TE is delayed from your COVID-19 infection, it can be hard to know if your hair loss is from COVID or something else. To be sure, you can check other possible causes of hair loss.

Nutritional deficiencies are one such possibility. Hair relies on a balanced amount of nutrients, and in some cases, your hair loss might be because you're suffering from a deficiency in one type.

A blood test can be used to check for any nutritional deficiencies that might be affecting your hair growth. Furthermore, focusing on a more well-rounded and healthy diet can increase your chances of getting all the nutrients your body needs from the food you eat.

Your hormones might also be the culprit, with thyroids that are unbalanced possibly being the cause of your hair loss. A laboratory test can check your thyroid hormones, and if they are unbalanced, medication can be prescribed to address the low or high levels.

Check Your Stress

If tests for nutrient deficiencies and unbalanced hormones show no problems in these areas, and TE is determined to be the cause of your hair shedding, the only thing that you can really do is wait it out.

However, it's easier said than done to give your hair months to hopefully regrow, but one very important thing that you can do in this time is focus on your stress levels and keep them as minimal as possible.

TE most often results from stress, whether the stress of your environment or stress placed on your body from the illness. To ensure that TE runs its course and does not stick around longer than you want, you want to ensure that your stress levels do not remain high.

If you experience stress in your life, whether from your work, home life, or even thoughts of your hair loss, you want to work hard to address these concerns to lower your stress. Finding a healthy way to work through your worries, such as meditation, exercise, or counseling, can also be influential.

As for stress due to illness, this involves providing your body with all it needs to properly care for itself and recover from illness. For instance, your body may require more sleep as it heals or a more balanced diet rich in vitamins and nutrients it can use to repair and damage.

Stress can keep TE around longer, so by actively working to reduce stress in all forms, you can increase the odds of your hair finally beginning the regrowth cycle.

Medication

Medication is not always the right choice, but sometimes it can be.

For those with acute TE, hair growth will recover spontaneously, and their hair will begin growing again. Because of this, and since it can be hard to know when to stop medication once it has been started, it's not often recommended for those with acute TE. However, once you have been experiencing hair shedding for four to six months, and it does not appear to be getting better, it might be time to look into medication.

Remember: It's Not Permanent

In most cases, hair shedding results because of stress. While it is usually from stress sustained by the body due to illness, any stress you experience from the current state of the world can also influence your hair's growth phase.

However, it's also common for hair shedding to then cause increasing stress, perpetuating the problem.

In these cases, it's important to remember that any hair loss due to TE is not permanent, and your hair will recover. Even chronic cases of TE, which last longer than 6 months, are still not cases of permanent hair loss. Once the body returns to balance, hair will begin regrowing again.

So, the best thing you can do to reverse hair loss is to remain calm, both in your mindset about any hair you have lost and in all other aspects of your life.

COVID-19 Hair Loss: Key Takeaways

Because of the increasing amount of physical and mental stress COVID-19 infection places on the body, more and more people are suffering from hair loss months after their infection.

Unfortunately, there's not much that can be done to reverse hair loss from COVID-19 beyond waiting for everything to sort itself out. If you find yourself at this point, remember that your hair will grow back, and this is only a temporary process.

Still, while COVID-19 can cause hair shedding, it may not be the cause of your hair loss, which is why it is best to reach out to a doctor to look into your health profile to determine if something else is to blame for your hair loss.

Remember, while hair is often considered only for its influence on physical appearance, it can provide a lot of information about your internal health. If your hair is shedding more than before, it may be wise to listen to your body and look into why this is happening with your doctor.

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Don't Let Dental Anxiety Keep You Away from the Dentist

In 2024 with all of the advances in dentistry, any people still have anxiety about dental treatment. Advances that make your experience more pleasant include digital radiographs (more efficient, less radiation and less chair time), digital 3 dimensional scans (no more messy impressions), topical anesthetic (less feeling with local anesthetic injection), and numbing gels (used for dental cleaning if needed), just to name a few.

Dental anxiety may have come from childhood experiences, discussions between family/friends or general negativity from movies, comedians or social media. It can also be from fear of the unknown.

Dentists are well equipped today with many aides to help ease your mind and have a more pleasant experience. First, you should find an experienced, confident, efficient dentist who has the time to discuss your dental needs as well as your dental anxiety. In my practice, I start with an initial consultation which includes a comprehensive examination and radiographs. There are times that a dental cleaning causes anxiety and must be addressed first.

Your dental experience can be more comfortable today in a relaxing dental environment with plenty of time to voice your concerns so the doctor can develop a personalized comprehensive oral health plan. Once an oral health plan is developed the visits are often listed in order of the patients needs. Environmental aides that help: good communication with your dental provider, listening to relaxing music, deep breathing, watching relaxing videos, pillows and blankets. There are also medical aides such as prescription medication for the dental visit, nitrous oxide or IV Sedation. In my office, if you are an animal lover, you can request our service dog to stay beside you. The most important thing is you must be able to talk to your provider and feel comfortable with your dental team.



**KELLY M. DAINIAK, DMD,
GENERAL DENTIST**

Dr. Kelly M. Dainiak provides all services mentioned in article. Dr. Dainiak graduated from The University of Connecticut School of Dental Medicine in 1995 and went on to finish a Hospital Residency at The University Hospital in Stonybrook, NY in 1996. She has been practicing in Southwest Florida since 2001, having her own solo practice since 2005.



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UNDERSTANDING MEDICAID: WHAT DOES MEDICAID COVER?

By Ehren Frey, Esquire

In the complex and frequently changing landscape of health care in the United States, Medicaid stands out as a vital program. Since 1965, it has provided essential coverage to millions of individuals and families. Alongside Medicare, Medicaid serves as a lifeline for those who may otherwise struggle to afford long-term care services. And though many believe that they will not be eligible for Medicaid benefits due to asset and income limitations, Medicaid actually serves as the primary payor for a vast majority of long-term care services.

Though Medicaid exists to help those who need it, navigating the specifics of what it covers and does not cover can be daunting. This article highlights the basics of Medicaid coverage for long-term care, shedding light on its benefits and limitations.

The Basics of Medicaid

Medicaid offers health care coverage to individuals and families within certain income and asset guidelines. However, what many individuals may NOT understand is that there are rules in place to allow for planning and preservation of assets when applying for Medicaid benefits. Medicaid provides a wide range of medical services, including doctor visits, hospital stays, prescription drugs, and preventive care. Medicaid is a joint federal and state program, so each state has the flexibility to administer the program differently within broad federal guidelines. However, each state is required by federal law to provide Medicaid's mandatory benefits.

