

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

# Health & Wellness<sup>®</sup> MAGAZINE

August 2024 Lee Edition - Monthly

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# This New Hearing Treatment Technology Just Restored My Ability to Hear Well in Noise!

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**John Nobile**

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• 8/26- 10am	• 8/24- 11am	• 8/23- 11am	• 8/22- 1pm
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# THE IMPORTANCE OF A BASELINE HEARING TEST

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

The human body is a complex ecosystem, where each part plays a vital role in maintaining overall health. Among the many organs and systems that contribute to our well-being, the sense of hearing stands as a critical pillar. Often overlooked, baseline hearing tests are an indispensable tool for assessing and safeguarding our auditory health. This article delves into the significance of baseline hearing tests, shedding light on their role in preserving overall health and wellness.

## Understanding Baseline Hearing Tests

A baseline hearing test is a comprehensive evaluation of an individual's auditory abilities, typically conducted in a controlled environment by an audiologist. The test establishes a benchmark for an individual's hearing at a specific point in time, serving as a valuable reference for future assessments. It involves a series of sound-based stimuli and measures the person's ability to detect and interpret different frequencies and intensities of sound.

## Detecting Hearing Loss Early

One of the key reasons for conducting baseline hearing tests is to identify hearing loss at its earliest stages. Hearing loss can develop gradually, often going unnoticed until it reaches an advanced level. By establishing a baseline, any deviation from the norm can be detected promptly, enabling early intervention and preventing further deterioration.

## Preventing Cognitive Decline

The relationship between hearing and cognitive function has been the subject of extensive research. Studies have shown that untreated hearing loss can accelerate cognitive decline and increase the risk of conditions like dementia and Alzheimer's disease. A baseline hearing test helps catch hearing loss early on, reducing the cognitive burden and promoting brain health in the long run.

## Enhancing Communication and Social Interaction

Hearing is fundamental to effective communication, allowing us to connect with others and engage in meaningful interactions. When hearing loss goes unnoticed or unaddressed, it can lead to social isolation and decreased quality of life. By identifying hearing issues through baseline hearing tests, individuals can receive appropriate interventions like hearing aids or assistive devices, enabling them to stay socially active and connected.



## Preserving Mental and Emotional Well-Being

Living with untreated hearing loss can take a toll on mental and emotional well-being. Struggling to hear and communicate can lead to frustration, anxiety, and feelings of inadequacy. By addressing hearing issues early on, individuals can experience improved emotional stability and overall mental health, leading to a more fulfilling life.

## Preventing Occupational Hazards

For many professions, hearing plays a crucial role in ensuring workplace safety and efficiency. Baseline hearing tests are especially critical for individuals working in noisy environments, such as construction sites or factories. Identifying any hearing impairment early can help implement necessary measures to protect employees' hearing and prevent work-related hearing loss.

## Promoting Heart Health

Surprising as it may seem, research has revealed a link between cardiovascular health and hearing. A healthy cardiovascular system ensures adequate blood flow to the delicate structures of the inner ear, supporting optimal hearing function. Baseline hearing tests can alert healthcare providers to potential cardiovascular issues, prompting further evaluation and preventive measures.

## Addressing Tinnitus and Ear Conditions

Tinnitus, a condition characterized by ringing or buzzing sounds in the ears, can significantly impact an individual's quality of life. Baseline hearing tests aid in identifying the onset of tinnitus, allowing for prompt management and reducing its negative effects. Additionally, these tests can detect other ear-related conditions like infections or abnormalities, enabling timely treatment.

In the intricate symphony of human health, hearing holds a distinct and indispensable place. The significance of a baseline hearing test for overall health cannot be overstated. By detecting hearing loss and other auditory issues early on, individuals can take proactive steps to preserve their cognitive function, emotional well-being, and social connections. Let us not overlook the crucial connection between our ears and our overall health, and instead, embrace the benefits of baseline hearing tests for a healthier and more fulfilling life.

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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# DIALYSIS ACCESS SURGERY

## WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW



**F**or people with end-stage renal disease (ESRD) or kidney failure, dialysis is a life-sustaining treatment that filters wastes, salts, and fluids from the blood when the kidneys can no longer perform this function adequately. To receive dialysis, surgery is required to create an access point into the blood vessels that allows the frequent blood circulation necessary for dialysis. This access point, called the dialysis access, is one of the most important aspects of dialysis care.

### There are three main types of dialysis access:

1. Arteriovenous (AV) Fistula
2. Arteriovenous (AV) Graft
3. Venous Catheter

The AV fistula is considered the preferred access for most hemodialysis patients because it provides adequate blood flow for dialysis, lasts longer, and has fewer complications like infections and clots compared to other access types.

### Creating an AV Fistula

An AV fistula is created by connecting an artery to a vein, usually in the arm, during outpatient surgery using local anesthesia. This allows the vein to receive increased blood flow from the artery, causing it to grow larger and stronger - a process called "maturation" that typically takes several weeks or months. Once matured, two needles can be inserted into the enlarged vein during dialysis sessions to allow blood flow out of the body, filtering by the dialysis machine, and then return to the body.

If the vein is unsuitable for an AV fistula, an AV graft may be used instead. This involves implanting a synthetic tube to join an artery and vein together.

Catheters, while allowing more immediate dialysis access, are meant for temporary use as they have higher risks of infection and clotting compared to fistulas and grafts.

### Pre-Surgery Evaluation

Prior to dialysis access surgery, vascular mapping tests like ultrasound are done to evaluate which veins and arteries would be best for creating the access. This exam looks at blood vessel size, location, any blockages or narrowing, and direction of blood flow. The non-dominant arm is usually preferred for creating the access to preserve mobility in the dominant arm.

### Surgery Risks and Recovery

As with any surgical procedure, dialysis access surgery carries risks like bleeding, infection, poor wound healing, steal syndrome (disruptive blood flow diversion), and potential future access failure requiring additional procedures. Temporary swelling, bruising and discomfort around the access site is normal after surgery.

Post-surgery recovery involves carefully monitoring the access for maturation while avoiding prolonged bleeding, arm elevation to decrease swelling, and protecting the area from trauma that could disrupt the new access. Patients are shown how to check for an adequate blood flow "pulse" in the access.

### Ongoing Access Monitoring and Care

Once a successful dialysis access is established and healed, proper access monitoring and care becomes crucial, including:

- Checking the access thrill or vibration daily for adequate blood flow
- Keeping the access area clean and avoiding trauma
- Exercising the access arm and avoiding pressure on that area
- Managing any stenosis or clotting issues promptly
- Not allowing any injections, IVs or blood pressure monitoring on the access arm

With proper surgery, monitoring and care, a well-functioning AV fistula dialysis access can last many years. Having this vital vascular access created is one of the key steps in preparing for successful, ongoing dialysis treatment for ESRD patients.

**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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# Understanding Symptoms and Treatment Options for Enlarged Prostate (Benign Prostatic Hyperplasia)

**E**nlarged prostate, clinically known as benign prostatic hyperplasia (BPH), is a common condition affecting older men. As the prostate gland grows, it can exert pressure on the urethra, leading to bothersome symptoms and impacting quality of life. In this article, we will explore the symptoms associated with an enlarged prostate and discuss the various treatment options available.

## Symptoms of an Enlarged Prostate

An enlarged prostate can cause a range of symptoms, varying in severity from person to person. Some common signs to watch out for include increased urinary frequency, urgency to urinate, weak urine flow, difficulty initiating or stopping urination, and the sensation of incomplete bladder emptying. Nocturia (frequent nighttime urination) and urinary tract infections may also occur. It's important to note that these symptoms can be indicative of other conditions, so it's essential to consult a healthcare professional for an accurate diagnosis.

## Diagnosis and Evaluation

To diagnose an enlarged prostate, a healthcare provider will evaluate a patient's medical history, perform a physical examination, and may order additional tests. These tests may include a prostate-specific antigen (PSA) blood test, urine flow rate assessment, ultrasound, or cystoscopy. These diagnostic tools help determine the size of the prostate, assess urinary function, and rule out other potential causes of the symptoms.

## Treatment Options

The treatment approach for an enlarged prostate depends on the severity of symptoms, overall health, and personal preferences. In mild cases, a watchful waiting approach may be adopted, with regular monitoring and lifestyle modifications. Lifestyle changes can include avoiding caffeine and alcohol, managing fluid intake, and practicing pelvic floor exercises.



Medications can also be prescribed to alleviate symptoms. Alpha-blockers help relax the muscles around the prostate and bladder neck, improving urine flow. 5-alpha reductase inhibitors reduce the size of the prostate by blocking the conversion of testosterone to dihydrotestosterone, a hormone responsible for prostate growth.

For more severe cases, minimally invasive procedures or surgery may be recommended. Transurethral resection of the prostate (TURP) involves removing excess prostate tissue to relieve urinary obstruction. Other options include laser therapy, transurethral microwave therapy (TUMT), and prostate artery embolization (PAE).

An enlarged prostate, or benign prostatic hyperplasia, can significantly impact a man's quality of life. Recognizing the symptoms and seeking medical advice is crucial for accurate diagnosis and appropriate management. Treatment options range from lifestyle modifications and medication to minimally invasive procedures and surgery, depending on the severity of symptoms. If you or someone you know experiences symptoms associated with an enlarged prostate, consult a healthcare professional to discuss the best course of

action. With appropriate treatment and management, individuals with an enlarged prostate can improve their urinary function and enjoy a better quality of life.



**Alejandro Miranda-Sousa, MD**

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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:

A non-surgical option, Sculptra stimulates collagen production, helping to restore volume and improve skin texture over time.

#### CoolSculpting:

FDA-cleared for various body areas, CoolSculpting offers a non-invasive approach to fat reduction, allowing for targeted treatment without surgery.

#### Evolve Body Contouring:

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

#### Breast Augmentation:

For those seeking enhancement in the chest area, Dr. Garramone specializes in breast augmentation procedures.



### 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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# PSORIASIS AND YOUR FEET

By Dr. Lori DeBlasi, DPM, FACFAS

**P**soriasis is a skin condition that makes skin cells turn over faster than normal. Because of the increased cell death, the dead cells buildup on the surface and form red and dry patches of skin topped with silvery scales. These plaques can occur on the elbows, knees, and bottoms of the feet. Psoriasis can also affect the nails and joints. Psoriasis is an autoimmune disease and can also be more severe in people with a weakened immune system.

Foot problems that can be caused by psoriasis include:

## Skin changes

Most commonly, psoriasis on the foot looks similar to plaque psoriasis in other locations on the body. The plaques are thick and scaly skin areas that can be painful and bleed if cracks appear. They can also be red and itchy.

Psoriasis can mimic severe athlete's foot or contact dermatitis. A podiatrist can help determine the cause of the reddened and itchy feet. Treatment of these conditions may differ.

Another skin variant, occurring in 5% of patients with psoriasis, causes pustules to appear on the palms and soles. They look like yellow or white blisters measuring 2-3mm in diameter. These are not infectious, although they may look like they are. The fluid inside of them is sterile and contains no bacteria. Antibiotics will not affect them. The pustules can be painful due to the fluid buildup. They are seen more in women than men. About 10-25% of people with this type of psoriasis have a family history.

## Nail changes

Nail psoriasis is quite common, however, not everyone with psoriasis will have their nails involved. The nails that are affected with psoriasis may look like they are lifting off from the nailbed. They also may have small indentations in the surface called pitting. Psoriatic nail changes sometimes will look like nail fungus. The thickening, ridging, pitting, lifting and discoloration of the nail comes from abnormalities in the growth of the tissue within the nail bed and not the surface of the nail. If nails are involved, keeping them trimmed does help to visually make them look better.



## Joint changes

Approximately 30% of people that have psoriasis will develop psoriatic arthritis. This is a chronic inflammatory disease of the joints as well as places where tendons and ligaments connect to the bone. Typically, people with psoriatic arthritis will develop psoriasis first and then later the arthritis develops in the joints. The main signs of psoriatic arthritis are like any other type of arthritis including joint pain, stiffness, and swelling. In the feet, psoriatic arthritis typically will affect smaller toe joints rather than larger joints. Sometimes, the toes will get swollen and painful which gives it a sausage-like appearance resulting in "sausage toes". When this occurs, the smaller joints in the toe and the surrounding tendons become inflamed, resulting in the swollen appearance of the toes. The arthritis flares from psoriasis can alternate with periods of remission and no pain. However, the swelling of these toes will often persist. The shoes worn must accommodate for the swollen toes. Shoe gear must have a high and wide toe box so the toes do not become further irritated.

Psoriatic arthritis can also affect areas where the tendons and ligaments attached to the bones. In the feet, this can present as Achilles tendinitis or plantar fasciitis. In these cases, the underlying cause is psoriatic arthritis.

## Treatment

Both psoriatic arthritis and psoriasis are chronic diseases that worsen over time. A podiatrist is part of the care team, including a primary care physician, dermatologist, and a rheumatologist, in treating psoriasis. Treatment depends on the severity of the disease.

Mild cases of psoriasis may be treated with topical steroid creams. More severe cases of psoriasis may need more advanced treatment with medications that help diminish inflammation and others that depress the immune system.

Currently, there is no cure for psoriatic arthritis. Treatment is aimed at controlling symptoms and trying to prevent further joint damage. Occasionally, a cortisone injection can be performed if symptoms are isolated to a single joint.

Lifestyle changes are also beneficial, including losing weight and remaining physically active. It is best to choose activities that are less stressful on the joints in your feet, such as elliptical machine exercises, stationary biking, swimming and water aerobics. It is also recommended to stretch regularly, ice after exercise and wear supportive shoes at all times.

## Prevention

Psoriasis cannot be prevented. With all types of psoriasis, infection and stress are suspected trigger factors. Some patients will identify their own triggers that will make it worse. Additional stress can make psoriasis worse. Stress management techniques may help. For other people avoiding alcohol, dry air or too much/too little sunlight. If identified, avoiding these triggers may help diminish symptoms.

The most important action is to seek medical advice and help when you notice any changes in your feet.

*Disclaimer: This content is not intended to be a substitute for professional medical advice, diagnosis, or treatment. Always seek the advice of your physician or other qualified health care provider with any questions you may have regarding a medical condition.*

## Lori DeBlasi, DPM, FACFAS

Dr. Lori DeBlasi is certified by the American Board of Foot and Ankle Surgery®. Dr. DeBlasi works at Family Foot & Leg Center at the Estero office. She is accepting new patients. To make an appointment, call 239-430-3668 or visit [www.NaplesPodiatrist.com](http://www.NaplesPodiatrist.com).



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# FGCU Graduates Are Your Physician Assistants

## Marieb College Master's Program Prescribes Rigorous Training

**A**s part of Marieb College of Health & Human Services at Florida Gulf Coast University, the master of physician assistant studies program prepares medical professionals to provide evidence-based patient-centered care as part of a collaborative healthcare team.

The program's curriculum begins with 15 months of instruction in physiology, pharmacology, anatomy, clinical medicine, clinical integration and clinical skills on campus. The remaining 12 months are dedicated to four-week supervised clinical rotations at healthcare sites off campus. Core clinical rotations are in primary-care medicine, internal medicine, pediatrics, behavioral health, women's health, general surgery and emergency medicine.

Marieb College's rigorous program ensures top-quality professionals enter the workforce to provide comprehensive, compassionate care to patients in many settings. They work in hospitals, medical offices, community health centers, nursing homes, retail and workplace clinics, educational facilities and more.

Physician assistants' duties vary depending on where they work, their level of experience and their specialty. They may be the people in your doctor's office or urgent-care clinic entrusted to work with you in some of these ways:

- Taking medical histories
- Conduct physical exams
- Diagnosing and treating illness
- Ordering and interpreting tests
- Developing treatment plans
- Counseling on preventive care
- Performing procedures or assisting in surgery

Demand for physician assistants like those graduating from FGCU is expected to grow 27% by 2032, much faster than the average for all occupations, according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. With hands-on learning in state-of-the-art facilities and the individualized attention of dedicated faculty, Marieb College graduates are poised to lead this growing field.

### Marieb College a top draw for PAs

When the time came for Allayna Vanderheid to consider physician assistant graduate programs, FGCU topped the list of possibilities. Vanderheid



gained a favorable impression of the program long before she enrolled. Her sister, Zoe, earned her master's degree in physician assistant studies at FGCU in 2021.

"Zoe really loved her program at FGCU," said Vanderheid, who completed her master's in physician assistant studies in December 2023. "It was an easy decision for me to add it to my applications. When I had an admissions interview, they liked me, and I liked them, and it worked out perfectly."

Indeed, her educational journey culminated in the best possible way, by her landing a position at an orthopedics practice in Naples — her hometown.

### Smaller class sizes, accessible faculty

At FGCU, students like Vanderheid experience the benefits of close peer cohorts and personal interaction with faculty. Classes of just 20 students are the norm.

Professors are accessible in person and online for questions from class or about homework, research or career paths. As a result, they observe the personalities and learning styles of each student and how they will best absorb and learn the information they are teaching.

Marieb College's students also benefit from the varied teaching methods faculty use. These range from lectures to a mentor-mentee scheme in which

younger students interact with more senior ones on assignments. Professor-led reviews helped students focus on what they should know for their exams.

Many of the professors worked or still work as PAs in addition to teaching. This means they can often illustrate concepts by drawing on their own professional experiences. They may show images of CT scans or chest X-rays of ER patients to classes. After learning a patient's history, the students ask questions and then spell out a course of treatment.

### Marieb graduates prepared to excel

Marieb College's PA program has a proven record of success, with all graduating cohorts attaining first-time board certification pass rates above the national average and overall pass rates of 100%.

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Building on the success of the first five graduating cohorts of the master of physician assistant studies, Marieb College of Health & Human Services looks forward to expanding the program to meeting growing demand for healthcare professionals in Southwest Florida and beyond.

For more information about Marieb College's master of physician assistant studies program, go to [fgcu.edu/mariebcollege](http://fgcu.edu/mariebcollege), email [paprogram@fgcu.edu](mailto:paprogram@fgcu.edu) or call 239-745-4477.



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# MEMORY MATTERS

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

There are many reasons to live in southwest Florida. The wonderful weather, beautiful beaches, no state income tax, and many activities to enjoy. And while the weather may be a big draw, we know in the dog days of summer, like August, it is extremely hot and humid. One of the things that can impact our quality of life is becoming dehydrated in the summer heat. As we age, we are at higher risk for dehydration. Our brain can be impacted by dehydration, so we want to ensure we are staying hydrated because a hydrated brain is a happier brain. Let's look at some of the reasons for this, and also identify some tips to stay hydrated.

So how do you know if you are dehydrated? There are a number of ways, but one of the easiest ways to identify if you may be dehydrated is noting the number of times you go to the bathroom. According to Dr. Dana Cohen, the co-author of *Quench*, a book about the science behind hydration, going to the bathroom every two to three hours is an indicator of adequate hydration. Simply stated, if you are not urinating, you are not drinking enough.

That begs the question, well if I drink when I am thirsty, I should be hydrated, right? Unfortunately, that is not the case. Particularly as we get older, not only does our body composition change, but by the time we feel thirsty, we may already be in the early stages of dehydration. Those of us over the age of 65 have less water in our bodies than younger adults or children. Many of us simply do not drink enough fluid, for a variety of reasons.

Water is important and necessary for almost every bodily function. Lubrication of joints, pumping blood through our body and regulating body temperature all need adequate water. According to a report by the National Institute of Health, it's estimated that between 17% and 28% of older adults are hospitalized due to dehydration! Signs of dehydration can go unrecognized, or may be attributed to another condition. A few symptoms of dehydration include fatigue and weakness; dizziness and/or loss of coordination; dry mouth and/or dry cough; headache and muscle cramps and chills or heat intolerance.



Another area of concern is that in some cases, dehydration can cause confusion, memory loss and anxiety. Some studies have shown that dehydration can have an impact on one's ability to perform complex cognitive tasks, as well as challenges with attention, executive function, and coordination. Women tend to be more sensitive to the impact of dehydration, and older women are particularly vulnerable. When our bodies lose more water than is replaced, dehydration will occur, and optimal brain function is affected.

Having a healthy brain is one of the things we care about at NPRC. Here are some tips to help you stay hydrated. Please note if you have other health conditions, be sure you are discussing fluid intake with your health care provider.

- **Keep track of what you are consuming.** 8 – 10 servings of 8 ounces of fluid a day is a good guideline. There are a number of apps you can add to your phone to help you. Keeping track manually works as well.

- **If water is not your favorite beverage, look at other options.** Perhaps water is more palatable with some fresh fruit added in. Or you can add a splash of juice to your water. Be mindful that some fruit juices contain added sugar, which can be a concern if you are pre-diabetic or have diabetes.

- **Enjoy beverages with caffeine in moderation** as they can have a mild diuretic effect.

- **You don't have to just drink, you can eat foods high in water content.** Some examples include watermelon, cucumbers, lettuce, celery, tomatoes, zucchini, strawberries, melon, and bell peppers are all good choices.

Be mindful of your fluid intake here in beautiful and hot southwest Florida to keep your brain in tip top shape. Do you have concerns about your memory or cognitive functioning? 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 innovative clinical studies that are focused on addressing memory issues. Take charge of your brain health and schedule your free memory screen today! **#Memoriesmatter**

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[nia.nih.gov](https://nia.nih.gov)  
[ncoa.org](https://ncoa.org)



**Contact NPRC at 239-939-7777  
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# ALIGNMENT MATTERS: Back to School and Back to You

By Shannon Willits

When kids go back to school it shakes up the whole household routine. The new schedule is not just felt in family homes but throughout cities and towns as traffic patterns differ, stores change their products and fall activities begin to take into effect. This change is a chance for parents to plan and prioritize their well-being.

While every family is different, mothers still dominate childcare and household responsibilities. 58% of mothers, from Motherly's State of Motherhood 2023 Survey, report being mostly responsible for household duties and caring for children. 77% report being the parent responsible for scheduling and appointments for the household. Parents, especially mothers, can get caught up in taking care of everyone else while putting their own well-being to the side.

One of the most over-regurgitated words of advice for mothers is, "you have to take better care of yourself." This truth leaves a vague direction which often undermines the intended advice. Parents need to invest in their health at every opportunity these days.

*Planning, simplicity and convenience are the keys to successfully starting and continuing a fitness program.*

## Finding Fitness that Aligns

To be successful in setting a new goal takes thought and planning. Preparing is key for desired outcomes and to set both short-term and long-term goals. When choosing a fitness program think about external and internal factors like:

### External factors:

- Fitness location and schedule
- Fitness program that is efficient, well-rounded and offers a variety of options
- Fitness program that provides resources and supportive community

### Internal factors:

- Finding short-term and long-term motivation
- Preparing with proper clothing and equipment
- Look for the small changes like in your daily living activities like improved posture



## Strategic Planning for Fitness Success!

Choose a fitness modality that you enjoy doing. Finding something fun to do is a key factor in staying committed to a fitness journey. Enjoyment can increase motivation, improve mental health and enhance physical performance. It can also make exercise more sustainable over time and increase social connection.