The eligibility criteria for Medicaid benefits vary from state to state and may relate to factors such as income, household size, disability status, and age. Seniors and people with disabilities may need to meet additional criteria.

Seeking out an experienced Elder Law attorney in your state is essential to understanding the rules and navigating the process. The following benefits are provided as a guideline only.

What Medicaid May Cover in Your State:

Doctor Visits and Preventive Care

Medicaid should cover visits to primary care physicians, specialists, and other health care providers for preventive services, including vaccinations, screenings, and wellness exams.



Hospital Services

Medicaid coverage for inpatient and outpatient hospital care may include emergency room visits, surgeries, and medically necessary treatments.

Transportation to Medical Care

Medicaid generally covers the costs of emergency and non-emergency transportation to and from medical appointments and services that are covered by Medicaid.

Prescription Drugs

Medicaid provides coverage for a wide range of prescription medications deemed medically necessary by health care providers. However, coverage may vary depending on your state's specific guidelines.

Laboratory and Diagnostic Services

Medicaid may cover laboratory tests, diagnostic imaging, and other medical tests necessary for diagnosis and treatment.

Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services

Mental health services may be eligible for Medicaid coverage. These may include counseling, therapy, psychiatric care, as well as treatment for substance abuse disorders.

Long-Term Care

Medicaid provides coverage for long-term care services. This includes care in nursing facilities and home health services for eligible individuals who require assistance with daily activities. Individuals may qualify for these services because of age, disability, or chronic illness.

Dental and Vision Care

Coverage for dental and vision services varies by state.

What Medicaid May NOT Cover:

- Cosmetic Procedures
- Experimental or Investigational Treatments
- Non-Emergency Medical Transportation
- Out-of-Network Providers
- Certain Prescription Drugs
- Routine Foot Care (unless it is medically necessary).

Medicaid plays a crucial role in ensuring access to health care for millions of vulnerable individuals and families nationwide. And though Medicaid covers many services, exclusions and limitations could result in unexpected costs or denials of coverage.

Consequently, it is of the utmost importance that you contact an experienced elder law attorney at Zacharia Brown to ensure that you understand the scope and limitations of Medicaid coverage in your state so you can make informed decisions about health care needs and costs.

Ehren Frey, Esquire

Ehren is an Associate Attorney at the Bonita Springs office of Zacharia Brown Estate Planning and Elder Law Firm. He counsels clients in estate and asset protection planning, Medicaid eligibility for long-term care, and Florida probate, including Homestead. He also brings many years of experience as a complex commercial litigator to the Firm.



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Ladies, If You Are Looking for a New Urologist, Consider a Urogynecologist

By Joseph Gauta, MD, FACOG

What is Urogynecology?

Many women experience problems that overlap between the fields of gynecology and urology, and they often bounce back and forth between the two specialties. Urogynecology bridges that gap and allows for both of these issues to be addressed by one physician. The field of Urogynecology is a subspecialty within Obstetrics and Gynecology and is dedicated to the study and treatment of pelvic floor disorders in women. Female Pelvic Medicine and Reconstructive Surgery (a.k.a. Urogynecology) is a subspecialty that incorporates the tremendous advancements made in the last decade in the diagnosis and treatment of female pelvic floor disorders. If you suffer from any of the following symptoms, you may benefit from a consultation with a Urogynecologist.

Expert treatment for the following symptoms:

- **Incontinence:** Loss of bladder or bowel control (accidental loss of urine or stool).
- **Prolapse:** Displacement of the pelvic organs (uterus, bladder and rectum) beyond the normal position of the vaginal walls. Symptoms include a visible bulge and pelvic pressure. These conditions are sometimes referred to as a “dropped bladder”, “dropped uterus” or “dropped rectum”.
- **Overactive bladder symptoms:** Frequent need to urinate, urgency, incontinence and night-time frequency.
- **Emptying Disorders:** Difficulty urinating or moving bowels.
- **Pelvic (or bladder) Pain:** Discomfort, burning or spasm within the bladder, urethra or vagina. May also manifest as pain with sexual intercourse.
- **Bowel Control Conditions:** Constipation and bowel control issues/incontinence.
- **Recurrent urinary tract infections.**
- **Cosmetic Gynecology**
- **Sexual Dysfunction**

Board certification means that a Urogynecologist has obtained training and experience beyond that of a general OB/Gyn or Urologist. Urogynecologists deal only with the evaluation and treatment of conditions that affect the female pelvic organs, nerves,



muscles and connective tissue that support these organs. The additional training focuses on the surgical and non-surgical treatment of noncancerous gynecologic problems.

When Should I See a Urogynecologist?

If you're struggling with pelvic floor dysfunction, pain, or incontinence, you should seek treatment immediately. Consulting with a Urogynecologist can help to achieve an accurate diagnosis of your condition and provide information on the full spectrum of treatment options available. Specialized training enables a Urogynecologist to blend elements of gynecology, urology and gastroenterology to treat the entire pelvic floor.

Treatments may include conservative (non-surgical) or outpatient surgical therapy to cure or relieve your symptoms. While your primary care physician, Urologist or OB/Gyn may have knowledge about these problems, a Urogynecologist can manage all these pelvic floor conditions simultaneously.

Urogynecology Treatment Options

A Urogynecologist can recommend a variety of therapies to cure or relieve symptoms of prolapse, urinary, gas or fecal incontinence, or other pelvic floor dysfunction symptoms. He may advise treatments based on your personal needs and lifestyle, the severity of your condition and your general health. Conservative options include medications, pelvic exercises, behavioral and/or dietary modifications and vaginal devices (also called pessaries).

Biofeedback and Electrical Stimulation are two newer treatment modalities that your Urogynecologist may recommend. Safe and effective outpatient surgical procedures are also utilized by the Urogynecologist to treat incontinence and prolapse. A Urogynecologist will discuss all of the options that are available to treat your specific problem(s) before you are asked to make any treatment decisions.

It's easy to become embarrassed by pelvic and bladder disorders, but you do not have to suffer with these problems or associated pain. Florida Bladder Institute provides compassionate, thorough urogynecological care for all women. Whether you face pelvic issues as a result of aging, delivering babies, illness, or trauma, we can provide proper treatment and counseling so you can enjoy an active, healthy life-style.

Call 239-449-7979 today to schedule an appointment with Joseph Gauta M.D. to learn how proper urogynecological care can benefit you. Don't suffer in silence any longer; there is help available.



Joseph Gauta, MD



Nicole Houser, PA-C



Lisa Mark, MD



Amy Goetz, PA-C


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KIDNEY CANCER: Are You at Risk?