## Create Accountability

In regard to fitness, accountability is poised to be a powerful incentive. Creating a sense of accountability can be achieved in several ways, such as;

- **Joining a fitness group:** Joining a fitness group can provide a like-minded community, support and accountability. Choose a fitness program that offers classes on the days and times that are convenient for you and your lifestyle. Planning classes for several days every week creates an appointment with the instructor and others in the class for built-in accountability and a sense of community.
- **Hiring a personal trainer:** A personal trainer can provide personalized support, motivation and accountability. They can also help to create a workout plan that is tailored to your individual needs and goals.
- **Tracking progress:** Tracking progress can provide a sense of accomplishment and motivate you to continue with your fitness journey.

## Location, location, location!

With so many boutique fitness options out there, it should be fairly easy to choose one that is conveniently located. *Choosing a studio or gym that is convenient to get to is essential for maintaining a consistent workout routine.* A location that's not a burden to reach, whether it's close to your home, workplace, grocery store or child's school will make it easier to incorporate exercise into your daily schedule. The less effort it takes to get there, the more likely you'll stick to your fitness routine.



Club Pilates strives to include all the discussed components. Delivering a well-rounded workout for each participant can be expected at Club Pilates. It's efficient and time-saving because of the variety of classes offered and Club Pilates is open seven days a week. With interesting equipment, Pilates offers strength and core training, flexibility and mobility exercises and cardiovascular training making it a one stop shop to meet all fitness goals. Plus the locations are conveniently located within Lee County.

A new schedule is an opportunity to embrace earning a better quality of life. Joseph Pilates said "Physical fitness is the first requisite of happiness." These words are true at Club Pilates. Putting oneself first for one hour a day is not a selfish act. Instead, it is an act of self-care, self-improvement and an example to the next generation that living a healthy, active lifestyle is key to a better quality of life.

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## 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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# THE HEALING POWER OF PAWS

## Unleashing the Benefits of Pets for Seniors

The love and companionship of a pet can enrich our lives in countless ways, and for seniors, the bond with a furry friend can be especially meaningful. Pets offer more than just unconditional love and a wagging tail; they can enhance our physical and emotional well-being, provide a sense of purpose, and even expand our social circles.

We'll delve into the benefits of pets for seniors, explore practical considerations for choosing the right pet, and highlight resources available to support you on your journey with a new furry friend.

Whether you're a lifelong pet lover or considering adopting a pet for the first time, discover how the companionship of a furry friend can bring joy, comfort, and companionship to your retirement.

### The Health Benefits of Pets Ownership

No matter if you prefer a trilling meow or playful bark, research has shown that both cats and dogs can have remarkable physical and mental health benefits, including:

- **Reduced Blood Pressure and Stress Levels:** The simple act of petting a dog or cat has been shown to lower blood pressure and decrease the production of stress hormones.
- **Increased Physical Activity:** While cats still encourage movement, owning a dog significantly increases physical activity, which is essential for maintaining a healthy heart and staying active.
- **Enhanced Immune Function:** Studies have shown that interacting with pets can boost your immune system, potentially reducing the risk of illness and promoting faster recovery times.
- **Pain Management:** The warmth and companionship of a pet can alleviate pain and discomfort, particularly for those with chronic conditions. The act of petting a pet can release endorphins, natural pain relievers that can improve mood and overall well-being.
- **Unconditional Love and Companionship:** The unconditional love and unwavering loyalty of a pet can be incredibly comforting, especially during challenging times. Their presence can fill your home with warmth and joy.



- **Improved Social Interaction:** Taking your dog for a walk or visiting the community dog park creates opportunities to connect with people, fostering new friendships and a sense of community.
- **Lowered Risk of Depression:** Pets offer unconditional love and companionship, which can be especially valuable for those who live alone or those who have lost a spouse. Research shows this companionship has been linked to a decreased risk of depression and improved mental health.
- **Eased Anxiety and Loneliness:** The simple act of petting a purring cat or cuddling with a loyal dog has been shown to reduce anxiety and feelings of loneliness. Pets offer a consistent source of comfort and support.
- **Routine and Purpose:** Caring for a pet provides a sense of routine and purpose, which can be especially important as we age. The daily walks, feeding times, and playtime create a structured schedule that can bring a sense of fulfillment and joy.
- **Increased Self-Esteem and Confidence:** The companionship and unconditional love of a pet can boost your self-esteem and confidence. Knowing that you are loved and needed by a furry family member can have a profound impact on your emotional well-being.

### Choosing Your Perfect Companion

Selecting a pet is a personal choice, and the ideal pet for you depends on your individual preferences and lifestyle. Here's a look at some popular dog and cat breeds that suit different activity levels:

### The Best Dogs for Seniors

- **Cavalier King Charles Spaniel:** These gentle and affectionate dogs enjoy leisurely walks and cuddles on the couch.
- **French Bulldog:** Frenchies are known for their playful personalities and low exercise needs, making them a great choice for less active older adults.
- **Shih Tzu:** Shih Tzus are adaptable companions that enjoy short walks and plenty of lap time.
- **Beagle:** Beagles are curious and playful dogs that enjoy daily walks and exploring their surroundings.
- **Cocker Spaniel:** Cocker Spaniels are friendly and adaptable dogs that thrive on companionship and moderate exercise.

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Wednesday, August 21  
3 p.m.

If you're tired of home maintenance, would love more free time, value financial security, and want a solid plan for the future – *all without giving up your luxury retirement lifestyle – The Terraces is the place for you.*

Join us to learn about this distinctive Life Plan Community, including the advantages of our nonprofit status, *peace of mind* provided by a Type A LifeCare contract, our on-site continuum of care, residence options, amenities, services, and programming – *all under one roof!*

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 today by calling 239-204-3469 or take a virtual tour right now! Please join us for our next event!

**The Terraces**  
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- **Boston Terrier:** Boston Terriers are lively and affectionate dogs that enjoy walks and playtime but are also content to relax at home.

- **Labrador Retriever:** Labs are energetic and playful dogs that love to fetch, swim, and go on adventures.

- **Australian Shepherd:** Aussies are intelligent and active dogs that thrive on physical and mental stimulation.

- **Border Collie:** Border Collies are highly intelligent and energetic dogs that excel at herding and agility activities.

**The Best Cats for Seniors**

- **Persian:** Persians are known for their sweet and gentle personalities. They are relatively inactive and enjoy quiet environments.

- **British Shorthair:** British Shorthairs are known for their calm and laid-back personalities. They are content to lounge around and enjoy a good petting session.

- **Ragdoll:** Ragdolls are known for their docile and affectionate personalities. They are laid-back cats that enjoy cuddling and are relatively easy to care for.

- **Maine Coon:** Despite their large size, Maine Coons are gentle giants known for their playful and affectionate nature.

- **Siamese:** Siamese cats are vocal and affectionate companions that thrive on human interaction. They are intelligent and playful cats who enjoy puzzle toys and games.

- **Abyssinian:** Abyssinians are known for their playful and energetic personalities. They are curious and intelligent cats that enjoy interactive play and exploring their surroundings.

Remember, this is just a general guide. Every pet is unique, and their individual personalities and energy levels may vary. It's essential to research different breeds and consider your lifestyle, activity level, and living situation before making a decision.

**Embrace the Joy of Pet Ownership at The Terraces at Bonita Springs**

The companionship of a pet can bring immeasurable joy, comfort, and well-being to your life. Whether you're seeking a loyal walking buddy, a cuddly lap companion or simply a furry friend to share your days with, opening your home to a pet could be one of the most rewarding decisions you make.

The Terraces at Bonita Springs is pet-friendly! Our pet policy is generally 25 pounds and we interview dogs on an individual basis if they are a bit bigger. We're dedicated to creating a community that celebrates the special bond between our residents and their four-legged family members. Contact us online or call 239-208-6963 to schedule a personalized visit, enjoy a tour of our beautifully landscaped grounds, meet fellow pet lovers in our social spaces, and discover a place where your best friend is always welcome.

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# 5 Vaccines Recommended for Adults Age 65 and Older

Lisa Mattingly, M.D.

**A**s we begin to wind down on summer, it's the perfect time to schedule your seasonal flu vaccine and make sure you're up to date on other vaccines that help to protect you against respiratory illnesses, such as COVID-19 or pneumonia. These conditions tend to be more common during the fall and winter months, so you want to be sure you take the necessary preventative measures ahead of time.

August is National Immunization Awareness Month (NIAM), an annual observance that highlights the importance of vaccination for people of all ages, especially those 65 and older. During NIAM, take a moment to ensure you're current on all recommended vaccines for your age group.

## Recommended Vaccines for Older Adults

Vaccines are an important preventative measure that helps to protect yourself and those around you. As we get older, our immune system undergoes dramatic age-related changes. It becomes slower to respond and is much more easily compromised if and when exposed to disease, resulting in slower recovery from injuries, infection, and illness. This is because your body produces fewer immune cells, including white blood cells, with age.

For this very reason, it is vital that you are current on all recommended vaccines. There are five vaccines adults age 65 and older should consider to prevent certain diseases:

### Influenza (Flu)

The flu shot is recommended for everyone six months or older. They usually become available in September, so you're protected during the critical months, typically fall and winter, when influenza is usually common and highly contagious. Influenza is a respiratory virus. For adults over the age of 65, a high-dose flu vaccine is available, which helps create a strong immune response.

### Pneumonia

The CDC recommends pneumococcal vaccination for all adults 65 years or older. The pneumonia vaccine is considered a one-time vaccine that offers protection against over 15 types of pneumococcal



bacteria that commonly cause severe infections in adults. The vaccine is 60 to 70 percent effective in preventing serious disease complications and is expected to last throughout your lifetime.

### Shingles

Older adults should receive two doses of the shingles vaccine, two to six months apart, to help protect against the viral infection. Shingles is a reactivation of chickenpox that develops on the body as a painful rash with blisters. The shingles vaccine is the only way to protect yourself against shingles and postherpetic neuralgia (PHN), the most common complication of shingles.

### Tetanus, Diphtheria, and Pertussis

The Tdap vaccine can prevent tetanus, diphtheria, and pertussis. Tetanus enters the body through cuts and wounds, and diphtheria and pertussis spread from person to person. These three diseases can lead to very serious health problems and can even become life-threatening.

Tetanus causes stiffening in the muscles and can result in difficulty swallowing or breathing. Diphtheria can also cause trouble breathing, in addition to heart failure and paralysis. Pertussis, also known as whooping cough, can cause uncontrollable, violent coughing that makes it hard to breathe, eat, or drink. Adults should receive a booster Tdap vaccine every 10 years.

### COVID-19

The older population remains more vulnerable to severe symptoms from COVID-19. There are currently several vaccines available to protect yourself from the virus, including updated booster shots to address new variants. Some vaccines require two doses, while others are single-dose options. You are considered fully vaccinated two weeks after completing the required doses.

### Maintain Your Health With Vaccines

Take a proactive role in your health and get the necessary vaccines to ensure your safety. Vaccines are a small price to pay for Better Health. It's important to discuss your vaccine options with your healthcare provider. At VIPcare, we offer all recommended vaccines for adults 65 and older. Your health and safety are important to us. Learn more about vaccines and what preventative measures you can take by scheduling an appointment with a VIPcare provider today! Call 239-747-7202

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# PROTECTING YOUR CHILD'S VISION JUST IN TIME FOR A SUCCESSFUL BACK-TO-SCHOOL SEASON

By Bradley Middaugh, O.D. | Optometric Physician

As the back-to-school season approaches, parents and caregivers are busy ensuring that children have everything they need for a successful academic year. However, amidst the excitement of new books, backpacks, and school supplies, it's important not to overlook a crucial aspect of their well-being: their eye health. Good vision is fundamental for learning, and taking steps to safeguard children's eyes is vital. In this article, we will explore the importance of children's eye health and provide practical tips to promote optimal vision during the back-to-school period.

## Understanding the Significance of Children's Eye Health

Healthy eyes play a significant role in a child's educational journey. Clear vision enables them to absorb information, read text, and comprehend lessons effectively. Unfortunately, many vision problems go unnoticed, leading to potential academic challenges. According to the American Optometric Association, one in four children has an undiagnosed vision problem. By prioritizing regular eye exams and adopting healthy eye habits, parents can give their children a solid foundation for academic success.

## Promoting Good Eye Health Habits

**1. Schedule an Eye Exam:** Before the start of the school year, schedule a comprehensive eye exam for your child. Eye exams can detect refractive errors, eye coordination issues, and other vision problems that might hinder learning. Early detection and treatment can prevent potential difficulties.

**2. Encourage Outdoor Play:** Spending time outdoors benefits children in various ways, including their eye health. Natural light helps regulate the development of the eyes, reduces the risk of nearsightedness, and promotes overall visual well-being. Encourage outdoor activities during breaks and after school.

**3. Limit Screen Time:** Excessive screen time can strain the eyes and contribute to vision problems. Establish sensible limits on device usage, ensuring children take regular breaks and practice the 20-20-20 rule: every 20 minutes, look at an object 20 feet away for 20 seconds. This helps reduce eye strain caused by prolonged near-vision tasks.



**4. Proper Lighting:** Ensure that study areas are well-lit to minimize eye strain. Good lighting reduces glare and helps maintain comfortable reading conditions. Utilize desk lamps or overhead lighting to provide adequate illumination.

**5. Healthy Diet:** A balanced diet rich in nutrients, especially those beneficial for eye health like omega-3 fatty acids, vitamin C, and vitamin E, supports optimal vision. Include foods such as leafy greens, citrus fruits, nuts, and fish in your child's diet.

**6. Protective Eyewear:** Encourage your child to wear appropriate protective eyewear during sports or recreational activities. This reduces the risk of eye injuries that can have long-lasting consequences.

As parents and caregivers prepare their children for the upcoming school year, it is crucial to prioritize their eye health. By understanding the significance of good vision and implementing practical tips, we can ensure that children have the best chance at success in their academic pursuits. Regular eye exams, healthy habits, and a supportive environment all contribute to safeguarding their eyes and setting the stage for a productive and enjoyable back-to-school experience. Let's make children's eye health a top priority as we embark on this exciting educational journey!

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**BRADLEY MIDDAGH, O.D.**  
Optometric Physician

Dr. Bradley Middaugh is a board-certified optometric physician committed to providing his patients the highest level of care through innovative technology and a focus on providing an excellent patient experience. Dr. Middaugh has extensive training in ocular disease, vision testing, eyewear prescriptions, specialty contact lenses and the diagnosis and treatment of eye disorders for patients of all ages, from pediatric to geriatric.

Dr. Middaugh graduated from Wake Forest University and earned his doctorate at The University of Alabama at Birmingham. He has been in private practice since 1988 and founded The Fort Myers Eye Center in 1993. In 2020, he joined the Center For Sight team to offer his patients direct access to the some of the finest cataract, LASIK, glaucoma, cornea, retina, and oculo-plastics specialists in Southwest Florida.

Dr. Middaugh has served on the Lee County School Board as a member of the Health Care Advisory Panel and the Early Intervention Health Care Panel. He is also an active member of the Southwest Florida Optometric Association, the Florida Optometric Association, and the American Optometric Association, and Above Board Chamber. In addition, he enjoys leading Medical Mission teams annually to El Salvador.

Dr. Middaugh and his wife, Meg, enjoy raising their two boys. The family is very active in their church, Walk to Emmaus, Kairos Prison Ministry, and enjoy serving on medical mission teams.



# Exploring the Remarkable Benefits of Umbilical Stem Cell Therapy Injections and Intravenous Infusions

By Dr. Doreen DeStefano, NHD, APRN, DNP

In recent years, medical research has made significant strides in harnessing the potential of stem cells for therapeutic purposes. One particularly promising avenue of exploration is umbilical stem cell therapy, which utilizes stem cells derived from umbilical cord tissue. This innovative approach offers a range of potential benefits, with applications spanning various medical fields. In this article, we will explore the advantages of umbilical stem cell therapy, both through injection and intravenous (IV) administration methods.

## Enhanced Tissue Repair and Regeneration:

Umbilical stem cells possess unique properties that make them highly effective in promoting tissue repair and regeneration. These cells are characterized by their ability to differentiate into various cell types, including muscle, bone, cartilage, and nerve cells. When administered through injections or IV infusions, they have been shown to stimulate the regeneration of damaged tissues, facilitating the healing process.

A study published in the *Journal of Orthopaedic Research* (Koh et al., 2013) demonstrated that umbilical cord-derived stem cells injected into the injured joints of rats effectively promoted cartilage repair. Another study published in *Stem Cells Translational Medicine* (Sampaolesi et al., 2006) found that umbilical cord stem cells injected into damaged skeletal muscle led to muscle regeneration and improved functional recovery in mice. These findings highlight the potential of umbilical stem cell therapy for tissue repair.

## Immunomodulation and Anti-inflammatory Effects:

Umbilical stem cells possess immunomodulatory properties, meaning they can regulate and modulate the immune system's response. This ability makes them a promising therapeutic tool for conditions characterized by excessive inflammation, such as autoimmune disorders and chronic inflammatory diseases.

Research published in the *Journal of Autoimmunity* (Sundin et al., 2014) demonstrated that umbilical cord-derived mesenchymal stem cells (MSCs) were effective in suppressing the immune response in a model of multiple sclerosis, resulting in reduced disease severity. Similarly, a study published in the journal *Stem Cells* (Zhang et al., 2004) showed that umbilical cord MSCs reduced inflammation and

improved the survival rate in a mouse model of acute lung injury. These studies indicate the potential of umbilical stem cell therapy in modulating immune responses and alleviating inflammatory conditions.

## Neuroprotective and Neuroregenerative Effects:

The ability of umbilical stem cells to differentiate into various cell types, including neural cells, makes them an attractive option for neurological disorders and injuries. Research has shown promising results in utilizing umbilical stem cell therapy for neuroprotection and neuroregeneration.

A study published in the *Journal Cell Transplantation* (Lu et al., 2013) demonstrated that umbilical cord blood-derived stem cells improved functional recovery and promoted nerve regeneration in a rat model of spinal cord injury. Another study published in *Stem Cells and Development* (Kim et al., 2017) highlighted the neuroprotective effects of umbilical cord MSCs in a mouse model of ischemic stroke.

## Safe and Ethical Source of Stem Cells:

One significant advantage of umbilical stem cell therapy is the ethical and non-controversial nature of its source. Umbilical cord tissue, which is typically discarded after childbirth, serves as a rich source of stem cells. Utilizing these cells bypasses the ethical concerns associated with other sources, such as embryonic stem cells.

Umbilical stem cell therapy, whether administered through injections or intravenous infusions, holds immense promise in the field of regenerative medicine. The ability of these cells to promote tissue repair, modulate the immune response, and facilitate

neuroregeneration offers exciting prospects for treating a wide range of medical conditions. Furthermore, the ethical and non-controversial nature of umbilical cord tissue as a source of stem cells adds to its appeal. However, further research is necessary to optimize treatment protocols and expand our understanding of the therapy's potential. With ongoing scientific advancements, umbilical stem cell therapy may revolutionize medical practice and provide new avenues of hope for patients worldwide.

## Doreen DeStefano, NHD, APRN, DNP

Dr. DeStefano came to Fort Myers in the early 1980's, leaving and coming back again several times until finally settling here in 2001. She has a lifelong background in health and wellness that began in middle school when she started running.

Dr. DeStefano is also a lifelong student. She holds a bachelor's degree in nursing, and another in exercise physiology. She has a Masters (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. (DNP), a doctorate in nursing. She holds numerous licenses and certifications from advanced practice training. She continues to attend educational seminars in integrative and functional medicine twice a year to stay abreast of the most recent, cutting edge therapies available.

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

Contact Root Causes to find out more about these and other Alzheimer's treatments.



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# ESTATE PLANNING: PUTTING YOUR LOVED ONES FIRST

By Carl Zacharia

**W**hen it comes to estate planning, many people focus on the financial and legal aspects, such as minimizing taxes and ensuring that their assets are distributed according to their wishes. While these considerations are undoubtedly important, the true essence of estate planning lies in the people you love and care about the most: your spouse, your family, and your children.

At the heart of every well-crafted estate plan is the desire to provide for and protect your loved ones. It's about ensuring that your spouse has the financial security they need to maintain their quality of life, even in your absence. It's about making sure that your children have access to the resources they need to pursue their dreams and build successful lives of their own. And in the beginning, it is also a plan to ensure that you have taken care of decision making for yourself. At Zacharia Brown, we advise our clients that the number one tool in an estate plan is the Power of Attorney. Without that in place, even a well thought out plan can run into unnecessary problems.

One of the primary goals of estate planning is to ensure that your family has enough money to meet their needs, both in the short-term and the long-term. This means carefully considering their current and future expenses, such as housing, education, healthcare, and daily living costs. By setting aside sufficient funds and creating a clear plan for how those funds should be managed and distributed, you can help to alleviate the financial burdens that often accompany the loss of a loved one.

However, it's important to strike a balance when it comes to providing for your family. While you want to ensure that they have enough money to live comfortably, you don't necessarily want to provide them with so much that they lose the motivation to work and achieve their own goals. After all, personal growth and self-sufficiency are essential components of a fulfilling life.

This is where the guidance of an experienced estate planning attorney can be invaluable. The attorneys at Zacharia Brown can help you create a plan that takes into account your unique family dynamics and values and ensures that your loved ones are cared for in a way that aligns with your wishes and their best interests.



Beyond the financial considerations, estate planning is also about preserving your legacy and passing on your values to future generations. It's an opportunity to share your life experiences, wisdom, and love with your family, even after you're gone. Whether it's through a heartfelt letter, a video message, or a cherished family heirloom, these personal touches can provide comfort and connection for loved ones during difficult times.

Of course, no discussion of estate planning would be complete without mentioning the role of taxes. While minimizing taxes is certainly a valid concern, it should never be the primary focus of your estate plan. After all, what good is saving a few dollars in taxes if it comes at the expense of your family's well-being and security?

Instead, the goal should be to create a plan that balances tax efficiency with the needs and desires of your loved ones. This may involve strategies such as setting up trusts, making charitable donations and taking advantage of tax exemptions and deductions. But ultimately, the driving force behind these decisions should be the well-being of your family, not the desire to avoid taxes at all costs.

Estate planning is about so much more than just numbers and legal documents. It's about the people you love and the legacy you leave behind. By putting your family first and working with an experienced estate planning attorney at Zacharia Brown, you can create a plan that provides for and protects your loved ones now, and for generations to come. Don't wait until it's too late – start the estate planning process with Zacharia Brown today and give your family the gift of peace of mind and security.

## AUGUST 2024 EVENTS!

### Wealth, Wills, & Wine!

- Thursday - August 29 @ 4:00pm - 6:00pm
- Sandalwood Village - 3511 Vanderbilt Beach Rd, Naples, FL 34109
- Featuring Partner Christine Brown and Attorney Ehren Frey

## UPCOMING 2024 EVENTS!

### Downsizers Club of Florida!

- Starting on September 17th @ 10:30am
- Tuesday's Twice Monthly
- Events will be held in East Naples & North Naples

### Medicaid and Medicare 101

- Wednesday - September 25 @ 4:00 pm - 6:00pm
- Area Agency on Aging for SWFL - 2830 Winkler Avenue, suite 112, Fort Myers, FL 33916
- Featuring Partner Carl Zacharia and Jennifer from the SHINE Medicare Program

### Aging Gracefully:

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- Thursday - September 26 @ 2:00 pm - 4:00pm
- Brookdale Bonita Springs - 26850 S Bay Dr, Bonita Springs, FL 34134
- Featuring Partner Christine Brown and Attorney Ehren Frey

### Scan To RSVP!



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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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# CAN A HIGH-TECH CHAIR CURE INCONTINENCE?