By Neetu Malhotra, MD

The kidneys are a major part of our detoxifying system. These two small bean-shaped organs clean the blood and filter waste products and toxins from the body through the urine. Kidney cancer is one of the ten most prevalent cancers. The lifetime risk for developing kidney cancer is about 1 in 46 in men and 1 in 82 in women.¹

The symptoms of kidney cancer often go unnoticed or don't begin to show until the tumor(s) has grown. However, some of the key indicators are as follows:

- Blood in the urine
- Fatigue
- Loss of appetite
- Weight loss
- Fever or infection
- Swollen abdomen
- Lump on the side of the abdomen (with or without pain)
- Anemia
- Swollen legs and ankles
- Chronic inflammation
- High blood pressure
- Shortness of breath

If you have symptoms or your physician finds a lump during a physical examination, they will order diagnostic testing such as a renal arteriogram, MRI, CT Scan, blood and urine analysis, and a needle biopsy may be necessary.

There are some increased risk factors, which make some individuals more susceptible to renal cancer. The risks factors included:

- Being over the age of 40
- Being male
- Being black
- Smoking
- Obese
- Overuse of NSAIDs and other prescription medications
- Family History
- Chemical Exposures
- Kidney disease

Most kidney cancer appears first in the tubules of the kidneys. When the malignant cells form a tumor(s) the growth rate is typically slow, so the

likelihood of an early diagnosis is increased, and the treatment can usually be performed before the tumor has metastasized into any other organs.

Treatment

Depending on the stage and size of the tumor(s), your physician will develop a specific treatment plan tailored to your needs.

Typically, performing a nephrectomy treats kidney cancer. There are three main types of this surgical option. The first is a Partial nephrectomy, which removes the tumor and some of the surrounding tissue. The second is a Simple nephrectomy, which removes the entire kidney, and the third treatment method is a Radical nephrectomy, which removes the kidney, adrenal glands, lymph nodes, and any questionable surrounding tissue margins. These procedures can usually be done laparoscopically. Some patients may also require radiation or chemotherapy treatments.

Associates in Nephrology

Associates in Nephrology has been providing comprehensive kidney care and transplant services in Southwest 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.

Source:

1. https://www.nftr.org/cancer-types/kidney-cancer/?gclid=CjwKCAIAYc2BBhAaEiwA44-wW9qTM7gXbIKsBU1ldxNN-rM7OKwmG3j43bZni6h175MIIQCzwNsKORoCE5QQAvD_BwE

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.

- All forms of Dialysis – Hemodialysis and Peritoneal
- Diabetic Kidney Disorder
- Dietitian Services for Kidney Patients
- Disorders of Blood Chemistry
- Electrolyte Disorders
- Fluid Overload, Edema (swelling)
- Glomerulonephritis
- 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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Unraveling the Ancient Healing Art of Acupuncture: ORIGINS, BENEFITS, AND MODERN APPLICATIONS

By Dr. Mary Lambert, AP, DOM

The first time I experienced acupuncture and Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) was in the early 2000s after a car accident. I knew nothing about it, but I knew that conventional therapies were not helping to resolve the pain from my injuries. So off I went to the acupuncture clinic, where the Acupuncture Physician utilized all of the branches of TCM: Acupuncture, Chinese Herbal Medicine, and Tui Na, also known as Chinese medical massage. Not only did I experience relief from pain, but the doctor also helped to treat my PTSD from the car accident. My eyes were opened to the possibilities!

Fast forward to now, I'm now a practicing board certified Acupuncture Physician. With the study and credentialing requirements being as arduous as it is for Western medicine providers, there are so few acupuncturists that make it through the entire process. Studying TCM means thousands of hours studying anatomy and physiology, both in Eastern and Western medicine, studying the Chinese language, medical massage, evaluation and differential diagnostics. We learned how to interpret imaging, and to read lab work, we studied Eastern herbal medicine with all of its internal and external applications and we studied western pharmacology. With all of that under our belts, Acupuncturists are recognized as primary care providers in the state of Florida.

In this article, I would like to share with you some of the origins and history of Acupuncture, what to expect during a treatment, what we can treat and ways that we've modernized this ancient healing art.

Acupuncture originated in China over 2,500 years ago with some archaeological findings dating back 5,000 years! Traditional Chinese Medicine is rooted in the concepts of Qi, Yin and Yang. Qi flows through pathways called meridians in the body that follow the neurological and vascular systems in the body. Similar to a highway connecting major cities, when a motor vehicle accident blocks the road, nothing gets through, and pain and suffering result. Clearing the traffic jam takes time and coordinated effort to restore the traffic flow. Similarly, when an obstruction blocks the meridians, pain and illness can occur. We use specific places on the meridians, called acupoints, to clear that traffic jam and restore the free flow in the meridians.



Modern scientific research shows that acupuncture works by stimulating the nervous system, increasing blood flow, reducing inflammation and releasing endorphins, the body's natural painkillers. Functional MRI studies have shown that acupuncture can activate brain regions involved in pain processing and stress regulation, offering an explanation for its effectiveness in managing various conditions.

What can acupuncture treat? The short answer is everything! TCM is a fully developed health care system that has survived several millennia, and can treat every aspect of the mind and body.

Pain Relief: Acupuncture is recognized for its ability to relieve chronic pain, including back pain, neck pain, osteoarthritis, and headaches. Many studies have shown that acupuncture can be more effective than conventional pain treatments.

Stress Reduction: By promoting relaxation and reducing stress, acupuncture can alleviate symptoms of anxiety and depression. The treatment's calming effects can improve sleep quality and enhance mental well-being.

Improved Digestion: Acupuncture supports digestive health by regulating the digestive system and reducing symptoms such as irritable bowel syndrome (IBS) and acid reflux.

Enhanced Immune Function: Regular acupuncture treatments can support the immune system, helping the body fight off infections and illnesses more effectively.

Women's Health: Acupuncture can address a range of women's health issues, including menstrual irregularities, menopause symptoms, and infertility. It can also be beneficial during pregnancy for managing morning sickness and promoting a smoother labor process.

If you're considering acupuncture, it's helpful to know what to expect during a session.

- 1. Initial Consultation:** Your acupuncturist will take a detailed health history and ask about your symptoms, lifestyle, and any specific health concerns. This helps them create a personalized treatment plan.
- 2. Needle Insertion:** The acupuncturist will insert hair-thin sterile needles into specific acupoints on your body. You might feel a slight pinch or tingling sensation, but the process is generally painless.
- 3. Relaxation:** Once the needles are in place, you'll typically rest for around 30 minutes. Many people find this time deeply relaxing and may even fall asleep.
- 4. Needle Removal:** The acupuncturist will remove the needles. There are usually no significant side effects, but you should have an amazing night's sleep.