By Joseph Gauta, MD, FACOG

Do you wear urinary pads or diapers? Do you leak when you exercise or sneeze? Aging, childbirth, and menopause can all lead to incontinence. There are many treatments such as surgical procedures, pessary devices, and medications to help cure or reduce incontinence.

**T**here is a new device by BTL called Emsella that makes incontinence treatment as simple as sitting in a chair! The Emsella is a unique chair that patients can simply sit and relax in (fully clothed) and have their pelvic floor significantly strengthened during a 28 minute treatment.

The Emsella chair is being touted as the Kegel throne. Each treatment provides the equivalent of doing over 10,000 kegel exercises. It produces high-frequency vibrations with thousands of contractions per session that tighten the pelvic floor muscles and the bladder. Results can often be noticed as quickly as the first treatment. Most women and men will undergo just six sessions in a full three-week program to restore their pelvic muscle strength. The best part is, 67% of treated patients totally eliminated or decreased the use of hygienic pads, and 95% of treated patients improved quality of life.

**Who Is The Right Candidate For BTL Emsella?**  
BTL EMSELLA™ is a great option for patients of any age who desire solution for urinary incontinence and improvement in their quality of life.

**How Long Is The Treatment?**

**How Many Sessions Do I Need?**

Your provider will tailor a treatment plan for you. A typical treatment takes 28 minutes and you will need about 6 sessions, scheduled twice a week.

**What Does The Procedure Feel Like?**

**Is It Painful?**

You will experience tingling and pelvic floor muscle contractions during the procedure. The treatment is painless and you may resume daily activities immediately after the treatment.



**Some comments from local users:**

- I don't have to worry about peeing when I sneeze anymore
- My husband definitely notices the difference
- I just feel lighter down there.

To learn more about this technology please go to our website at [www.FloridaBladderInstitute.com](http://www.FloridaBladderInstitute.com). Call 239-449-7979 to schedule your Emsella consultation today.

**The following patients should not seek Emsella treatment.**

1. Subject is pregnant, planning to get pregnant or within 3 months postpartum;
2. Subject has a pacemaker;
3. Subject has an implant or IUD containing metal (e.g. copper 7);
4. Subject has piercing between the waist and knees and is not willing to remove it before each treatment

**How Fast Will I See Results?**

You may observe improvement after a single session. The results will typically continue to improve over the next few weeks.<sup>1</sup>

This progressive treatment is helping numerous men and women find their freedom, confidence, and get their life back without having to worry about urinary incontinence. Emsella has been featured on the Doctors and in various news and media outlets.

**References:**

1. Body by BTL, A Breakthrough Treatment For Incontinence And Confidence, 2019 Btl Industries Inc.



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# The Relationship Between Inflammation and Sugar Consumption

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

Inflammation is a natural component of the immune system that aids the body through its healing process. However, certain foods, such as sugar, can cause inflammation in the body. While this is normal, overconsumption of sugar can lead to chronic low-grade inflammation, which can contribute to many different health problems.

Let's further explore the relationship between sugar consumption and inflammation and what you can do to protect your health.

## The Connection Between Sugar and Inflammation

When the body senses an injury or infection, it reacts by releasing chemicals that fight off the harmful antigens while also protecting it. This results in inflammation, which can cause warmth, redness, and swelling.

Like a virus or bacteria, sugar can also cause inflammation in the body. Scientists believe that this is because sugar stimulates the production of free fatty acids in the liver. The compounds that result as the body digests these free fatty acids can then trigger inflammatory processes.

In 2018, a systematic review found several studies that linked the consumption of more dietary sugar, primarily due to sugary drinks, with chronic inflammation. The studies found that those who had a higher sugar diet possessed more inflammatory markers in the blood, especially a marker called C-reactive protein.

Additionally, a 2014 study found that those who reduce their sugary drink intake experienced a decrease in inflammatory markers in the blood.

Findings such as this not only show that sugar can cause inflammation, but that the inflammation caused by sugar can be undone by decreasing sugar consumption. However, it is important to do this sooner than later since, while you can lower inflammatory markers, it is not possible to undo the damage already caused by chronic inflammation.

## The Dangers of Chronic Inflammation

Some of the signs of chronic inflammation can include:

- body pain
- anxiety, depression, and other mood disorders
- weight gain
- insomnia and constant fatigue
- frequent infections
- diarrhea, constipation, and acid reflux

Chronic inflammation can also increase the risk of certain health conditions, including depression, diabetes, heart disease, cancer, and dementia.

## Detecting Chronic Inflammation

Chronic inflammation can be gauged based on the presence of inflammatory markers, some of which include C-reactive protein (CRP), plasma viscosity (PV), and erythrocyte sedimentation rate (ESR). These markers are measured through blood tests, and they serve an important role in helping doctors diagnose and monitor inflammatory conditions.

Research has shown that sugar not only increases inflammatory markers but also increases LDL cholesterol and insulin resistance. A study on 29 healthy individuals saw these increases after the participants drank just one can of soda each day, consuming an additional 40 grams of added sugar.

Not only does sugar cause inflammatory markers to spike, but this effect lasts even after the food is consumed. For example, a study on fructose consumption found that a 50 g dose of fructose caused a spike in CRP 30 minutes later, and it remained high for more than two hours.

## How Does Sugar Cause Inflammation?

We've seen the studies showing that eating sugar causes an increase in inflammatory markers, but why is it that this occurs?

There are many ways that sugar may affect the body and cause inflammation, such as:

### Increased Gut Permeability

Consuming too much sugar can increase the risk of obesity and type 2 diabetes, two conditions that can increase gut permeability.

The gut is a central part of the body, playing a significant role in the immune system. However, when gut permeability increases, toxins, bacteria, and undigested food can more easily move out of the gut and into the bloodstream. Your body then reacts to these foreign components with inflammation.

With high sugar consumption, the gut is continually "leaky," leading to chronic low-grade inflammation.

### Excess AGE Production

Advanced glycation end products (AGEs) are harmful compounds that can form when fat or protein combines with sugar in the bloodstream. The more sugar you consume, the more sugar in the bloodstream, and the greater chance of this happening.

When there are too many AGEs in the body, oxidative stress and inflammation can occur.

### Weight Gain

One of the complications of excess sugar consumption is weight gain, which can lead to inflammation in two ways: excess fat can increase inflammatory markers and may lead to insulin resistance, increasing sugar levels in the bloodstream.

### Higher LDL Cholesterol

There are two types of cholesterol in the body, low-density lipoprotein (LDL) cholesterol and high-density lipoprotein (HDL) cholesterol. Despite there being two types of cholesterol, one is often referred to as "bad" cholesterol (LDL), while the other is referred to as "good" (HDL).

This is because LDL cholesterol contributes to the build-up of fatty deposits in the arteries. This then narrows the arteries and increases the risk of stroke, heart attack, or other cardiovascular health concerns.

Excess LDL cholesterol has also been associated with higher levels of the inflammatory marker C-reactive protein (CRP).

Sugar can increase LDL cholesterol, which then increases inflammation.



### Risks of Chronic Inflammation

While sugar is not the only cause of inflammation in the body, it is a contributor, and many health conditions can result from excess sugar consumption and the resultant chronic low-grade inflammation.

### Diabetes

One effect that a diet high in added sugar can cause to the body is insulin resistance. Insulin is a hormone responsible for turning blood sugar into energy for cells. However, with insulin resistance, the body is unable to use the sugar circulating in the blood, and this sugar can end up building up.

Over time, this insulin resistance can lead to diabetes, a comorbidity factor for many other health concerns.

### Heart Disease

Multiple studies have reported a strong link between sugary drink consumption and heart disease risk. There are many ways in which sugar can lead to this increased risk, including the increase in LDL cholesterol, increased blood pressure, increased inflammatory markers, insulin resistance, and obesity.

The relationship between sugar and heart disease can be significant, with one study on more than 75,000 women finding that a diet high in sugar and refined carbohydrates resulted in a 98% greater risk of heart disease.

### Cancer

Multiple studies have shown a relationship between sugar consumption and increased cancer risk.

More research is needed to further examine this relationship, but scientists suspect that the inflammatory nature of sugar is what causes the increased risk of cancer. This is because chronic inflammation may damage the cells of the body and their DNA.

Other scientists believe that chronically high insulin levels play a role in cancer development, something to which excess sugar consumption also contributes.

### How to Reduce Inflammation Naturally

You can reduce inflammation in many ways, with one of the biggest being a reduction in sugar consumption. Multiple studies have shown that eating less sugar can decrease inflammation, so this should be a top priority.

As a guide, the World Health Organization (WHO) recommends that your sugar intake not exceed 10% of your daily energy intake, but aiming for a lower percentage may offer greater health benefits.

Another way to naturally reduce inflammation is by getting enough sleep. Studies have shown that inflammatory markers rise when you don't get enough sleep. So, to help with your inflammation, make sure that you are spending enough time asleep each night.

To lower inflammation, it is also helpful to avoid other foods that commonly cause inflammation. While sugar can cause inflammation in the body, it is not the only food to be a culprit of this, with some other inflammatory foods including:

- trans fats (fried foods, fast food, donuts, cookies)
- saturated fats (red meat, decadent desserts, full-fat dairy products)
- alcohol
- excess omega-6 fatty acids (sunflower oil, corn oil, vegetable oil)
- MSG (soy sauce, prepared soups, deli meats)
- refined carbohydrates (white rice, bread, white potatoes)

Managing your weight is another important way to reduce the risk of inflammation since obesity is a risk factor for chronic inflammation. This is because excess fat in the body can increase inflammatory factors, so weight loss is the most effective strategy for reducing chronic inflammation.

A final way to address inflammation is by correcting any hormonal balances. The sex hormones of testosterone and estrogen can slow the production of inflammatory factors. So, if estrogen or testosterone levels are low, which can occur with age and certain life stages (i.e., menopause), the production of inflammatory factors may increase.

By working with a doctor to test your hormone levels and address any imbalances, you could reduce chronic inflammation.

### Sugar and Inflammation

While sugar is a component of many tasty drinks and beverages, consuming it in excess can cause chronic inflammation in the body, which can increase the risk of health conditions such as obesity, heart disease, diabetes, and cancer.

Sugar is not the only thing to blame for chronic inflammation, but it does play a key role and limiting sugar consumption has shown significant improvements in inflammation levels.

Other ways to address inflammation and lower it include getting enough sleep and correcting hormonal imbalances. If you are concerned about inflammation in your body, reach out to your doctor to check your inflammatory markers and discuss how to lower them and protect your health.

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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**

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# Understanding Polycystic Kidney Disease

By Neetu Malhotra, MD

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

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

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

## The primary symptoms of PKD are as follows:

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

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

## PKD Treatment

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

## How Can the Progression of Kidney Disease Be Delayed?

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

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

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## Chronic Kidney Disease Program

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

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

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

## Services Provided

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

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- Dietitian Services for Kidney Patients
- Disorders of Blood Chemistry
- Electrolyte Disorders
- Fluid Overload, Edema (swelling)
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- Hypertension
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- 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 educational 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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# Digestive Health:

## The Role of Acupuncture in Holistic Wellness

By Dr. Mary Lambert, AP, DOM

*"All disease begins in the gut,"* a quote attributed to Hippocrates, underscores the profound impact of digestion on both physical health and overall well-being. Our digestive system is not merely a means of processing food; it serves as a cornerstone for nourishing our cells, supporting organ function, and maintaining immune system strength. The process of digestion breaks down food into essential nutrients—vitamins, minerals, proteins, and carbohydrates—that our body absorbs and utilizes for energy, growth, and repair. This intricate process not only affects our physical health but also influences mental clarity and emotional stability. Therefore, maintaining good digestive health is pivotal for living a vibrant and balanced life.

In Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM), digestive health hinges on holistic principles that emphasize the interconnectedness of body systems and the balance of Qi, or vital energy. Key organs like the Spleen, Stomach, and Intestines play crucial roles in maintaining overall well-being. Digestive disorders in TCM often stem from Qi imbalances influenced by diet, emotional stress, and environmental factors. Treatment typically integrates acupuncture, herbal medicine, dietary adjustments, and lifestyle changes to restore balance, support long-term digestive health, and enhance vitality. Acupuncture, an ancient practice rooted in TCM, has garnered increasing recognition in modern medicine for its myriad health benefits, particularly in improving digestive health.

### Common Digestive Issues

Digestive health is paramount for overall well-being, and a variety of disorders can disrupt this delicate balance, including:

- **Irritable Bowel Syndrome (IBS):** Characterized by abdominal pain, bloating, and altered bowel habits, IBS affects millions worldwide. Acupuncture has shown promise in managing symptoms by regulating gastrointestinal motility and reducing hypersensitivity. Research published in the *World Journal of Gastroenterology* supports its efficacy in improving IBS symptoms.
- **Gastroesophageal Reflux Disease (GERD):** GERD causes chronic acid reflux, leading to heartburn, regurgitation, and discomfort. Acupuncture has been

studied for its ability to reduce the frequency and severity of symptoms associated with GERD. Studies published in the *Journal of Gastroenterology and Hepatology* suggest acupuncture can be a valuable adjunct therapy in managing GERD symptoms.

- **Constipation and Diarrhea:** Both constipation and diarrhea can significantly impact quality of life. Acupuncture has been found to regulate bowel movements by enhancing gastrointestinal motility and promoting regularity. Studies in the *Annals of Internal Medicine* highlight acupuncture's potential as an effective treatment option for chronic constipation.
- **Bloating and Abdominal Discomfort:** These symptoms often accompany various digestive disorders and can be alleviated through acupuncture, which helps regulate digestive function and reduce discomfort.
- **Inflammatory Bowel Diseases (IBD):** Conditions like ulcerative colitis and Crohn's disease involve chronic inflammation of the digestive tract. Acupuncture's anti-inflammatory effects have been studied extensively, with research published in the *Journal of Digestive Diseases* showing promising results in reducing inflammation and improving clinical outcomes in patients with ulcerative colitis.

### How Acupuncture Benefits Digestive Health

- 1. Regulating Gastrointestinal Function:** Acupuncture enhances gastrointestinal motility, regulates bowel movements, and reduces symptoms of constipation and diarrhea. Studies have shown that acupuncture can improve symptoms of IBS by modulating the motility of the gastrointestinal tract and alleviating visceral hypersensitivity.
- 2. Reducing Inflammation:** Chronic inflammation is a common feature of many digestive disorders. Acupuncture's anti-inflammatory properties can help mitigate inflammation in conditions such as ulcerative colitis and Crohn's disease, improving overall digestive health and reducing disease severity.
- 3. Alleviating Stress and Anxiety:** Psychological factors like stress and anxiety can exacerbate digestive issues. Acupuncture promotes relaxation and reduces stress levels, which in turn can alleviate digestive symptoms. Clinical trials have demonstrated acupuncture's efficacy in reducing stress and anxiety, thereby improving overall digestive function.

**4. Enhancing Immune Function:** A robust immune system is crucial for maintaining digestive wellness. Acupuncture has been shown to enhance immune function by stimulating the production of natural killer cells and other immune factors, bolstering the body's defenses against infections and inflammation.

### Clinical Trials and Research

Numerous clinical trials have validated acupuncture's efficacy in treating various digestive disorders:

- **IBS:** Research published in the *American Journal of Gastroenterology* concluded that acupuncture is a safe and effective treatment for IBS, with significant improvements in symptoms compared to control groups.
- **GERD:** Studies in the *Journal of Gastroenterology and Hepatology* indicate that acupuncture can reduce the frequency and severity of heartburn and reflux symptoms, making it a valuable complementary therapy for managing GERD.
- **Constipation:** Trials published in the *Annals of Internal Medicine* have demonstrated that acupuncture improves stool frequency and consistency in patients with chronic constipation, offering an alternative treatment approach.

**Integrating Acupuncture into Digestive Health Care**  
Acupuncture has strong evidence and scientific research supporting its benefits for digestive health and can be pivotal in integrated treatment plans for digestive disorders. Patients should consult licensed acupuncturists for personalized treatment plans that may include acupuncture alongside dietary adjustments, stress management, Chinese herbs, and conventional medicine. By addressing imbalances and enhancing healing mechanisms, acupuncture regulates gastrointestinal function, reduces inflammation, alleviates stress, and boosts immune function, offering a versatile option supported by clinical trials. Remember to always consult your healthcare professionals before starting any new treatment regimen.

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# Back-to-School & Oral Health: A Window to Your Overall Health

Ricardo S. Bocanegra, D.D.S.

**Y**our oral health is more important than you may realize. Get the facts about how the health of your mouth, teeth and gums may affect your general health.

Did you know that your oral health can offer clues about your overall health? Or that problems in your mouth can affect the rest of your body? Understand the intimate connection between oral health and overall health and what you can do to protect yourself.

### What's the connection between oral health and overall health?

Your mouth is teeming with bacteria — most of them harmless. Normally the body's natural defenses and good oral health care, such as daily brushing and flossing, can keep these bacteria under control. However, harmful bacteria can sometimes grow out of control and cause oral infections, such as tooth decay and gum disease. In addition, dental procedures, medications, or treatments that reduce saliva flow, disrupt the normal balance of bacteria in your mouth or breach the mouth's normal protective barriers may make it easier for bacteria to enter your bloodstream.

### What conditions may be linked to oral health?

Your oral health may affect, be affected by or contribute to various diseases and conditions, including:

- **Endocarditis.** Gum disease and dental procedures that cut your gums may allow bacteria to enter your bloodstream. If you have a weak immune system or a damaged heart valve, this can cause infection in other parts of the body — such as an infection of the inner lining of the heart (endocarditis).

- **Cardiovascular disease.** Some research suggests that heart disease, clogged arteries and stroke may be linked to oral bacteria, possibly due to chronic inflammation from periodontitis — a severe form of gum disease.

- **Pregnancy and birth.** Gum disease has been linked to premature birth and low birth weight.

- **Diabetes.** Diabetes reduces the body's resistance to infection — putting the gums at risk. In addition, people who have inadequate blood sugar control may develop more-frequent and severe infections of the gums and the bone that holds teeth in place, and they may lose more teeth than do people who have good blood sugar control.

- **HIV/AIDS.** Oral problems, such as painful mucosal lesions, are common in people who have HIV/AIDS.

- **Osteoporosis.** Osteoporosis — which causes bones to become weak and brittle — may be associated with periodontal bone loss and tooth loss.

- **Alzheimer's disease.** Tooth loss before age 35 may be a risk factor for Alzheimer's disease.

- **Other conditions.** Other conditions that may be linked to oral health include Sjogren's syndrome — an immune system disorder — and eating disorders.

Be sure to tell your dentist if you're taking any medications or have had any changes in your overall health — especially if you've had any recent illnesses or you have a chronic condition.



### How can I protect my oral health?

To protect your oral health, resolve to practice good oral hygiene every day. For example:

- Brush your teeth at least twice a day.
- Replace your toothbrush every three to four months.
- Floss daily.
- Eat a healthy diet and limit between-meal snacks.
- Schedule regular dental checkups.

Also, watch for signs and symptoms of oral disease and contact your dentist as soon as a problem arises. Remember, taking care of your oral health is an investment in your overall health.

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# CLEAR SKIN FOR THE CLASSROOM: Effective Acne Treatments for Teens and Adults

By Dr. Andrew Kontos

**A**s the back-to-school season approaches, many teens and adults alike find themselves concerned about one common skin issue: acne. Whether you're heading to high school, college, or even returning to teach, clear skin can boost confidence and help you put your best face forward. Let's explore some effective acne treatments suitable for both teens and adults, ensuring you're ready to tackle the new academic year with a clearer complexion.

## UNDERSTANDING ACNE

Before diving into treatments, it's crucial to understand what causes acne. Hormonal changes, stress, genetics, and certain foods can all contribute to breakouts. Acne occurs when hair follicles become clogged with oil and dead skin cells, leading to pimples, blackheads, and whiteheads.

## OVER-THE-COUNTER SOLUTIONS

For mild to moderate acne, over-the-counter (OTC) treatments can be highly effective:

- 1. Benzoyl Peroxide:** This ingredient kills acne-causing bacteria and helps remove excess oil and dead skin cells. It's available in various strengths and forms, including face washes, creams, and spot treatments.
- 2. Salicylic Acid:** This beta-hydroxy acid (BHA) helps unclog pores and reduce inflammation. It's particularly effective for blackheads and whiteheads.
- 3. Alpha Hydroxy Acids (AHAs):** Ingredients like glycolic acid and lactic acid can help exfoliate the skin, reducing the likelihood of clogged pores.
- 4. Retinol:** An over-the-counter form of vitamin A, retinol can help unclog pores and boost cell turnover, improving skin texture and reducing acne.

## PRESCRIPTION TREATMENTS

For more severe or persistent acne, consulting a dermatologist may be necessary. They might prescribe:

- 1. Topical Retinoids:** Stronger versions of retinol, like tretinoin or adapalene, can be highly effective in treating acne and preventing new breakouts.
- 2. Oral Antibiotics:** These can help reduce inflammation and kill acne-causing bacteria from the inside out.
- 3. Hormonal Treatments:** For women, birth control pills or anti-androgen medications can help regulate hormones that contribute to acne.

**4. Isotretinoin:** Reserved for severe, cystic acne, this powerful oral medication can provide long-lasting results but requires close medical supervision due to potential side effects.

## NATURAL REMEDIES

Some individuals prefer natural approaches to acne treatment:

- 1. Tea Tree Oil:** Known for its antibacterial properties, tea tree oil can be an effective spot treatment when diluted properly.
- 2. Green Tea:** Applied topically or consumed as a beverage, green tea's antioxidants may help reduce inflammation and sebum production.
- 3. Honey and Cinnamon Masks:** These ingredients have antimicrobial properties that may help fight acne-causing bacteria.

## LIFESTYLE CHANGES

In addition to topical treatments, certain lifestyle modifications can significantly improve acne:

- 1. Proper Cleansing:** Wash your face twice daily with a gentle, non-comedogenic cleanser to remove excess oil and dirt.
  - 2. Hydration:** Drinking plenty of water helps flush toxins from your body and keeps skin hydrated.
  - 3. Healthy Diet:** While the link between diet and acne is still debated, many find that reducing dairy and high-glycemic foods helps improve their skin.
  - 4. Stress Management:** Practice stress-reduction techniques like meditation or yoga, as stress can exacerbate acne.
  - 5. Regular Exercise:** Working out can improve circulation and reduce stress, potentially benefiting your skin. Just be sure to cleanse your face post-workout.
  - 6. Avoid Touching Your Face:** Keep your hands away from your face to prevent transferring bacteria and oil.
  - 7. Choose Non-Comedogenic Products:** Use skincare and makeup products labeled "non-comedogenic" to avoid clogging pores.
- BACK-TO-SCHOOL TIPS**  
As you prepare for the new school year, consider these acne-fighting strategies:

- 1. Establish a Consistent Skincare Routine:** Stick to a morning and evening regimen that works for your skin type.
- 2. Be Patient:** Most acne treatments take 4-8 weeks to show significant improvement. Don't give up too quickly!
- 3. Stay Prepared:** Keep oil-absorbing sheets and a gentle spot treatment in your backpack for quick touch-ups.
- 4. Don't Over-Treat:** Using too many products or treatments can irritate your skin and worsen acne. Keep it simple and consistent.
- 5. Seek Support:** If acne is affecting your self-esteem, don't hesitate to talk to a counselor or trusted adult.