To ensure a safe and effective acupuncture experience, it's crucial to find a qualified practitioner. Look for a licensed acupuncturist who has completed an accredited training program and is board certified by the National Certification Commission for Acupuncture and Oriental Medicine (NCCAOM) in the United States.

Acupuncture offers a holistic approach to health and wellness, addressing both physical and emotional aspects of well-being. As more people seek natural alternatives to conventional treatments, acupuncture continues to gain recognition for its ability to promote balance, relieve pain, and enhance overall quality of life. By raising awareness about this ancient practice, we can help more individuals discover the benefits of acupuncture and incorporate it into their health and wellness routines.

If you are ready to discover the benefits that acupuncture can offer, call Dr. Mary at Lambert Wellness to book your free consultation. 239-776-4055. Whether you're dealing with chronic pain, stress, or other health issues, acupuncture can provide the relief and healing you need.



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UNRAVELING THE LINK BETWEEN ANXIETY AND ALCOHOL USE: A HOLISTIC PERSPECTIVE

In today's fast-paced world, where stress and pressure seem to be constant companions, many individuals turn to alcohol as a means of coping with their anxiety. However, what may initially seem like a solution to soothe their worries often spirals into a cycle of dependency, exacerbating both anxiety and alcohol use. Understanding the intricate connection between anxiety and alcohol consumption is crucial for developing effective interventions that promote holistic well-being and sustainable recovery.

Anxiety, a pervasive mental health condition characterized by excessive worry and fear, affects millions of people worldwide. It can manifest in various forms, including generalized anxiety disorder, panic disorder, social anxiety disorder, and phobias. Individuals with anxiety may experience intense physical and psychological symptoms, such as rapid heartbeat, sweating, trembling, and intrusive thoughts, which can significantly impair their daily functioning and quality of life.

In an attempt to alleviate their symptoms and escape from the grip of anxiety, many individuals turn to alcohol as a form of self-medication. Alcohol's sedative effects can provide temporary relief from feelings of tension and apprehension, offering a fleeting sense of relaxation and euphoria. However, this relief is short-lived, and the long-term consequences of excessive alcohol consumption can be devastating.

The relationship between anxiety and alcohol use is complex and multifaceted, involving both biological and psychological factors. Neurochemical imbalances in the brain, genetic predispositions, traumatic experiences, and environmental stressors can all contribute to the development of both anxiety disorders and alcohol use disorders. Moreover, individuals with anxiety may be more susceptible to the reinforcing effects of alcohol, as it provides a temporary escape from their distressing symptoms.

Furthermore, the cycle of anxiety and alcohol use can become self-perpetuating, as alcohol consumption can disrupt normal brain function and exacerbate anxiety symptoms. Chronic alcohol abuse can lead to tolerance, dependence, and withdrawal, further fueling feelings of anxiety and perpetuating a vicious cycle of substance use and mental health issues.

To effectively address the interconnected nature of anxiety and alcohol use, a holistic approach is essential. This approach acknowledges the interplay between biological, psychological, social, and environmental factors and recognizes that treating one aspect in isolation is unlikely to lead to lasting recovery. Instead, it emphasizes the importance of addressing both anxiety and alcohol use simultaneously through integrated interventions that target the root causes of these issues.

One key component of a holistic approach is comprehensive assessment and diagnosis, which involves evaluating the individual's physical health, mental health, substance use patterns, and psychosocial functioning. This enables healthcare professionals to tailor treatment plans to the unique needs and circumstances of each individual, ensuring a personalized and effective approach to recovery.

Psychotherapy, such as cognitive-behavioral therapy (CBT) and mindfulness-based interventions, can be particularly beneficial in treating co-occurring anxiety and alcohol use disorders. These approaches help individuals develop coping skills, manage stress, challenge negative thought patterns, and cultivate greater self-awareness, thereby reducing reliance on alcohol as a coping mechanism and promoting healthier ways of managing anxiety.

In addition to therapy, holistic treatment may also incorporate pharmacotherapy, peer support groups, lifestyle modifications, and complementary therapies such as yoga, acupuncture, and meditation. By addressing the underlying factors contributing to anxiety and alcohol use from multiple angles, individuals can achieve greater insight, resilience, and long-term recovery.

Moreover, holistic approaches recognize the importance of addressing the social determinants of health, such as socioeconomic status, access to healthcare, housing stability, and social support networks. Creating a supportive and nurturing environment that fosters connection, belonging, and purpose can significantly enhance recovery outcomes and reduce the risk of relapse.

In conclusion, understanding the intricate connection between anxiety and alcohol use is essential for developing effective interventions that promote holistic well-being and sustainable recovery. By adopting a comprehensive and integrated approach that considers the interconnectedness of mental health and substance use, individuals can break free from the cycle of anxiety and alcohol dependency and embark on a journey toward lasting health and happiness.

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UNDERSTANDING DIZZINESS, VERTIGO & BALANCE DISORDERS

What Is a Balance Disorder?

Your sense of balance is critically important to help prevent falls and injury.

A balance disorder affects your body's ability to hold an upright, safe position and is often experienced as dizziness and vertigo. Dizziness is a feeling of being unsteady or having a distorted sense of your body in the space in the space around it. Vertigo involves a sense a movement, as if you or the environment around you is spinning. Dizziness and vertigo can be accompanied by light-headedness, blurred vision, confusion, disorientation, nausea, and vomiting. Dizziness and vertigo are symptoms of numerous conditions, including anxiety, dehydration, circulation issues, nervous system and brain conditions, medication side effects, and inner ear disorders.

An ENT can help you determine if your dizziness or vertigo is caused by an inner ear disorder.

Balance and the Inner Ear

Your sense of balance is guided by signals from your eyes, ears, and sensory receptors to your brain.

The part of your ears involved in balance is called the vestibular system, a structure of bone and soft tissue located in your inner ear. Within this structure are loopshaped canals that contain fluid hairlike sensors. When you move your head, the fluid in the vestibular system causes the hairlike sensors to bend, sending a signal to your brain that your head has changed position. With this information, your brain can send signals to other parts of the body, such as your eyes and muscles, to move your body's position and visual focus to help maintain your sense of balance.

When any part of the vestibular system is injured or malfunctioning, proper signals to your brain can be disrupted, causing you to feel imbalanced. When the vestibular system is the cause of your sense of imbalance, it is called a vestibular disorder.

Common Vestibular Disorders

Autoimmune Inner Ear Disease (AIED)

Autoimmune Inner Ear Disease is caused by a malfunctioning immune system that attacks healthy ear tissue. It affects both ears and causes hearing



loss and balance issues. Once symptoms are present, they typically progress quickly. AIED is rare, affecting 15 out of 100,000 people, and is most common in middle-aged women. It commonly occurs with other autoimmune diseases such as rheumatoid arthritis, lupus, scleroderma, and ulcerative colitis.

Acoustic Neuroma

Acoustic neuroma is a benign (non-cancerous) tumor that grows on the nerves in the inner ear that are responsible for hearing and balance. The pressure on the nerve from the tumor may cause hearing loss and imbalance.

Benign Paroxysmal Positional Vertigo (BPPV)

Benign paroxysmal positional vertigo (BPPV) is one of the most common vestibular disorders. The structures in your ear that monitor your head's movements crystals that make you sensitive to gravity. These crystals can become dislodged for several reasons, such as serious trauma to the head or even minor trauma such as a violent sneeze or bumping your head into something. When the crystals become dislodged, they can move into the canals of the vestibular system and create a fall signal of head movement, causing dizziness. Benign paroxysmal positional vertigo can occur at any age but is most common in people over the age of 50.

Mal de Debarquement Syndrome (MdDS)

Mal de Debarquement Syndrome is a rare condition that causes a severe and often debilitating feeling of swaying or bobbing, much like motion sickness but without motion. It often follows boat or ship travel but can persist for months or longer. While it is a neurological condition rather than a vestibular condition as it does not involve the inner ear, patients often see ENT physicians for a diagnosis.

Ménière's Disease

Ménière's disease causes severe vertigo, ringing in the ears, hearing loss, and a feeling of fullness or congestion in the ear. In Ménière's disease, a buildup of fluid in the inner ear interferes with the vestibular nerve's ability to send signals that regulate balance to the brain. Ménière's disease usually affects only one ear but over time can progress to affect both ears.

Vestibular Neuritis

Vestibular neuritis, or vestibular neuronitis, is characterized by inflammation of the vestibular nerve in the inner ear. It causes a sudden case of severe vertigo, dizziness, balance problems, nausea and vomiting that can last for minutes or prolonged over several days. Vestibular neuritis is typically caused by a virus either in the ear or elsewhere in the body.

Perilymph Fistula

A perilymph fistula is a tear or defect in the membrane that separates the air-filled middle ear and the fluid-filled inner ear. This tear allows fluid from the inner ear to flow into the middle ear, causing a change in the ear pressure of the middle ear. This change in ear pressure can stimulate the balance structures in the inner ear. Sudden pressure changes, head trauma, or injury to the ear are common causes.

Diagnosing Vestibular Disorders

Price Sonkarley, MD and the audiologists are trained to performed diagnostic tests for vestibular function. Tests they may perform include:

- Hearing tests – To evaluate hearing functionality
- Electrocochleography (ECoG) – Measures inner ear fluid pressure
- Electronystagmography (ENG) or Videonystagmography (VNG) — Measures eye movement and the muscles that control them
- Head movement testing – Evaluates the effect of tilting your head
- Rotational chair testing – Measures eye movements while you sit in a computerized chair that moves
- Posturography – Measures your ability to maintain proper posture under different test conditions
- Subjective visual vertical test (SVV) – Measures how your inner ear senses gravity
- Vestibular evoked myogenic potential (VEMP) – Evaluates the functionality of the inner ear and vestibular nerve
- Blood tests – To check for infections



Your otolaryngologist may consult with other physicians such as neurologists to assess neurological conditions, and cardiologists to assess circulatory conditions.

Treating Vestibular Disorders

Your treatment plan will depend on which type of vestibular disorder you have. Options may include:

- Medications to treat an infection
- Medications to prevent vertigo and nausea
- Treatment of underlying conditions
- Surgery to repair inner ear function
- Dietary changes
- Activity changes
- Physical or occupational therapy

Be Safe When Feeling Dizzy

Dizziness and vertigo increase the risk of falling and injuries. To minimize this potential, consider taking these safety precautions:

- Minimize driving
- Minimize going up and down the stairs
- Walk with a cane or walker
- Install “grab bars” in the bathroom
- Wear low-heeled shoes

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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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WHAT DOES SUNSCREEN REALLY DO AND INGREDIENTS TO LOOK FOR?

By Dr. Andrew Kontos

With summer approaching and UV Safety Month in full swing, it's a great time to talk about sunscreen and its importance in protecting our skin from the harmful effects of ultraviolet radiation. Sunscreen is a crucial line of defense against sunburns, premature aging, and skin cancer, but it's essential to understand how it works and what ingredients to look for to ensure maximum protection.

What Does Sunscreen Really Do?

Sunscreen is designed to absorb or reflect ultraviolet (UV) radiation from the sun, preventing it from penetrating the skin and causing damage. There are two main types of UV radiation that sunscreens protect against: UVA and UVB.



UVB rays are responsible for causing sunburns and playing a significant role in the development of skin cancers. These rays have a shorter wavelength and are partially absorbed by the ozone layer, but they are still capable of causing harm.

UVA rays, on the other hand, have a longer wavelength and can penetrate deeper into the skin, contributing to premature aging, wrinkles, and potentially increasing the risk of skin cancer. They are not filtered by the ozone layer and are present year-round, even on cloudy days.

Sunscreens work by using active ingredients that either absorb or reflect these harmful UV rays, preventing them from reaching the sensitive skin cells below the surface.

Ingredients to Look For

When shopping for sunscreen, it's essential to look for products that offer broad-spectrum protection, meaning they block both UVA and UVB rays. Here are some common active ingredients to look for:

1. Mineral sunscreens (physical blockers):

- Zinc oxide
- Titanium dioxide

These ingredients work by reflecting and scattering UV rays away from the skin, providing a physical barrier against both UVA and UVB radiation.

2. Chemical sunscreens (organic filters):

- Avobenzone
- Oxybenzone
- Octocrylene
- Ecamsule

These ingredients absorb UV radiation, converting it into a small amount of heat that is then released from the skin.

It's important to note that some chemical sunscreens, like oxybenzone, have been a subject of controversy due to potential health and environmental concerns. Many experts recommend opting for mineral sunscreens or newer chemical filters like Ecamsule, which are generally considered safer alternatives.

Other Considerations

In addition to the active ingredients, there are a few other factors to keep in mind when choosing a sunscreen:

- **SPF (Sun Protection Factor):** Look for a sunscreen with an SPF of 30 or higher, which blocks approximately 97% of UVB rays.
- **Water resistance:** If you plan to swim or engage in activities that will cause sweating, choose a water-resistant sunscreen.
- **Expiration date:** Sunscreens can lose their effectiveness over time, so check the expiration date and replace expired products.
- **Broad-spectrum protection:** As mentioned earlier, choose a sunscreen that offers protection against both UVA and UVB rays.