Remember, everyone's skin is different, and what works for one person may not work for another. It may take some trial and error to find the perfect combination of treatments for your unique skin. With patience, consistency, and the right approach, you can achieve clearer skin and face the new school year with confidence. If your acne persists or significantly impacts your daily life, don't hesitate to consult a dermatologist for personalized advice and treatment options.

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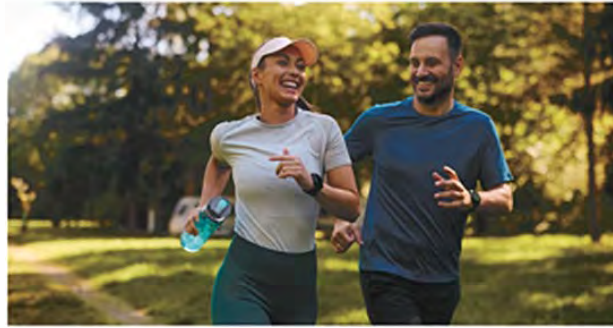
# The Powerful Benefits of IV Hydration Therapy

In recent years, IV hydration therapy has gained popularity as a quick and effective way to combat dehydration, boost energy levels, and promote overall wellness. This innovative treatment, once reserved for hospital patients, is now widely available in specialized clinics and even offered as a mobile service. But what exactly is IV hydration, and why are so many people turning to it?

IV hydration therapy involves the direct infusion of fluids, electrolytes, vitamins, and sometimes medications into the bloodstream through an intravenous line. This method bypasses the digestive system, allowing for rapid absorption and immediate effects. While drinking water is still essential for daily hydration, IV therapy offers unique advantages that have made it a go-to solution for various situations.

One of the primary benefits of IV hydration is its speed and efficiency. When you drink water, it takes time for your body to process and distribute it to your cells. In contrast, IV hydration delivers fluids directly to your bloodstream, providing almost instant hydration. This rapid rehydration can be particularly beneficial for those suffering from severe dehydration due to illness, intense physical activity, or overindulgence in alcohol.

Athletes and fitness enthusiasts have embraced IV hydration as a recovery tool. After strenuous workouts or competitions, the body needs to replenish not only water but also electrolytes and nutrients lost through sweat. IV therapy can quickly restore these essential elements, potentially reducing recovery time and improving performance in subsequent training sessions or events.



For those battling hangovers, IV hydration has become a popular remedy. Alcohol is a diuretic that can lead to significant dehydration, contributing to many hangover symptoms. An IV drip can rapidly rehydrate the body, while also delivering vitamins and minerals that may have been depleted during alcohol consumption. Many users report feeling relief from headaches, nausea, and fatigue after receiving IV hydration treatment.

Beyond addressing acute conditions, IV hydration therapy is also used as a wellness and preventive measure. Some people receive regular treatments to boost their immune system, increase energy levels, or improve skin health. The customizable nature of IV drips allows for the inclusion of various vitamins and nutrients tailored to individual needs, such as vitamin C for immune support or B vitamins for energy enhancement.

IV hydration may also benefit individuals with certain medical conditions. For example, those suffering from chronic fatigue syndrome, fibromyalgia, or migraines may find relief through specialized IV cocktails. However, it's crucial to consult with a healthcare provider before using IV therapy for any medical condition.

As with any medical treatment, it's essential to receive IV hydration from reputable providers who follow proper safety protocols. Potential users should also be aware that the effects of IV hydration can vary from person to person, and multiple sessions may be necessary to achieve desired results.

In conclusion, IV hydration therapy offers a range of potential benefits, from rapid rehydration to customized nutrient delivery. As research continues and more people experience its effects, this innovative treatment is likely to become an increasingly common tool in the pursuit of health and wellness.

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# Weathering the Storm: 5 Disaster Preparedness Tips for You, an Adult Child with a Senior Parent

By Cynthia Perthuis, CDP, CADDCT, CSA

## Safeguard Your Aging Loved One During Storm Season

After Hurricane Ian hit in 2022, we introduced you to Stan and Mary. Stan and Mary lived in a high-rise in Florida when the hurricane hit. Although they were in an evacuation zone, everyone thought they would be safe because the staff in their building was top-notch, plus it was built to withstand hurricane-force winds. However, what they and most people did not consider is what would happen if the power went out for long periods of time? What would happen if staff could not make it to the building due to storm damage?

As an adult child, it is essential for you to proactively prepare for potential disasters like hurricanes, heat waves, flooding, and blizzards. This is especially true if you have recently noticed a parent or loved one displaying dementia-like symptoms. Here are five real-life situations for you to consider when preparing for any natural disaster.

### Power Outages and Medical Equipment

Power outages can pose significant challenges for seniors who rely on medical equipment like scooters, lift chairs, CPAP machines, or even something simple like hearing aids, which use rechargeable batteries. Does your family member use electrical medical devices? Do they have alternative methods of using or charging their equipment? Do they actually know how to use alternative methods? Investing in a portable generator or a battery backup system is only good if they know where it is and how to use it.

### Ensuring Food and Water Supply

After Hurricane Ian, I met Joan\*, age 76, and her daughter Michelle\* on the 13th floor of an over-55 community in Naples. When I met them, they had just begun the long trek from the fourteenth floor to the first floor via the stairs because the elevator was out. It was obvious the stress of the situation had overwhelmed them both. After one flight of stairs, Joan gave up. She had a broken foot (in a boot) and was tired and wanted to go back upstairs. Michelle knew they



needed to either go all the way to the first floor to get food and medical supplies or go back up one flight to wait it out. Her mom, who had undiagnosed cognitive decline, could not understand why Michelle was adamant they had to continue down more stairs.

### Temperature Control and Electric Shutters

Susan's\* home had electric storm shutters to protect her windows. They worked effectively during the storm. However, the building lost power, and the generator system was flooded. This meant there was no electricity, and she could not open any windows to get airflow into the apartment. Her lovely home with all its amenities became a hotbox, which could have easily caused heat exhaustion.

### Assess Your Loved One's Cognitive Ability

If you have ever wondered if your loved one may be experiencing cognitive decline, now is the time to assess their cognitive level. Here are some simple things for you to consider and questions you can ask to determine if they are able to remain in their home. What would you do if there was a fire? Can your loved one tell you what they would do, and is it the right thing? Would they call 911? Would they leave the house? Can your loved one hear a fire alarm, or do they know what a fire alarm means? I had a client who lived alone, but his family decided to move him into a memory care community because his cognitive ability declined to the point where he did not know what a fire alarm sounded like. Do they ever confuse the telephone and the television remote control? In times of emergency,

this is a big problem. The last thing you would want is for your mom or dad to try to call for help using the television remote. Do they rely on medication support from someone who may not be able to get to them in a storm or emergency? If they have an automatic pill dispenser or an aide that provides medical care, what will happen if the aide is unable to get to their home? Would they know the right medication to take, and would they remember to do it?

### Proactive Planning:

Proactive planning is key to ensuring your loved one's safety. Now is the time to create a comprehensive emergency plan with essential contact information for healthcare providers, emergency services, and neighbors who can offer assistance. Compile copies of important documents like medical records, insurance information, and identification papers in a secure location. Sharing them with appropriate people via Google Drive, One Drive, or Dropbox can make it much easier for everyone. Establish regular communication protocols and ensure your loved one understands the plan and their role in it.

If you do not think your loved one would know how to manage in an emergency situation, it is time for you to act. Information is always important. You can read this article to learn more about how Senior Living Providers plan for emergency situations:

<https://www.seniorcare-nyfl.com/elder-care-and-senior-living-blog/how-senior-living-communities-prepare-for-natural-disasters-1667516343701.html>

We find most families do not understand how communities prepare and all the work they do to make sure your loved one gets the best care possible. We are here to answer any questions you have and can help you create a disaster preparedness plan for you and your loved one. We can also help you after the disaster by finding short-term accommodations until things are back in order.

*\*Names have changed to protect our client's privacy.*



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# KEEPING COOL: How CBD Can Help Pets Beat the Summer Heat

As temperatures soar during the hot summer months, pet owners are always on the lookout for ways to keep their furry friends comfortable and healthy. While traditional methods like providing shade, fresh water, and limiting outdoor time are essential, many pet owners are turning to CBD as an additional tool to help their pets cope with the challenges of summer heat. This natural compound, derived from hemp plants, may offer several benefits for pets during the hottest time of the year.

CBD, short for cannabidiol, is known for its potential to reduce inflammation, ease anxiety, and promote overall well-being in both humans and animals. As the summer heat can exacerbate various health issues in pets, CBD's properties may be particularly beneficial during this season.

One of the primary concerns during hot weather is inflammation. Heat can cause or worsen inflammatory conditions in pets, leading to discomfort and reduced mobility. CBD's anti-inflammatory properties may help alleviate these issues, allowing pets to move more comfortably even on scorching days. This can be especially helpful for older pets or those with chronic conditions like arthritis, which can be aggravated by extreme temperatures.

Anxiety is another common problem for pets during summer. Thunderstorms, fireworks, and changes in routine due to vacations or visitors can all contribute to increased stress levels. CBD has shown promise in reducing anxiety in both humans and animals,

potentially helping pets stay calm during stressful summer events. This can be particularly useful for pets who become agitated during thunderstorms or fireworks displays, which are common occurrences during the summer months.

Heat can also disrupt pets' sleep patterns, leading to restlessness and irritability. CBD may help promote better sleep quality, allowing pets to rest more comfortably even when temperatures remain high overnight. Improved sleep can contribute to better overall health and help pets better cope with the challenges of hot weather.

Another potential benefit of CBD for pets during summer is its ability to support the immune system. Heat stress can weaken an animal's immune defenses, making them more susceptible to illnesses. By potentially boosting immune function, CBD may help pets stay healthier during the summer months.

It's important to note that while CBD shows promise for helping pets deal with summer heat, it should never replace essential care practices. Providing plenty of fresh water, ensuring access to cool, shaded areas, and avoiding exercise during the hottest parts of the day remain crucial for pet safety during summer.

Before starting any CBD regimen for your pet, it's essential to consult with a veterinarian. They can provide guidance on appropriate dosages and potential interactions with other medications. Additionally, always choose high-quality, pet-specific CBD products from reputable sources to ensure safety and efficacy.

As with any supplement, individual results may vary, and it may take some time to see the full effects of CBD on your pet. Start with a low dose and monitor your pet closely for any changes in behavior or well-being.

While more research is needed to fully understand the effects of CBD on pets, many pet owners report positive results in helping their furry companions beat the summer heat. By potentially reducing inflammation, easing anxiety, promoting better sleep, and supporting overall health, CBD may be a valuable addition to your pet care routine this summer. Remember, a cool, comfortable pet is a happy pet, and CBD might just be the extra boost they need to enjoy the dog days of summer.

### 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.

We were inspired by family members, in the massage industry, that kept getting requests from clients to use CBD oils because of their natural healing properties.

We felt this was a great and underserved need, so we began our search for the most natural most authentic CBD oils and lotions.

Please visit us at [hempjoi.com](http://hempjoi.com), stop by, or call us to find out more at (239) 676-0915.

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# What Does An Otolaryngologist Do?

## What is an Otolaryngologist?

Otolaryngology is the oldest medical specialty in the United States. Otolaryngologists are physicians trained in the medical and surgical management and treatment of patients with diseases and disorders of the ear, nose, throat (ENT), allergy, and related structures of the head and neck. They are commonly referred to as ENT physicians.

Otolaryngologists are ready to start practicing medicine after completing up to 15 years of college and post-graduate training.

## What types of medical problems do otolaryngologists treat?

**The Ears** – Otolaryngologists are trained in both the medical and surgical treatment of hearing loss, ear infections, balance disorders, ear noise (tinnitus), nerve pain, and facial and cranial nerve disorders.