Remember, sunscreen is just one part of a comprehensive sun protection strategy. It's also essential to seek shade, wear protective clothing (including hats and sunglasses), and avoid prolonged exposure to the sun during peak hours when UV radiation is strongest.

By understanding how sunscreen works and choosing the right products with the appropriate ingredients, you can ensure you and your loved ones stay safe and protected from the harmful effects of UV radiation this summer and beyond.

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Dr. Andrew Kontos

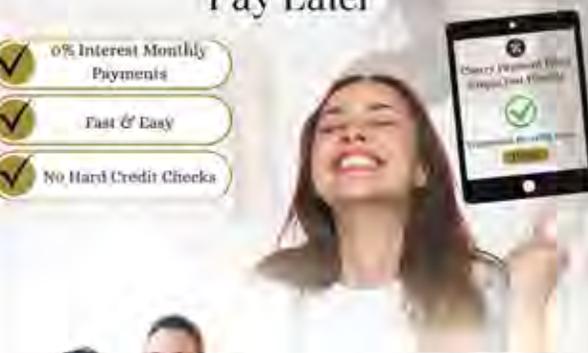
Dr. Andrew Kontos is a highly regarded board-certified dermatologist and fellowship-trained and board-certified Mohs micrographic and cutaneous oncology surgeon. Committed to providing high-quality skin care, Dr. Kontos stays current in medical advancements to continue offering the best care available for his patients. Compassion, accountability, respect, and excellence guide his patient-centered model of delivering positive outcomes. Dr. Kontos has been trained in the Euro-Thread Lift procedure since 2018 and recently received Advanced Threadlifting Certification.



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Implant Dentistry CAN GIVE YOU A NEW SMILE!

By Dr. Ricardo S. Bocanegra, DDS



If you're missing teeth, implant dentistry may be the best option to get a new smile. Dental implants can improve your smile in a variety of ways, and some of them may even be surprising. Here's what you need to know.

Understanding the Basics of Implant Dentistry

Implant dentistry has existed since the 1980s, but it's really gained popularity in the last decade. Essentially, when you get a dental implant, we put a small metal post in your jaw bone. The jaw bone ossifies around the post, and then we place a crown on the post. The result is a prosthetic tooth that looks and feels just like a natural tooth.

Replacing One or More Teeth

The most noticeable way that implant dentistry helps to preserve your smile is by replacing missing teeth. You can replace one or multiple missing teeth with implant dentistry. If you just need to replace a single tooth, the process is exactly as described above. Typically, if you are missing several teeth, we will place implants in different locations in order

to distribute the pressure of the bite. The hybrid denture is when they place a bridge between the implants. There are also full dentures that can work with implant dentistry. With this option, the implants work as anchors for your dentures, and you just snap the dentures into place. This creates a more secure, natural feeling fit.

Preventing Future Decay

On an aesthetic level, implant dentistry helps to improve your smile, but implants also help your smile in other, indirect ways. When you are missing teeth, other teeth often began to move into those areas. Your mouth has a natural tendency to fill those gaps. As that happens, your teeth come out of alignment. This can lead to issues with chewing, headaches, and even TMJ syndrome. On top of that, when your teeth rub against each other due to misalignment, that can trap food debris and lead to cavities. By choosing implant dentistry, you help to minimize some of the risk of future decay.

Preserving the Integrity of Your Jaw Bone

Implant dentistry can also help to preserve the integrity of your jaw bone. When you are missing teeth, your jaw bone starts to deteriorate. You can see this effect in many people who have lost all their teeth. Their jaw line loses its strength, and the mouth almost seems to collapse in on itself. Basically, this happens because when there aren't any teeth with roots to stimulate the jaw bone leading to the atrophy and resorption of the jaw bone. Dental implants mimic the role of the root of the teeth. They convince the jaw bone that it is still integral to the body's function. This prevents the jaw bone from deteriorating and safeguards your smile.

Dental implants are changing the way people live. With them, people are rediscovering the comfort and confidence to eat, speak, laugh and enjoy life. For more information about dental implants or to schedule a consultation appointment, call our office in Fort Myers, FL at 239-482-8806.



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Navigating the Healthcare Landscape: A Comprehensive Guide

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

In today's intricate societal fabric, healthcare often presents itself as a labyrinth. The common tendency is to focus on the cost and the additional services a health plan might offer. However, the real focus should be on access to care - the 'what if's'. What if you are diagnosed with cancer or a heart condition? The importance of a robust network cannot be overstated, as it ensures you receive the best care from the hospital and specialist you need.

Unfortunately, many individuals overlook their potential future needs, focusing solely on their current health status and the financial implications. It's crucial to understand that in Individual, Group, and Medicare Advantage insurance, a doctor or hospital can exit the network or be asked to leave, and this does not constitute grounds for changing plans.

The upcoming 2025 Medicare season will bring significant changes. It's imperative to conduct a thorough review and work with a broker who represents multiple companies in your area. You can review plans starting October 1-14 and enroll from October 15 to December 7, 2024, for 2025. Ensure you review doctors, hospitals, and other medical services to verify they are in-network. Remember, just because they are in-network now doesn't guarantee they will be in 2025.

Prescription medications will undergo substantial changes in 2025 due to the Inflation Reduction Act, which caps the annual out-of-pocket expenses at \$2,000 for Part D Medications. We anticipate an increase in Part D premiums and changes in the formularies. The cap ONLY applies to in-formulary medications. This also affects Advantage Plans.

If your insurance company has recently dropped your doctor, we may still have options. Contact us or a professional specializing in Medicare. As insurance agents, we are not notified when your doctor is no longer in the network. It's your responsibility to reach out to us so we can assist you before it's too late.



Under the new Biden administration rules for short-term health plans, plans issued or sold on or after September 1, 2024, will be limited to total durations of no more than four months, including renewals.

Short Term and Tri-Term Health Insurance plans are affordable options for many. The Affordable Care Act/Market Place/Obama Care is available to all residents at the regular price. Affordability comes into play if you receive a subsidy to help pay for a portion of your healthcare, based on your household income and if you have qualified group coverage that the government considers affordable to you.

Health insurance is complex, but you don't have to navigate it alone. We suggest you seek help from a professional. We don't charge for our services and neither do most in our industry.

Travel Insurance – Summer is a time when many of us are traveling within the USA, on a cruise, or abroad. Check to make sure your insurance has you covered. Travel Medical Insurance is not that expensive and if you were to need it, it's a very small investment in peace of mind.

Life Insurance – You are never too young, and you can never have enough. Life insurance also has living benefits. The younger you start, the more affordable it is. Your insurability is not guaranteed so the younger and healthier, the better.

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

To learn more about your options, schedule an appointment with Logical Insurance Solutions for all your insurance needs. I am licensed in most states. Visit www.Logicalinsurance.com or call 239-362-0855. You can also reach us at info@Logicalinsurance.com.

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CBD and Autoimmune Diseases: A Potential Natural Solution

Autoimmune diseases are a group of chronic conditions characterized by the body's immune system mistakenly attacking its own healthy cells and tissues. From rheumatoid arthritis and lupus to multiple sclerosis and Crohn's disease, these disorders can cause a wide range of debilitating symptoms and significantly impact an individual's quality of life. While conventional treatments aim to manage symptoms and alleviate inflammation, many patients are turning to a natural alternative – cannabidiol (CBD).

CBD, a non-psychoactive compound derived from the cannabis plant, has garnered significant attention in recent years for its potential therapeutic benefits. Unlike its counterpart, THC (tetrahydrocannabinol), CBD does not produce the "high" associated with marijuana use, making it an attractive option for those seeking relief without the psychoactive effects.

One of the primary ways CBD may benefit individuals with autoimmune diseases is through its potent anti-inflammatory properties. Chronic inflammation is a hallmark of autoimmune disorders, as the immune system continuously attacks healthy tissues, leading to swelling, pain, and potential organ damage. CBD has been shown to interact with the body's endocannabinoid system, a complex network of receptors and signaling molecules that play a crucial role in regulating immune function and inflammation.



By modulating the endocannabinoid system, CBD may help reduce inflammation and alleviate symptoms associated with autoimmune diseases. Numerous studies have demonstrated CBD's ability to suppress the production of inflammatory cytokines, which are signaling molecules that contribute to the inflammatory process. Additionally, CBD has been found to inhibit the migration of immune cells to sites of inflammation, further reducing the potential for tissue damage.

Beyond its anti-inflammatory effects, CBD may also offer neuroprotective benefits for individuals with autoimmune conditions that affect the nervous system, such as multiple sclerosis. Research suggests that CBD may help protect neurons from oxidative stress and excitotoxicity, two processes that can contribute to neuronal damage and degeneration.

Furthermore, CBD has been explored for its potential to modulate the immune system's response, potentially restoring balance and preventing the body from attacking its own cells. While the exact mechanisms are still being investigated, some studies have shown that CBD may influence the activity of T cells and B cells, which play critical roles in the autoimmune process.

It's important to note that while the research on CBD and autoimmune diseases is promising, more rigorous clinical trials are needed to fully understand its efficacy and safety. Additionally, CBD may interact with certain medications, so it's crucial for individuals to consult with their healthcare providers before incorporating CBD into their treatment regimen.

Despite the need for further research, the growing body of evidence surrounding CBD's potential benefits in autoimmune diseases has sparked hope for many individuals seeking relief from these debilitating conditions. As the acceptance and availability of CBD continue to increase, it may become a valuable complementary therapy, offering a natural and potentially effective approach to managing the symptoms and underlying mechanisms of autoimmune disorders.

About Hemp Joi

It all started back in 2019, we set out to change the way the world deals with chronic aches and pains. Having a background in functional medicine and a passion for entrepreneurship, we set out to bring quality products to the greater SW Florida area and beyond.

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Why is Measuring Your Microvascular System Is Important?

By Lisa H. Sprague MSS, PTA, LMT

In the last issue I introduced a revolutionary new medical device called GlycoCheck that was recently released to healthcare practitioners after 15 years in research hospitals and universities (research with the GlycoCheck is ongoing). This technology measures and analyzes the function of your entire microvascular system, therefore you can monitor the health of the endothelial glycocalyx lining inside your microvessels. I wanted to go a little deeper into the information that we get from the results and why you would want to get this scan.



How Does GlycoCheck Work and What Does It Measure?

GlycoCheck is a non-invasive, under-the-tongue test that shows the live movement of your red blood cells. This device produces a single Microvascular Health Score that reveals the health of the glycocalyx by measuring several critical parameters of the microvascular system:

- **Capillary Density:** Gives the capacity of your capillary network to get nutrients to organs and tissue cells. Higher numbers are better.
- **Capillary Blood Volume (CBV) Recruitment Capacity:** Shows the additional number of functional capillary blood vessels that can be engaged when flow increases. Higher is better.
- **CBV Dynamic:** When all available capillary blood vessels are engaged at high blood flow levels this tells the maximum functional capacity of the capillary network. Higher is better.
- **Perfused Boundary Region (PBR) Flow Corrected:** Indicates the level of damage to the endothelial glycocalyx. A lower number indicates a healthier glycocalyx.

- **Microvascular Health Score (MVHS):** This is your overall score based on capillary density, recruitment capacity, and glycocalyx health. A higher score means better microvascular health.

Lower Microvascular Health Scores are linked to:

- Diabetes
- Hypertension
- Heart disease
- Kidney disease
- Stroke
- Dementia
- Septic shock
- Inflammatory disorders
- Cancer metastasis
- Long-haul COVID-19 complications

Why have a GlycoCheck scan of your microvascular system?

There are many reasons but the I think these are the most important:

1. Know the health of your glycocalyx. Recent research indicates that impaired glycocalyx health contributes to loss of microvascular function in conditions and diseases such as diabetes, dementia, cancer metastasis, heart disease and more.
2. Knowledge of your true vascular health for you may look and even feel healthy on the outside, but inside, your microvascular system a completely different situation could be developing.
3. Valuable information you can give your doctor that will be an asset for your overall care.
4. Take action to repair and protect your microcirculation and change the health of your microvascular system therefore your health
5. Protect yourself from premature health decline
6. Peace of mind

Can You Can Restore, Regenerate, and Protect Your Glycocalyx?

Yes! No matter what your microvascular health score is, you can still improve the health of your vascular system! Clinically proven to repair the damage in your arteries, veins, and microcapillaries is a patented product called Endocalyx Pro.

Endocalyx Pro is made up of seven synergistic ingredients from three classes of compounds: polysaccharides (helps restore), amino sugars (helps regenerate), and antioxidants (helps protect). You can restore the health of your endothelial glycocalyx and capillary function with Endocalyx Pro and monitor your progress with GlycoCheck. As the health of your glycocalyx improves so improves all your other data that makes up your MicroVascular Health Score.

Without doubt lifestyle choices are just as important. Support the health of your glycocalyx by having a healthy lifestyle, reducing stress, exercising regularly, and eating an anti-inflammatory, Mediterranean-style diet.