**The Nose** – Care of the nasal cavity and sinuses is one of the primary skills of otolaryngologists including sinus disease, allergies, nosebleeds, and nasal deformities (both functional and cosmetic).

**The Throat** – Otolaryngologists manage tonsils and adenoid infections, diseases of the larynx (voice box) and esophagus including voice and swallowing disorders, airway problems including obstructive sleep apnea and snoring.

**The Head and Neck** – Otolaryngologists are trained to treat infectious diseases of the head and neck area, both benign and malignant (cancerous) tumors including the thyroid, facial trauma, and deformities of the face (both cosmetic and reconstructive).

## EAR

The ear is a very sophisticated organ. It not only provides us with the ability to hear but it is also integrally involved in our balance system.

Hearing loss and dizziness affect millions of lives every year, significantly impacting their quality of life. With specialized training in otology and neuro-otology, our physicians treat a wide array of diseases affecting the ear.

## DIAGNOSTIC, TREATMENT, SURGICAL AND REHABILITATIVE SERVICES PROVIDED:

- Adult and Pediatric Ear Disorders
- Vertigo & Balance Disorders
- Ear Infections
- Ear Tubes

- Hearing Loss
- Implantable Hearing Devices
- Hearing Aids
- Tinnitus/Ringing in the Ears
- Tumors and Skin Cysts
- Middle Ear Problems and Prosthesis
- Perforated Ear Drums
- Otosclerosis and Laser Stapedotomy
- Sudden Sensorineural Hearing loss

We offer advanced diagnostic testing and treatment for all types of hearing loss including sensorineural hearing loss, conductive hearing loss, mixed hearing loss, sudden hearing loss and unilateral hearing loss.

Imbalance, dizziness and vertigo can be very complex problems. That's why we here at Price Sonkarley, MD understand the importance of a complete, thorough medical evaluation and in-depth diagnostic testing for your dizziness issues. Let our team of highly trained professionals be a resource for you. Don't let your life be diminished by dizziness, poor balance or hearing loss.

We have one of the largest selection of hearing aids available for people with hearing loss. Our hearing rehabilitation specialists will help you select the type of hearing device that is right for you. We have hearing aids to fit every budget and lifestyle. Financing and special programs are available.

## HEARING

We offer advanced diagnostic testing and treatment for all types of hearing loss including sensorineural hearing loss, conductive hearing loss, mixed hearing loss, sudden hearing loss and unilateral hearing loss.

Imbalance, dizziness and vertigo can be very complex problems. That's why we here at Price Sonkarley, MD understand the importance of a complete, thorough medical evaluation and in-depth diagnostic testing for your dizziness issues. Let our team of highly trained professionals be a resource for you. Don't let your life be diminished by dizziness, poor balance or hearing loss.

Patients with hearing loss can count on our highly skilled audiology staff to provide comprehensive diagnostic evaluations for hearing as well as rehabilitative technology and services that are unmatched by other area providers.

We have one of the largest selection of hearing aids available for people with hearing loss. We offer a variety of state-of-the-art and cosmetically appealing hearing aids. Our hearing rehabilitation specialists will help you select the type of hearing device that is right for you. We have hearing aids to fit every budget and lifestyle. Financing and special programs are available. We also provide digital programming, repairs, maintenance and accessories onsite.

## BALANCE & DIZZINESS

Our specialists perform an advanced comprehensive evaluation, and spend extra time educating patients on the specific nature of their complaints. Our patients leave the office with a complete understanding of their underlying problem. The patients are comfortable with the treatment options utilized to manage these distressing symptoms. Here their problem and the treatment options are analyzed in a comprehensive manner, and delivered by caring and knowledgeable physicians and professionals.

- Vertigo
- Meniere's
- Dizziness
- Inner Ear Infections/Labyrinthitis
- Vestibular Disorders

## Hearing Aids & Assistive Listening Devices

You can discuss hearing aid options with the doctors and the audiologist to determine which model might be right for you. Click on appropriate model to read more about the advantages, disadvantages and suitability of each model. You can also discuss surgery to correct hearing loss and assistive devices in the home with the doctors.

- Behind-The-Ear (BTE)
- In-The-Ear (ITE)
- In-The-Canal (ITC)
- Completely-In-The-Canal (CIC)
- Receiver in the Canal (RIC)
- Open Fitting

## NOSE - SINUS & BREATHING

Our physicians are board certified and fellowship trained in Rhinology and Advanced Sinus Surgery and perform Balloon Sinuplasty™, the least invasive and most comfortable method for performing sinus surgery. We provide testing and treatment for a wide range of sinus and nasal diseases.

- Disease of the Sinuses & Nose
- Allergies
- Acute & Chronic Sinusitis

- Bacterial Infections
- Nosebleeds
- Nasal Obstruction/Deviated Septums
- Snoring
- Allergic Fungal Sinusitis
- Sinonasal Tumors/Masses
- Nasal Polyps
- Endoscopic Sinus Surgery
- Balloon Sinuplasty™
- Clarifix
- Sinonasal Trauma
- Sinonasal Tumors/Polyps/Masses
- Smell/Taste Problems

### ALLERGIES & ASTHMA

Our physicians are board certified and fellowship trained in ear, nose and throat-related allergy problems, including food allergies and allergies of the eyes and skin. We provide testing and treatment for a wide range of allergic diseases.

### TESTING, TREATMENT AND MANAGEMENT SERVICES FOR:

- Adult & Pediatric Allergies & Hay Fever Symptoms
- Seasonal Allergies to Pollens, Dust Mites, & Molds
- Allergens, Pollen, Dust, Dust Mites & Mold Spores
- Animal Allergies
- Food Allergies – including Gluten & Casein Allergy
- Animal Allergies
- Skin Allergies/Eczema
- Hives
- Anaphylaxis & Angioedema
- Allergy Shots
- Xolair
- Allergic Asthma
- Allergic Reactions to Insects

### BALLOON SINUPLASTY

#### What is Balloon Sinuplasty?

- Balloon Sinuplasty (BSP) is a safe and effective procedure for many patients seeking relief from uncomfortable and painful sinusitis symptoms.
- If you have been diagnosed with chronic sinusitis and are not responding well to medication, or if you have recurrent acute rhinosinusitis, you may be a candidate for sinus surgery. There is now a less invasive technology used by ENT doctors to treat patients with chronic and recurrent acute sinusitis.
- With Balloon Sinuplasty, ENT doctors open inflamed sinuses in the same way that heart surgeons open up blocked arteries during balloon angioplasty. The procedure is less invasive than traditional sinus surgery, and effective at relieving symptoms of chronic

sinusitis. Balloon Sinuplasty allows patients to return to normal activities quickly. Unlike conventional sinus surgery, it does not include removal of bone or tissue from the nose. And, Balloon Sinuplasty is now offered by some doctors in their office under local anesthesia, so that there is no need to go to an operating room or undergo general anesthesia.

### THROAT

Problems of the throat are quite common. The staff of Florida Gulf Coast Ear, Nose and Throat is highly skilled and experienced.

We have treated thousands of patients suffering from a variety of acute and chronic throat or pharyngeal illnesses and disorders.

### DIAGNOSTIC, TREATMENT AND SURGICAL SERVICES PROVIDED:

- Tonsils & Adenoids
- Strep Throat
- Chronic Sore Throats
- Throat Surgery
- Somnoplasty Post Nasal Drip/Phlegm in Throat
- Gastroesophageal Reflux Disease – GERD
- Epiglottitis
- Laryngitis
- Swallowing Disorders
- Voice Disorders including Botox for Spasmodic Dysphonia
- Vocal Cord Disorders
- Vocal Cord Polyps and Nodules
- Soft Palate
- Snoring & Sleep Apnea

### LARYNGOLOGY TREATMENT AND SURGICAL SERVICES

#### Voice Disorders:

- Vocal fold paralysis
- Vocal fold nodules and polyps
- Vocal fold cysts and granulomas
- Early laryngeal cancer and precancerous lesions of the larynx
- Reinke's Edema
- Laryngeal papillomatosis
- Laryngeal Dystonia/Spasmodic Dysphonia
- Neurologic conditions affecting voice
- Voice Gender Dysphoria

#### Airway Disorders:

- Tracheal diseases
- Airway obstruction
- Sleep apnea syndrome
- Chronic cough
- Laryngeal cancer
- Tracheal stenosis
- Subglottic stenosis

### Swallowing Disorders:

- Zenker's Diverticulum
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- Inability to burp or belch (R-CPD)
- Laryngopharyngeal reflux

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Introducing Price Sonkarley, MD, the new owner of Mark Montgomery, MD PA



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

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



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



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

**Do you suffer with a chronic cough? Throat irritation? Hearing loss? Nasal congestion? Ear fullness? Allergy sufferers, ask us about our alternative solution to allergy shots.**

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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](http://www.Logicalinsurance.com) or call 239-362-0855. You can also reach us at [info@Logicalinsurance.com](mailto:info@Logicalinsurance.com).*

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# Dealing With Life's Painful Situations

By Pastor Timothy Neptune

**O**n Father's Day in 2005 my dad came to my office to visit and talk about how things were going. In the course of our discussion he mentioned that he experienced a terrible night's sleep because his back was causing him so much pain. I told him that it was time to go to the ER and get checked out to find out what was causing all of his pain. He did, and that started a two-year battle with pancreatic cancer. My dad fought an incredible fight with this terrible cancer but passed away in August of 2007.

Many people have faced the pain of having to bury a loved one. The question is, "How do I deal with the pain?" We may have confidence that our loved one is in a better place, but do we do with the pain that we still feel?

As you read this, maybe your pain is not in the loss associated with death, but rather you have faced the end of a relationship, or perhaps have received bad news regarding your own health. The question still remains, "what are we to do with these painful situations?"

As we turn through the pages of Scripture, we find that the thoughts and writings of the Psalmist David bring comfort and hope to those in pain. David understood painful situations for he faced many of them in his own life. He too, buried many loved ones and faced enormous family problems. How did he get through these challenges? He turned to God for help.

David tells us in the book of Psalms, <sup>18</sup> *The LORD is close to the brokenhearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit. Psalms 34:18*

You are never closer to God than when you are hurting. David knew that from personal experience. David took his pain and his problems to the Lord and asked for His help. In Psalm 142:1-2 David wrote, *"I cry aloud to the LORD; I lift up my voice to the LORD for mercy. I pour out my complaint before him; before him I tell my trouble."*

Our natural tendency is to suffer in silence. We put on a smile and pretend that everything is fine in our lives. Yet in reality, we know that ignoring our pain does not bring relief. We hope that time will heal all wounds but we know it does not. In fact, time often makes matters even worse.

Pain is our body's way of letting us know that we need to deal with something. Whether it is physical, emotional, or relational, pain should not be ignored. And yet still, we try to run from it.

It is human nature to run from painful situations. By law, all doors in public buildings swing out. When people panic, they run. They try to escape. When we face pain, loss and hurt, we look for ways to escape. We dream



of running away from reality in hopes of finding peace and comfort over the next rainbow. Sometimes people try to escape by turning to alcohol, drugs, food, or even inappropriate relationships. Running from your problems never brings resolution.

David went on to say in Psalm 142:3 that <sup>3</sup> *"When my spirit grows faint within me, it is you who knows my way..."* God knows the pain we feel and He wants us to run to Him with our troubles.

As you read his Psalms, you will quickly notice that David was very open about what he was going through. And yet, through it all, he learned to trust and depend on God.

When dealing with the pressures and strains of life and the emotional challenges we face, we can learn much from David's example. Stop pretending that you can handle everything in your own strength and turn to God who loves you and cares about you. He specializes in mending broken hearts.

For church times and other information, visit [www.venturenaples.com](http://www.venturenaples.com) or call (239) 775-5323.



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