If you're looking to enhance your quality of health/longevity or gain insight into your true cardiovascular potential and risk, then GlycoCheck is the answer. This is valuable information for your Physician to have also. It just might be life changing information, or a wakeup call for better health. GlycoCheck is a very interesting experience to have! See the live movement of your red blood cells as they move through your microcapillaries. The scan is a non-invasive and takes approximately 15 minutes to complete.

For practitioners, the GlycoCheck is not only an objective tool to monitor changes in your patient's endothelial glycocalyx – it also allows you to monitor the impact of your treatments and the results are an asset for your overall plan of care.

It's not too late to slow down or reverse the breakdown of your glycocalyx. GlycoCheck provides objective data and the solution to a healthy microvascular system that ultimately enhances whole-body health.

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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Navigating Solo Aging

Advocating for Yourself and Preparing for the Future

By Cynthia Perthuis, CDP, CADDCT, CSA

As our population ages, an increasing number of older adults find themselves making decisions about their future independently, without the support of adult children or close relatives. This experience, known as solo aging, is becoming more prevalent in society. With projections indicating that one in five Americans will be retirement age by 2030, it is crucial for solo agers to understand the unique challenges they may face and take proactive steps to advocate for themselves and prepare for the future.

What is Solo Aging?

Solo agers are older adults who are navigating the aging process without immediate family support. This group includes individuals or couples without children, those who never married or had children, individuals living alone due to divorce or the death of a partner, and those whose children or relatives live far away or are not involved in their lives. Many solo agers associate living alone as they age with positive feelings such as independence, satisfaction, and happiness. However, they may also experience a sense of lacking companionship, feeling left out, and isolation compared to the general population aged 50 and above.

Challenges Faced by Solo Agers

While solo agers may have a positive outlook on their aging journey, they face unique concerns and challenges. Solo agers are more likely to fear dying alone, being moved somewhere against their will, and having someone appointed by the court to make decisions for them. Additionally, this group

tends to worry about losing their independence, being alone without family or friends around, and not being able to stay in their homes.

Lack of Preparedness

One of the significant issues faced by solo agers is a lack of preparedness for the future. Only about one-third of solo agers report having someone who could assist in managing their household or handle day-to-day expenses if they were no longer able to do so. Furthermore, a considerable number of solo agers have postponed making their end-of-life wishes known. Approximately half have an advanced medical directive, and even among those who have one, only a fraction have shared it with their primary care doctor. Additionally, a significant percentage of solo agers have not created a will or trust, nor made arrangements for their funeral or burial. Many have done little or no planning for living assistance as they age.

Empowering Solo Agers Through Advocacy and Preparation

Solo agers must be proactive in advocating for themselves and planning for their future. Here are some steps they can take to navigate solo aging successfully:

- 1. Building a Supportive Network:** Engage with community organizations, social groups, and online communities that cater to the needs of solo agers. These connections can provide companionship, support, and assistance when needed.
- 2. Communicating End-of-Life Wishes:** Create advanced medical directives, such as a living will or health care proxy, to ensure your medical preferences

are known and respected. Share these documents with your primary-care doctor and trusted individuals who may be involved in your care.

3. Legal and Financial Planning: Consult with an attorney to create a comprehensive estate plan that includes a will or trust, power of attorney, and other relevant legal documents. Regularly review and update these documents to reflect any changes in circumstances.

4. Long-Term Care Options: Educate yourself about various living options available for aging adults, such as assisted living, independent living communities, or home care services. Understand the costs, benefits, and eligibility criteria associated with each option.

5. Caregiver Support: Consider building a network of trusted individuals, such as friends, neighbors, or professional caregivers, who can provide assistance with day-to-day tasks, manage household responsibilities, and offer emotional support.

Solo aging presents unique opportunities and challenges for older adults. By embracing independence, building supportive networks, and taking proactive steps to plan for the future, solo agers can advocate for themselves and ensure a fulfilling and secure retirement journey. It is essential to address concerns, communicate end-of-life wishes, and make informed decisions about long-term care to enjoy a life that is meaningful, connected, and prepared for the years to come.

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Failure is a Part of Growth

By Pastor Timothy L. Neptune

The Apostle Peter was a bold man. He stepped up when others stepped back. He was often the first to speak in a group setting. Because of his faith, he was able to walk on water. And, like most risk takers, he experienced his share of failures.

Faith involves risk. Failure is a possibility. But that's okay. Step out of the boat anyway. I love a small part of a speech given by President Teddy Roosevelt back in 1910. He said,

"It is not the critic who counts; not the man who points out how the strong man stumbles, or where the doer of deeds could have done them better. The credit belongs to the man who is actually in the arena, whose face is marred by dust and sweat and blood; who strives valiantly; who errs, who comes short again and again, because there is no effort without error and shortcoming; but who does actually strive to do the deeds; who knows great enthusiasms, the great devotions; who spends himself in a worthy cause; who at the best knows in the end the triumph of high achievement, and who at the worst, if he fails, at least fails while daring greatly, so that his place shall never be with those cold and timid souls who neither know victory nor defeat."

I would rather die on the playing field engaged in the battle than rot in the grandstands as a spectator.

Did Peter fail when he started to sink? Yes, he failed. But I think there were 11 bigger failures sitting in the boat afraid to even try to walk on water.

We need men and women of courage today. High-impact people who are willing to take risks and trust God with the results.

Failure is an indispensable part of growth.

The greatest lessons I've learned in life are from the many mistakes I've made along the way.

If you want to be a high-impact person, you too, will make some mistakes and need God to bail you out.

Peter took his eyes off of Jesus and his faith began to waver. But give Peter some credit... he was in the middle of a really big storm, he was outside of his boat in the darkest part of the night. Can you imagine how scary that must have been? I get nervous just standing at the back of cruise ship at night looking out at the sea!

Nevertheless, if we keep our eyes on Christ, what do we really have to fear?

As followers of Jesus Christ, we've been called to live a life of adventure that requires great risk and great faith.



Perhaps you've tried before but failed. That's okay. Admit your lack of faith and move on.

Whatever you do, don't give up, give in, or quit.

You lose more often than you win in life. There are more bad days than good days. You fail more often than you achieve. Remember that God is sovereign and always in control. Nothing can happen to you except by divine permission or divine directive.

Don't live with regrets and second guesses. Learn from your mistakes and then move on. It does no good to dwell on the past and wish you could do it over. Just keep moving forward... that's how your faith grows.

Tim Neptune is the lead pastor of Venture Church Naples, a new church located on the campus of Florida SouthWestern State College in Naples, FL.

For church times and other information, visit www.venturenaples.com.

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